

5

PRINT MEDIA AND PRACTICES

STRUCTURE

- Introduction
- Depth Reporting
- In Depth Reporting Sports
- In Depth Reporting Crime
- In Depth Reporting Accidents & Disasters
- In Depth Reporting Legislation
- In Depth Reporting Courts
- Follow-up Story
- Categories of Reporter
- Foreign Correspondent
- Stringer
- Functions of a Reporter
- Responsibilities

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ❖ After studying this chapter, you will be able to know the meaning and concept of Editing.
- ❖ Understanding the beat.
- ❖ To know about various kinds of beat.
- ❖ To know about depth reporting sports.
- ❖ To know about crime reporting.
- ❖ To know about accidents and disasters reporting.
- ❖ To know about legislation reporting.
- ❖ To know about court reporting.
- ❖ To know about follow-up story.

• INTRODUCTION

A beat is a particular topic or subject area that a reporter covers. Most journalists working in print and online news cover beats. A reporter can cover a particular beat for a period of many years. Beat reporting, also known as specialized reporting, is a genre of journalism that can be described as the craft of in-depth reporting on a particular issue, sector, organization or institution over time. Beat reporters build up a base of knowledge on and gain familiarity with the topic, allowing them to provide insight and commentary in addition to reporting straight facts. Generally, beat reporters will also build up a rapport with sources that they visit again and again, allowing for trust to build between the journalist and his/her source of information. This distinguishes them from other journalists who might cover similar stories from time to time.

Journalists become invested in the beats they are reporting for, and become passionate about mastering that beat. Beat reporters often deal with the same sources day after day, and must return to those sources regardless of their relationship with them. Those sources may or may not be pleased with the reporting of the reporters. It is pertinent that beat reporters contact their to know sources quickly, obtain all necessary information, and write on deadline.

According to media sociologists, beat reporting occurs because of the limited time reporters are given to cover stories. For big scoops, beats are not necessarily as useful as other journalism types. Some of the best inside stories, for example Bay of Pigs and Watergate, did not come from beat reporting.

Beat reporters collect information from each person they meet while reporting. They routinely call, visit, and e-mail sources to obtain any new information for articles. When reporters have experience on a specific beat, they are able to gain both knowledge and sources to lead them to new stories relating to that beat. Beats are able to help reporters define their roles as journalists, and also avoid overlap of stories within the newsroom.

• DEPTH REPORTING

Sometimes a lot, sometimes not much. Both basically define forms of journalism where a lot of time and energy is put into research. In many cases, the end result is the same: something that challenges the status quo, adds vital new information to public sphere, and uncovers wrongdoing or corruption. But sometimes reporting that is in-depth does not challenge accepted truth.

One example might be Lance Armstrong. There were many journalists who wrote in-depth stories about Armstrong, his career, his personality and so on. Even books. But few were prepared to chase the uncomfortable or hard-to-prove information about doping. Doing *that* was investigative journalism.

Some basic principles

Let us discuss some basic rules about investigative reporting before we move on to the practical techniques.

News value

Most newspapers, radio and television stations get a lot of requests from people to "investigate" some alleged wrongdoing. In many cases these are silly matters, lies or hoaxes. But you should spend some time on each tip-off, to decide whether or not it will make a story.

You should judge all topics for investigative reporting on the criteria for what makes news. Is it new, unusual, interesting, significant and about people? Sometimes, the story might only affect one person and be so trivial that it is not worth following up. Remember you have limited time and resources, so you cannot follow every story idea. Use your news judgment.

Keep Your Eyes and Ears Open

Always be on the lookout for possible stories. Sometimes people will come to you with tip-offs, but often you must discover the stories yourself. Story ideas can come from what you read or overhear or even a sudden thought while you

are brushing your teeth. Good investigative reporters do not let any possible story clues escape. They write them down because they might come in useful later.

Listen to casual conversations and rumour, on the bus, in the street or in a club. Careless words give the first clues to something wrong, but never write a story based only on talk you have overheard or on rumour.

Get the facts

Because investigative reporting means digging up hidden facts, your job will not be as easy as reporting court or a public meeting. People will try to hide things from you. You must gather as many relevant facts as you can, from as many people as possible. Your facts must be accurate, so always check them.

And do not expect dramatic results. Real life journalism is seldom like the stories you see in films. Most investigations need many hours of work gathering lots and lots of small details. You and your editor must realise this. If you are not given enough time, you may not be able to do any successful investigative reporting.

Fit the facts Together

As you gather the facts, fit them together to make sure that they make sense. Investigative reporting is often like doing a jigsaw. At the beginning you have a jumble of pieces. Only slowly will they emerge as a picture. Unlike a jigsaw puzzle, you will not have all the pieces at the beginning. You have to recognise which pieces are missing then go and find them.

Check the Facts

Remember you are trying to find information which some people want to keep secret. They will not help you in your investigation, so you cannot check your facts with them. They will probably oppose you and look for mistakes in everything you write or broadcast. If you make a mistake, they will probably take you to court. You must always check your facts. Take a tip from the most famous example of investigative reporting, the so-called Watergate Affair. The Washington Post reporters Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein investigated a crime which eventually led to the downfall of US President Richard Nixon. They knew their enemies would be waiting for them to make a mistake, so they made it a rule that they would never use any fact unless it was confirmed by two sources. This is a good rule to try to follow.

However, remember that many people you might interview about corruption could be corrupt themselves. Criminals lie, so be suspicious of what you are told- and check their words with someone else, preferably someone you trust.

Evidence

In addition to gathering facts, you should also gather evidence to support those facts. This is especially important in case you are taken to court for defamation as a result of your investigation. Courts will only accept facts which can be proved. If someone tells you something on the record, you can show the court your notes, but it would also be useful to get a signed statutory declaration from them. This is a kind of legal statement given under oath.

• IN DEPTH REPORTING SPORTS

Sports reporting field is broad and interesting enough to challenge the finest talent. The sports coverage remains the life blood of most sports pages. More opinions and news analyses appear on these pages. Sports reports are read mostly due to their contents and style. Sports reporter should take into account all the compulsory elements of the sports news item while reporting a news event. Sports reporting requires qualities of background knowledge and judgement, critical evaluation of sports besides sound general knowledge about games and their rules & regulations. The performance of the teams should be covered fairly, impartially.

and in an unbiased way. The quality of a written sports item depends on the quality of its reporting. The sports reporter who, among other things, knows the players well, the strategy they use during game, key incidents, crowd behaviour and the game which he/she is covering, is able to write an interesting sports story. But while writing a sports story or its advance story the reporter must follow the regular news writing and reporting principles in building the story and other requirements of sports writing. Sports reporting ranges from straight news reporting through all degrees of interpretation and feature writing and the editorialised column. A sports event may be treated in any one of these degrees or in all of them combined. For an important sports event, an advance story, a straight story, similarly background, prediction, follow-up types of stories may be used.

This is the era of big-time college football, created in large part by the willingness of the broadcasting networks to spend millions of dollars on nationally televised games. It is also the era of the million-dollar a year professional athlete, enormous stadiums, fanatical fans and gamblers who will do almost anything to avoid losing a bet.

Typical Combination

Such a combination is bound to add up to trouble, sooner or later, but it isn't often that either the sports pages or the sportcasters reflect so damaging a reality. In the mythology of the sports world, sports reporters are supposed to confine themselves to the stories of who won and who lost, or game called on account of the weather. When they don't, it's news.

At a meeting of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, Charles Bailey, editor of the Minneapolis Tribune, put the case this way.

I have a feeling of unease when I think about sports, both college and professional, in terms of the fact that we are not really doing a job of reporting on the true conditions. I am talking about college football in particular, but also most college sports, the money involved and the practices involved. One has a hard time getting sports writers interested in digging into that story.

Brent Musburger of CBS Sports responded with the not-so-original observation that most communities believe sports writers "should not touch this grand entertainment" and went on:

It is very unfortunate we are so hypocritical at the college level. Take a look at the money that is being generated by college athletics in terms of television contracts and tickets that are sold for those arenas. You wonder why athletes aren't paid in some way. Even if the Minneapolis Tribune does a story or CBS goes in with 20 minutes in one, two or three different schools around the country, we are not going to change a thing. They are going to be back out there giving cars away, giving jobs to parents, because there is so much money at stake. It is an economic issue. They just ought to be honest with it and deal with it in some way.

Hometown Story : Musburge's reference to hometown pride in local stories heroes was at the base of an outpouring of resentment in Tucson, Arizona, when the local Arizona Daily Star began digging into rumor about the alleged mishandling of the financial affairs of the University of Arizona's football programme. Some large businesses canceled their advertising in an effort to stop the inquiry, editors of the paper said, and other started a boycott.

Despite these efforts to stop the inquiry, the two city-side reporters who were conducting the investigation, Bobe Lowe and Clark Hallas, broke a series of stories after working for three months, bringing about the resignation and indictment of the university's football coach on charges of financial irregularities in the football recruiting programme. However, when the coach was brought to trial he was acquitted. Even though the reporter were awarded the 1981 Pulitzer Prize for investigative reporting, it did not endear them to the loyal supporters of the Arizona Wildcats. The coach's acquittal, coming as it did after the award of the prize, demonstrated once again that it is one thing for a newspaper to publish charges and quite another to persuade a jury to believe them.

Changes in Sports Reporting : Sports editors and reporters are well aware of the criticism that has come their way. In Boston, there was no effort to play down or cover up a criminal investigation into a point-shaving scandal that rocked the Boston College basketball team. As a result, a youthful Boston College basketball player was convicted and sent to jail for ten years. Nor have sports editors always been complaisant about the rumors of wrong-doing in collegiate and professional sports. Years ago, Max Kase, sports editor of the *New York Journal-American*, won a Pulitzer Prize Special Award for turning over information to the district attorney of New York County about a looming basketball scandal. As a result, several local college players were convicted and sent to prison.

But then, New York and Boston aren't as likely to develop hometown pride in local athletes as are smaller communities. And in the big cities, there is less opportunity for booster organizations to bring pressure on the local news media not to interfere in the affairs of local colleges or universities.

Without much doubt, the emergence of television as a dominant influence in the presentation of sports to a mass public has made a difference in the public's perception of right and wrong. As George Solomon to the Washington Post has said, "TV buys events. TV puts on the event. And to make TV look good and self all the commercials, the sport must look good."

Brenl Musburger of CBS believes the charges to be overstressed. He says, “To a large extent we are in the entertainment business, which leads me directly into what we do as networks. Yes, we have to buy events. Then we have to make a profit out of them. So we have to attract an audience. And, yes, there is a certain amount of type that goes into it”

Still, Musburger argues, newspapers also try to present the news in as appealing a way as possible because they, too, have to maintain circulation to attract advertisers and they, too, have to make a profit to stay in business. True enough, but the difference is that the newspapers don’t pay large sums of money to put on national sports broadcasts. In consequence, to quote Solomon, “A lot of editors are demanding the same standards from sports reporters and sports journalists as they do from everyone else—that is, aggressive reporting, looking behind the scenes, digging, being a true reporter.”

The Cult of Privacy : In professional sports, where outstanding athletes can earn enormous sums of money in a relatively short time, sports writers are under even greater handicaps. Because there is a tendency to criticize those players who collect millions and give substandard performances, the cult of privacy has taken firm hold among many teams. Once it was taken for granted that sports reporters and TV cameras would be welcome in team locker rooms or at practice sessions. But not today. Access to athletes in locker rooms is severely restricted by most professional sports teams.

Making a Beginning : It is a long way from such major concerns among the top figures in the sports reporting field to the beginner who wants to break into sports reporting for a newspaper or broadcast organization. Yet sports is almost a common denominator among working journalists today. Many of them had their first task of journalism covering sports as stringers at the high school level. And few have forgotten their experience.

Getting a Sports Job : In a lot of American cities, high school sports have a wide following and particularly in communities without college or professional teams, are a dominant community activity. On any autumn Saturday afternoon, thousands of people turn out to watch high school football. In many places, too, basketball is a magnet that draws towns people to high school gymnasiums. Such sports as baseball and track traditionally have lighter attendance, but all are reported on in the local papers and local broadcast media.

Beginners generally inherit stringing jobs in high school from graduating classmates. Or, if they are particularly enterprising, they may find a nearby publication of station that gives no coverage to a high school within the general circulation area and win the assignment. At any rate, the first time they report on a game, they may be told that the paper or station wants only the final score and how the victory was achieved. Then someone in the office writes a roundup including this information.

As the new comer proves trustworthy, the assignments improve. In addition to the final score, other details are requested—the number of people attending the game, an interview with the winning coach or the player who scored the

a professional assignment it generally is to do either a colour story on a major contest or to handle the play-by-play.

Regular beats-following a particular baseball or football team through the season — aren't practical for a small sports staff. Reporters may handle several different sports in single week and have to adapt themselves to local conditions.

Interviewing Sports Figures : Bob Matthews, sports columnist for the Rochester (New York) Times Union, has these suggestions for interviewing sports personalities.

- Make sure your first question is a good one so the subject will know you have something on the ball.
- Always be on a first-name basis with every player on a pro team. Sooner or later, one of them will good up and it's sports writer's job to ask him about it. Nothing turns off an athlete faster than a reporter who hasn't said hello to him all season but is quick to arrive after a costly error.
- Try for specifics. Don't settle for generalities. Ask why the center fielder dropped the ball in the last half of the ninth, enabling the opposition to score the winning run.
- I have one pet question I often ask athletes. "What do you think of sports writers?" They usually have definite opinions and branch off into how they've been misquoted, misrepresented, etc. It's a good way to build rapport and can lead to some good exchanges.
- Before I interview a national sports figure, I often phone a sports writer in his particular town for background and tips on how to approach the subject.
- Invariably there's a question I forget to ask or a point that needs clarification. So I always ask where the subject can be reached later in the day, just in case he's needed.

Patterns of Sports : There most of the sports public knows the final score of the game from radio of before the paper comes out, sports writing in the TV age is different in many ways from what it used to be. Dave Anderson of the New York Times says.

A lot of my colleagues really seem to resent television. I may be different, but I enjoy television for this reason. I think television creates sports readers. Any time people see an even on television, they invariably want to read about it next day. To name the beauty of television is that as soon as the game ends, they go off....As soon as they go off, that's when we go to work. That to me is the great value of television on the sports business.

Other newspaper, magazine and syndicated sports writers have been pleasantly surprised by the self-evident truth that Anderson expressed. And they have adapted to the new dispensation by using many of techniques of the feature writer—the bright anecdote, the sharp quote, the interview with all concerned in a disputed play or a disputed decision, the description of a part of the contest that television down played. Relatively few editors now want the

fast summary lead on the final score; instead, they ask for the way it happened and the answers to all the questions the fans will be raising that night and the next day.

Damon Runyon, Bob Considine and Jimmy Cannon — three of the old-time greats in the sports writing business— would have been very much at home in today's sports pages. As the saying goes, they always played the angles and wrote the story for all it was worth.

Telling the Sports Story : Anybody who undertakes to write about sports must have an intimate knowledge of the assignment. The three greatest necessities are accuracy, restraint and decent respect for the English language.

Sports followers invariably pride themselves on being experts. They like to hear and rear about “inside” strategy, just as the literacy gossip endlessly about the famous people on whom characters in a sensational new novel are supposedly patterned. However, some games are more easy to describe than others — and that depends on the patterns of the sport.

Multiple Techniques

The technique of doing multiple stories of one sports event is still practiced in a large section of the daily press, the essentials are recorded here without assurance that they will survive many more years.

The Advance Story : The advance begins with a situation lead, relating that two teams are facing each other or that a field of seven horses is ready for the big race of the day. The remainder of the story merely discusses the background of the event, gives whatever detail there is on the participants and the crowd, and winds up in such a way the running account of the early part of the game can be added on. If the contest is under way before the edition closes, a brief high insert can give the early scoring. Necessarily, even in an, early edition, the advance is bound to look foolish. It assumes that the public is entirely dependent on the news paper to find out what happened and will buy a later editor to get the full details. This used to happen, but it hasn't for many years.

The Running Story : Depending on the style of the paper, the chronological story of the game is told as B copy (or B matter) or merely slugged “Running” or “Play-By-Play.” As an edition approaches, a two-paragraphs lead is written by the reporter at the scene or by an editor in the office and put on top of the opening of the chronological account. Once the event is over, a final wrap-up lead is written and the details of the end of the game are put at the bottom of the piece.

If the running story is well done within reasonable space, it should stand. But frequently, sports writers have the urge to do the whole exercise over again on the dubious theory that they will produce magnificent prose the second time around. Unfortunately, it rarely turns out that way.

These are trying circumstances for any journalist. If the objective is to keep pace with radio and television, it is impossible to attain. If it is to “save space” for the final story, the theory is lacking in practicality. Such saved space is

always wasted space. The news magazines manage to do pretty well with their weekly summaries of sports and do not arouse great feeling among the sports-minded public that it is being cheated. Sooner or later, the newspapers will come around to the obvious—that the best way to do a sports story is to wait until the event is over and then give it the well-considered treatment it deserves. Few sports events are big enough to call for edition-by-edition coverage against electronic competition.

Statistics : The sports fans of the nation love statistics, and most sports pages provide them in abundance with columns of box score averages, racing detail, league standings and the like. Every reporter must learn at the outset how to keep an individual set of statistics and make sure they are accurate. But the wisest reporters know when to stop loading a story with ‘stats’ and depend, instead on the beauty and utility of the English language. Too many statistics can kill a story. Too few will make it unusable. The trick is to find a practical in-between point.

Basics Facts

Here are some of the basics that should be remembered about sports reporting:

- Sports reporters are measured by the same standards as all other reporters. They have to do more than just report the score; it is their business to be aggressive to dig for the hidden story, to make sports pages mean something more than a repository for columns of aggregate results.
- One of the foremost problems today is access to athletes and locker rooms, at both the professional and the amateur levels. Reporters have to make it their business to ask the tough question—which means that they can’t let themselves be turned aside by a stern locker room janitor.
- Most beginners in sports get their first job stringing for a neighbourhood paper and reporting high school scores. The high school sports beat is a testing ground for the next generation of sports writers. Usually, the best of the stringers gets first crack at an opening for a high school sports reporter and the progression starts there.
- The three necessities for a sports writer are accuracy, restraint and a decent knowledge of and respect for the English language. Phony expertise and cliché-ridden writing are the principal faults of new comers.
- In a contest featured on TV, the newspaper sports writer has to emphasize something other than the score, even though the score does have to be repeated high up. This can be anecdote, a sharp quote, an interview or an explanation of some occurrence that was fuzzed up by the TV reporters.
- In the thousands of contests that sports writers cover with little or no broadcast competition, the emphasis is still on writing the story straight and featuring the manner in which the game was won or lost. But even here, the feature approach always helps and—except for the brief summary story—good quotes are mandatory.

does not unnecessarily invade a citizen's privacy. There has been much criticism of press reporting of crime and not all of it is baseless. Some reporters have been found guilty of unethical standards, thus causing much pain and sorrow to their victims or their families and friends. In the case of the brutal murder of two Bombay nuns, some newspapers published totally baseless allegations conveyed to them by irresponsible police officials that the nuns were in the habit of receiving male visitors. The reports offended all decent citizens, particularly the members of the Christian Community.

A leading newspaper once published a fictitious report about a couple having been waylaid by a gang on the national highway. The report said that the husband was beaten up and the woman was molested. The story was subsequently found to be incorrect, the product of the imagination of a reporter anxious to get his by-line in the paper. Reports glorifying the activities of criminals or making heroes of them should be discouraged as much as a resort to sensationalism. The crime reporter must never violate standards of decency and good taste.

Crime as News : There are several types of crime news—murders, fires, accidents, robberies, burglaries, fraud, blackmail, kidnaping, rape, etc.

Fires : The reporter must get his facts correct about the essential elements of a fire story—the number of persons killed or injured, the extent of damage to property; the loss of valuables, etc. He must also find out if the fire brigade responded in time or was guilty of delaying the fire-fighting operations through sheer lethargy or incompetence or a lack of water supply. He should question eye-witnesses about any acts of bravery or cowardice. All these are essential ingredients of a fire story.

The lead in a fire story would normally suggest itself. It, for instance, lives have been lost, it needs highlighting in the lead. Where possible, list the names of the dead and the injured.

“A major fire caused extensive damage to New Delhi's Vigyan Bhavan, the premier venue of international and national conferences, on Monday night, a chowkidar on duty received minor burns. According to preliminary investigations, the fire broke out in the kitchen and soon spread to other rooms on the ground floor. The chowkidar raised an alarm which alerted the head clerk on duty who informed the fire brigade and the police. Ten fire tenders soon arrived on the scene. However, their fire-fighting operations were hampered by lack of water in the hydrants. By the time water tankers rushed to the site, the fire had engulfed a large area and damaged files, furniture, curtains and ceilings. The police suspect electric short-circuit as the cause of the fire”.

Homicides : In cases of a major murder, the reporter should rush to the scene as soon as possible after receiving a tip and gather all the relevant facts. In nine cases out of ten, crime reporters in, say, Delhi, depend on police information about murders and there is a time lapse before they can begin their investigations.

This often hampers their search for the truth. The reporter must, in any case, exercise great care in how he handles the story. Otherwise he runs the risk of causing offense.

In reporting dowry deaths or alleged dowry deaths, for instance, the reporter should refrain from levelling uncorroborated statements by one party or the other. He must therefore get his facts correct-by talking to the investigating police officer, the girl's in laws and her parents, and, if possible, the neighbours.

A 25 year old housewife, Renu, died in NN Memorial Hospital on Monday morning from burns received in a kitchen fire. The housewife's parents alleged that she was murdered by her in-laws who had been dissatisfied with the dowry she brought at the time of her wedding a year ago.

However, the husband, Kishore, a garment merchant in Chandni Chowk, and his father who were in the house at the time of the accident maintain, that Sushmita's sari caught fire when she was lighting a stove in the kitchen. Since the kitchen door was closed, they did not hear her cries for help.

The police are questioning the women's relatives as well as neighbours and are reluctant to offer an opinion until the investigations are complete. At the insistence of Renu's parents, however, they have registered a case against her in-laws.

• IN DEPTH REPORTING ACCIDENTS & DISASTERS

Accidents and disasters – everything from plane and train crashes to earthquakes, tornadoes and tsunamis – are some of the hardest stories to cover. Reporters at the scene must gather information under very difficult circumstances, and produce stories on very tight deadlines. Covering such an event requires all of a reporter's training and experience.

But if you keep in mind the lessons you've learned and the skills you've acquired, covering an accident or a disaster can be a chance to really test yourself as a reporter, and to do some of your best work.

Accidents

Most accidents are reported on the basis of police bulletins or information supplied by police spokesmen. However, wherever possible the crime reporter must rush to the scene of a major accident to give authenticity to his story.

Three members of a family-husband, wife and daughter-were killed on the spot when a speeding truck remmed into their car on the road to Indira Gandhi International Airport on Sunday morning. A fourth member of the family had a providential escape. According to the police, the truck driver lost control of the vehicle and swerved sharply to the right and hit the car coming from the opposite direction.

Those killed are Ram, a businessman of Agra, his wife, Janki and their daughter, Aasha. The second daughter, Geeta, had a miraculous escape and suffered only minor bruises on her arms and legs. She was treated at the Safdarjung Hospital and allowed to go home.

The truck has been seized by the police but the truck driver, Sasi Singh is absconding.

News at the Desk : All copy reaching a newspaper office from different sources is processed at the news desk. The desk is manned by sub-editors and usually a chief sub-editor leads the team and works as copy taster and also as revise editor or slotman. He sits in the very useful slot of the horse shot shaped copy desk facing other sub-editors on the rim. After distributing copy to other subs he also checks their work for any mistakes and passes to on to the composing room.

The sub-editor does some or all these to every story:

- Reads the story for clarity of language and meaning and rewrites where necessary.
- Shortens the story while retaining the essentials and maintaining coherence.
- Combines one story with another, or perhaps combines running reports from several news agencies, correspondents and reporters to produce a single, intelligible report from different and sometimes contradictory messages.
 - Saves space when verbosity creeps in.
 - Corrects the grammar and checks for house style.
 - Checks for apparent errors of fact.
 - Checks for taste.
- Adds important background facts and provides answers for any implied questions.
- Writes headlines which attract the attention of the reader and also writes sub-headings if necessary.

The chief-sub of revise editor checks the work of sub-editors ensuring accuracy of details. He also becomes the first reader of the story and sees whether the headline and copy make sense.

Another senior sub-editor or chief sub looks after the work at 'the stone'. He is called 'stone editor' also. Though with change in technology the stone has vanished but the term persists. The job of the composing room where the pages are made up with metal types and picture blocks or with strips of film or bromide. The stone sub can also be called production editor or make up editor. He deals with minor disharmonies. If the text is too long, he cuts it. If the page plan does not work, he changes it. If there is late news, he makes room for it. He checks the galley proofs and page proofs and finally sends them to the press.

Thus a sub-editor has to know all about news writing and how a reporter should write news copy. He is supposed to improve upon the work of the reporter. He should not change something for the sake of change but he must make sure that every correction or change, improves the copy.

Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances

Major industrial accidents involving dangerous substances pose a significant threat to human health and the environment. Such accidents can

give rise to serious injury to people or serious damage to the environment, both on and off the site of the accident.

The Chemicals Act (Control of Major Accident Hazards involving Dangerous Substances) Regulations 2015 (S.I. No. 209 of 2015) (the ‘COMAH Regulations’) implement the most recent Seveso Directive (2012/18/EU) and establishments that are subject to these Regulations have additional reporting requirements for-

An explosion or fire involving a dangerous substance occurring in an establishment which resulted in the stoppage of any part of the establishment or suspension of normal work in that establishment for more than 24 hours.

The uncontrolled or accidental release or the escape of any dangerous substance from any apparatus, equipment, pipework, pipe-line, process plant, storage vessel, tank or tanker, which, having regard to the nature of the substance and the extent and location of the release or escape, might have been liable to cause -

- (a) serious injury consequences to human health;
- (b) serious damage to the environment; or
- (c) damage to property; to the extent that it had the potential to cause a major accident.

News Agency Copy : The bulk of copy which comes to the news desk is from wire agencies. The teleprinter keeps on crediting information almost all the time during peak news hours of the afternoon and evening. This copy comes in takes-the unit of news agency transmission or unit of newswriting.

Foreign news items have their own serial numbers, FG., FS, FES FTF, PAS and POOL. Whereas FG, FS and FES files carry news items received from Reuter, AFP and UPI and are credited to those agencies, the PTF file is made up of reports received from PTI's own correspondents and stringers abroad. Items taken from the services of agencies like TASS, Xinhua, Antra Bernama, Tangug and other agencies with which PTI has exchange arrangements go under the PAS series. The POOL file is devoted to agencies participating with PTI in the Press Agencies Pool of Non-aligned countries.

Sobhraj-style is slug-an identification tag. Every story even a story consisting of only one take, must carry at the top a suitable slug. Generally the slug is one word which is often the key word in the story. Thus a story about rain would which is often the key word in the story. Thus a story about rain would be slugged “rain” and one about the police firing, “firing”. Slugs are nouns and not adjectives pour in from various points, a master slug should be used with sub-slugs for individual story. In the above example Sobhraj is master slug while style is sub-slug.

Play boy of prisons once more outwitted is the headline. This is a new development. Agencies normally are not supported to give headlines but now to lighten the burden of newspaper sub-editors they have also started putting headlines. If the sub-editor. At the newspaper desk likes it he can indicate the type size for the headline.

New Delhi Apr. 7 is dateline and PTI is credit line. It appears just after date line in the first take of the story and again at the end of each take. All the takes of the story except the last end with More-PTI as in the above example. The last take of the story is closed with PTI. For Spl of Espl services or sometimes for all stories the story can be reopened. In re-opening an item, reference is given to the previous take by its number for instance, "Sobhraj five-New Delhi-re-open Del 33". RR RT BDS are initials of the reporter, the deskman or deskman processing it and the teleprinter operator punching it on the tape. Each take also carries at the end that time at which it is transmitted in the services.

Lead : In news agency lead is used in the case of developing stories for updating the top, as necessary, in the light of fresh facts as they become available. Examples of such stories could be train or air mishap, a conference or meeting, an election, a state visit by a VIP. Such stories may require one or more leads as the story advances with the day. A lead can also be used to tie up loose ends of dispersed story, or to provide combined top for two or three different items about a single subject or related development.

There can be one or more leads to a story. For example, the leads on an air crash story, slugged "Crash" could be "Lead Crash", "Second Lead Crash", and so on. The final wrap-up story would be "Lead all Crash".

Pick-up: A lead often overhauls a substantial part of a story or even the entire story. Such lead is also called a "round up". Close to deadlines of newspapers roundups are not useful and therefore the lead is in the form of a brief one or two para top, that is, just the new intro. This intro introduces the new element that has emerged in situation. In such cases an appropriate pick-up line is given linking with the part of earlier story specifying the item by number, slug and dateline and giving the location of the point of pick-up.

Kill Note: If an agency wants to withdraw or kill a story which has come on the ticker, it puts out a kill note. The kill note has priority marking 'Kill' and is without a dateline. It gives the number, slug, dateline and subject of the story which it kills and also indicates whether a substitute follows.

Similarly, corrections are also issued specifying the take line and words of the earlier story and then the whole take is re-issued with corrections.

Service Messages: Sometimes service messages which are meant for internal use also reach newspapers. Such messages have the word "service" at the top. Ordinarily a service is addressed to the Editor at a particular place. These messages should not be confused with messages and stories sent for use in newspapers.

In order to prevent mistakes the words not, now and nor are repeated in news agency copy. While editing the copy a sub-editor should delete one of these words.

Sorting Process : News agencies keep on crediting takes of different stories one after the other, while reporters and correspondents also continue filing copy so that subjects covered by news agencies are also covered by the members of newspaper staff.

If the same story is covered by a member of newspaper staff his copy should get priority over the news agency copy. Additional information given by the news agencies can be added to his copy giving credit to the agency.

News copy coming from different sources is sorted out at the desk and all copy relating to a particular story is kept separate. This helps the sub-editor doing that story to read the whole copy, analyse it and do justice with it. This sorting helps also in knowing whether the news agency has completed the story or some more takes are likely to follow.

Judging the importance of the story the chief-sub decides the space to be given to it. This has to be in relation to total news fall. The relative importance of the story also determines the page where the story would go. Except developing or running stories, all other stories are edited as soon as it is decided that they are to be used. For running stories the deskmen wait for more information. When they come close to the deadline of the edition they proceed with what they have. When additional information comes, the story is changed again for the next edition.

A word about copy. Good copy, also called clean copy, has the name of the reporter and the date on the top of the first page. At least a third of this page is left blank to allow room for instructions to sub-editor and the printer. Sufficient margin should be left on both sides of the copy-say one and a half inch on the left hand side and one inch on the right hand side of all pages of the copy. At least a two inch space should be left at the top and the bottom of each page. News copy should be typed double space.

Every page of the copy should start and end with a paragraph. If there is a mistake in typing a word, it should be typed again. Corrections should be made above the line.

A reporter should leave underscoring paragraph, indents and all other typographical markings to the sub-editor. Wrong under-scoring and paragraph marks make a mess of copy. At the end of each page before the last 'more follows' or MF is essential and the end of the last page should be marked 'End'.

On the copy the sub-editor crosses out certain things and circles others. Neither will be set in type but the distinction is that what nobody needs to see any more is crossed out, but essential service messages are circled. The page and edition where the story will go are written on the top of the story and encircled. For example, P 1/2 would mean page one of the second edition. Sub-editor's name or initials are also written and encircled, if there is a printer's or proof reader's query it can be referred to the sub-editor who has edited the copy. Type size and columns are also indicated and encircled. For example, 8X1 would mean that the copy is to be set in 8 point type of the newspaper text print across one column. There is no need to specify the face or to say that it is in roman.

The rule in newspaper setting is to specify the unusual and otherwise to keep the copy clean. The fewer the marks the better it is.

Catch line or slug is also essential on edited text takes and headline folio, the operator setting the text sets the catch line and it can be married, with the other

folios of the same story. Thus a story may have 'Rajiv' as slug or catchline. Its headline folio will carry 'Rajiv 1' and its first text take would have 'Rajiv 2', and soon.

News Headline : Every headline is written on a separate folio. The headline should be written clearly-in capitals if necessary. The letter which need capitalisation should be double ticked. Edition and page mark go on the top left hand corner and the catchline on top right hand corner. It also carries instructions regarding type and the columns over which the headline will be spread and the headline style. For example, '14 CBLCX1 set left' would mean that the headline has to be set left over single column in 14 point century bold type in lower case. If the normal headline style is set left in that case it need not be specified in the instructions.

However, it is essential that the style breaking headlines should be marked with words and symbols. Spread and arrangement: The first headlines were single column. Now they can be spread over all the columns in the newspaper. Newspapers today use the opportunities for display by mixing single column and multi-column headlines depending on the importance of the news. Banner headline should not be in lower case because lower case letters across such a wide measure look straggly. Moreover, headlines should be crisp and lower case headline will be unduly wordy.

There is a wide range of possibilities regarding arrangements of headline. A newspaper may standardise on one form, such as the centered head, or it can mix them between headlines. But much depends on the skill of the page planners and the ideas they try to communicate.

The basic typographic arrangements are flush left, centered, stepped, flush right and hanging indention.

Flush Left: Many newspapers have switched to this style. The flush left heading has one or more lines which are set flush to the left. This should not touch the column rule. The flush left headlines look better when each line is indented on the column rule leaving 6 points or half an em space on an 11 cm column.

Centered: In this type of arrangement each line of headline type is centered on the white of the column. The well-constructed, centered heading, whether of a multi-line or a multi-deck has its own symmetry and it is neatly framed in white.

The patterns created by this need slightly more attention than the patterns the flush left heading creates, but neither needs as much attention as some other patterns.

If one is writing a multi-deck headlines they should be centered where they look best. The common double column headline is a single deck of two lines with centered headings. The second line should always be shorter than the first at least by two units. One should never try to write headlines in tight caps. They need more white around themselves for legibility.

Stepped: In this arrangement the first line is set flush left and the last flush right and the middle lines centered. Each line has to be about the same length,

and they look like steps. To achieve a smooth step requires great care in headline writing. This style is discouraged by modern experts of readability. However, the greatest difficulty is that the stepped style depends too much on a precise count and any failure can lead to ugly results.

Flush Right: Each line is pushed against the right-hand margin to create a stepped effect on the left. It has even more limited application than the stepped headline. It may be occasional variant in a paper but it cannot be recommended as a regular style. It is slow to set and difficult to read.

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

Quotes: Old school considered that quotes and dashes were full letters. New school thinks it is an ugly habit. No headline should need double quotes. Only simple quotes should do. With flush left headings the flush line should be the initial letter of each line-not the quote. The quote should be left to hang in the white.

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

Accuracy, intelligibility and vigour are the requirements and any newspaper which is careless with its headlines is careless about its own purpose and vitality. Wordy and vague headlines leave a newspaper reader confused and irritate him. Where every headline goes to the print with precision or wit, the whole newspaper comes alive.

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

Counting the Units: A headline must fit in the space available to it. A headline with too many letters to be accommodated in the width and type required is called a “bouncer”. It bounces back to the desk from the printer’s room and wastes time at various levels.

The deskman should always write a headline which should fit. But if there is a superb headline which will not fit in the heading scheme, the scheme can be changed to fit it. A chief-sub may consider this if the merit of the headline so demands.

A sub-editor counts the units in the words he writes for a headline. These units must not exceed the number of units allowed by the size of the type, its style and the number of columns the headline is being allowed to run.

The unit count system begins by giving a unit value to every letter and figure in the alphabet. It is based on a count of one for most letters with adjustments for thinner or fatter letters, and for capitals when they are mixed with lower-case letters. While M and W are counted as 1 Y2 units; I, L, F and T are

counted Y2 unit. Other letters are counted as one unit. Where capitals and numerals occur in a headline which is otherwise in lower case, allowance must be made for the extra space the capital letter or numerals will take compared with the lower-case letter. In a headline set u/lc (upper and lower case), count any ordinary capital letter or numeral as an extra Y2 unit, that is, 1 Y2 units. Exceptions are: M and W which should be counted as two units when in caps and I and J and numeral 1 should be counted as one unit.

If the headline is in all caps the letters M and W should be counted as 1 Y2 unit while I and numeral 1 should be counted as Y2 unit. Other letters and numerals will be one unit. The space between the words is counted by some experienced sub-editors as $\frac{1}{2}$ unit, while others insist that the space should be counted as full unit, it is better to count it as full unit as if it is in excess it is on the right side and it also simplifies the count.

How does one know the number of units available? In newspapers there is always a list of headline types composed and pasted somewhere for ready reference. It may be available in the style sheet or style book.

If it is not available then the sub-editor should prepare a unit count card which gives the various counts at a glance. Unit count card can be prepared from the type schedule or by counting headlines as published in the newspaper for each style, size and spread. Count a dozen representatives of each headline and average the unit count obtained. Working in this way from published examples the deskman can write headings that fit without the need to count them. Experienced sub-editors resort to a unit count only in case of doubt.

Reporting on Disasters

Disasters include natural events such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and hurricanes, and situations sparked by human actions, such as oil spills, radiation leaks and chemical accidents.

When a disaster strikes, the most important story that journalists can tell their audiences in the first instance will be about safety — what they should do to ensure they are safe, where they can go if they need help, and who they should listen to.

In describing what has happened, where, how and why, journalists may need to take complex scientific information and explain it in a way that broad audiences will understand.

If the situation is new then journalists will need to rapidly educate themselves about what is known about this kind of disaster, and which expert sources they should consult.

There are two main phases to disaster reporting – the initial breaking news period, and the longer-term aftermath.

Journalists who go to the site of a disaster to report on it, must take care to stay safe and not to get in the way of any emergency relief activities. Disaster zones are potentially dangerous because whatever caused the problem could happen again, because infrastructure may be damaged and because people

there may be in a highly stressed state. There may be no normal public security or regular ways to request help.

Reporters should bring in their own food, water, fuel and first-aid kit so they don't place a burden on the limited supplies that are there. They should wear appropriate clothing for the climate and avoid risks such as sunstroke, dehydration and hypothermia and avoid drinking dirty water.

It is important for reporters to stay in close contact with colleagues back at the newsroom and to have a clear plan for what to do if anything goes wrong. Additionally, it is best to back up as much information as possible back in the newsroom in case information is lost.

Some key things for reporters to report from the scene are the number of casualties and types of injury; any damage to buildings and infrastructure (and an idea of the cost); what the scene looks like (the sights and sounds and even smells, along with what people there are doing; any rescue efforts and what is helping or hindering them.

It is useful to report the chronology of events to create an accurate picture of what has happened, and it is important to avoid laying the blame for any disaster without having strong reasons to do so.

Journalists can interview eyewitnesses, casualties and relief workers about what caused the problem, how and when it began, and what has happened since. Quotations from these sources can be highly compelling but journalists must remember aware that people may be scared, in shock or working in stressful, dangerous conditions.

Interviewees may have survived a trauma or may be related to people who have died, been injured or are missing so it is imperative for journalists to be sensitive and respectful during interviews and reporting. While it is better to name people rather than treating them as anonymous victims, journalists should avoid printing or broadcasting the identities of people who have been hurt or killed before their families know.

Aid agencies and emergency services depend on media coverage to raise awareness of the need for help, and journalists benefit from the cooperation of aid agency staff. But each side of this relationship can have very different expectations and it is important to be aware of this during a crisis.

People managing the response to a disaster might expect journalists to be there only to provide a public service and may not understand how the media works and that journalists have a job to do to. At the same time journalists should respect the need for relief workers to do their job. A quick introduction and a promise not to take up valuable time can help.

Online social networks such as Twitter or Ushahidi allow people to use mobile phones to share life-saving information during a crisis, and journalists can also use this tools to get a better picture of what is happening (see Using Social Media).

After the initial breaking-news phase of a disaster, journalists can focus on more detailed reporting about whether the disaster could have been prevented

and how its impacts will be dealt with. Were there, for instance, any early warning systems in place, did they work, and could they work better?

Long after a disaster strikes there will still be many stories to report. Journalists can revisit the scenes of disasters to find out what the lasting impacts have been, whether life is returning to normal and what — if any — lessons there are for the future.

For instance, when the Asian tsunami struck in 2004, coastal mangrove forests helped to protect some communities by acting as natural barriers that absorbed the energy of the tsunami's waves. This has prompted some countries to replant mangrove forests in areas where they had been cut down for coastal development.

Of course all of this implies that journalists can also do more to report on disaster-related issues before they happen. With climate change set to increase the number of extreme weather events, including floods, droughts and powerful storms such as hurricanes, this kind of journalism will become increasingly important.

Tips

These tips to keep in mind:

1. **KEEP YOUR COOL:** Disasters are stressful situations. After all, a disaster means something horrible has happened on a very large scale. Many of the people at the scene, especially victims, will be distraught. It's the reporter's job in such a situation to keep a cool, clear head.
2. **LEARN FAST:** Reporters covering disasters often have to take in a lot of new information very quickly. For instance, you may not know much about planes, but if you're suddenly called upon to help cover a plane crash, you're going to have to learn as much as you can — fast.
3. **TAKE DETAILED NOTES:** Take detailed notes about everything you learn, including things that seem insignificant. You never know when small details might become critical to your story.
4. **GET PLENTY OF DESCRIPTION:** Readers will want to know what the scene of the disaster looked like, sounded like, smelled like. Get the sights, sounds and smells in your notes. Think of yourself as a camera, recording every visual detail you can.
5. **FIND THE OFFICIALS IN CHARGE:** In the aftermath of a disaster there will usually be dozens of emergency responders on the scene — firefighters, police, EMTs, and so on. Find the person who's in charge of the emergency response. That official will have the big-picture overview of what's happening and will be a valuable source.
6. **GET EYEWITNESS ACCOUNTS:** Information from emergency authorities is great, but you need to also get quotes from people who saw what happened. Eyewitness accounts are invaluable for a disaster story.
7. **INTERVIEW SURVIVORS—IF POSSIBLE:** It's not always possible to interview survivors of a disaster immediately after the event. Often they're

being treated by EMTs or being debriefed by investigators. But if survivors are available, try your best to interview them.

But remember, disaster survivors have just survived a traumatic event. Be tactful and sensitive with your questions and general approach. And if they say they don't want to talk, respect their wishes.

8. **FIND THE HEROES:** In nearly every disaster there are heroes who emerge - people who bravely and selflessly jeopardize their own safety in order to help others. Interview them.

9. **GET THE NUMBERS:** Disaster stories are often about numbers - how many people were killed or injured, how much property was destroyed, how fast the plane was traveling, etc. Remember to gather these for your story, but only from reliable sources - the officials in charge at the scene.

10. **REMEMBER THE FIVE W'S AND THE H:** As you do your reporting, remember what's critical to any news story – the who, what, where, when, why and how.

Keeping those elements in mind will help to ensure that you gather all the information you need for your story.

• **IN DEPTH REPORTING LEGISLATION**

Parliament and its proceedings have always been the main interest of newspaper readers. Parliamentary reporting offers opportunities to the reporter to conduct first hand study of the practical working procedure, responsibilities, role and functions of parliament, their members, different officials, the offices which they hold and their biographies besides the working of government. He/she remains in touch with the parliamentarians who may become an important source of news. In parliamentary reporting, all the techniques, proceedings and requirements of political and court reporting are involved because it is highly technical and sensitive. It needs professional skills and there are chances that even an experienced reporter may misinterpret the arguments and the proceedings. He/she must, have access to legal parliamentary literature, reports, periodicals to improve his/her knowledge and skill. A parliamentary reporter should be well acquainted with the legislative procedure in both the Houses of parliament and could write reports of adjournment and privilege motions, as well as of questions hour, tea break discussions on private bills and proceedings of the Senate. A lot of information can be obtained through private dealings with the members of the parliament. Parliamentary report has to be composed in prevalent parliamentary terminology.

Parliament and State legislatures become major news centres when in session. The Government is bound to make all announcements in the house. Political news also comes from in and around the house in session as political parties express their views on various issues and the relative strength of various parties is tested in the house. There are moves and counter-moves by ruling and Opposition parties which find place in news columns.

A reporter should know the rules and procedures of Parliament. State legislatures follow similar rules and procedures with a slight difference here and there. During inter-session periods there are conferences of Presiding Officers of all the houses presided over by the Speaker of the Lok Sabha. This makes rules and procedures more or less uniform.

Under the Rules of Procedure Secretary-General has to cause to be prepared a full report of the proceedings of the House at each of its sittings. Everything said in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha is reported by the Official Reporters, who represent the acme of the shorthand writing profession. The entire proceedings which exceed a couple of hundred pages per day have to be made available for reference by Members by the next morning, except the portions which are specifically expunged by the Speaker or the Presiding Officer or ordered by him not to be recorded. The efficiency of the human hand combined with the latest processing techniques has made this quick reproduction of the proceedings possible.

The mode of parliamentary reporting has undergone various changes, before it reached its present verbatim form. In early days when the legislature functioned as a part of the executive, the proceedings exclusively dealing with matters of law were recorded in the Revenue Department of the East India Company between 1777 and 1835. A new series called 'Legislative' began to be recorded separately in 1835. However, this 'Legislative' series was maintained like the minutes of an ordinary meeting, and it indicated only the title of the legislation considered by the Council. However, the Official Gazette of the Government of India contained from 1860 brief reference to the legislative business transacted.

Since the proceedings were open to outsiders, it was felt necessary to release an authentic report of the proceedings of the Council for publication. The Secretary to the Council who was charged with the responsibility for the preparation of the report of the proceedings of the Council, would have found it difficult, unaided by shorthand, to keep pace with the continuous flow of oratory by Members. From 16 March 1864 portions of the proceedings began to appear in the direct style although in a summarised form. The rule for the preparation of the proceedings was amended in 1897 to provide for the preparation of full report of the proceedings instead of mere abstracts. The responsibility directly cast on the Secretary till then for the preparation of the report thus stood transferred to the high speed shorthand writers or reporters. Accordingly the abstracts were discontinued and instead verbatim reports were issued and also published in the Gazette. Thus, the personal touch of the Members was reflected in the proceedings and gave a foretaste of the vitality of the modern verbatim report. The right to ask questions, conceded in 1892, added further to the liveliness of the records.

In 1920 when the first legislature was in the offing, a decision was taken to publish its proceedings in a separate book form, to meet the likely increase in demand from the public. Simultaneously the title was changed from "Proceedings" to "Debates". This change continues to be in operation till today.

The Constitution provides for a bicameral Parliament, consisting of the President and two Houses, known as the Council of States (Rajya Sabha) and the House of the People (Lok Sabha).

Rajya Sabha

The Rajya Sabha consists of not more than 250 members. Of these, twelve are nominated by the President for their special knowledge or practical experience in such matters as literature, science, art and social service. The remaining seats are allocated to the various States and Union Territories, roughly in proportion to their population. Each State is, however, represented by at least one member. The representatives of each State are elected by the elected members of the Legislative Assembly of the State in accordance with the system of proportional representation by means of a single transferable vote. The minimum age for membership of the House is 30 years.

The Rajya Sabha was constituted for the first time on April 3, 1952. It is a permanent body not subject to dissolution, but one-third of the members retire every second year by rotation and are replaced by newly elected members. The Rajya Sabha at present has 244 members.

Lok Sabha

The Lok Sabha is composed of representatives of the people chosen by direct election on the basis of adult suffrage. The maximum strength of the House envisaged by the Constitution is now 547—up to 525 members to represent the States, up to 20 members to represent the Union Territories and not more than two members of the Anglo-Indian community to be nominated by the President if in his opinion that community, is not adequately represented in the House. The Total elective membership is distributed among the States in such a way that the ratio between the number of seats allotted to each State and the population of the State is, so far as practicable, the same for all states. The qualifying age for membership of the Lok Sabha is 25 years.

The Lok Sabha, unless dissolved sooner, continues for five years from the date appointed for its first meeting and expiry of the period of five years operates till dissolution of the House. However, while a proclamation of emergency is in operation this period may be extended by Parliament by law for a period not exceeding one year at a time and not extending in any case beyond a period of six months after the proclamation has ceased to operate.

Following the first general election held in the country in 1952, the First Lok Sabha met in May 1952. Thereafter, nine general elections have been held. Elections were last held in December 1989 to constitute the Ninth Lok Sabha. The strength of the Lok Sabha is 544 (525 elected representatives of States and 17 elected representatives of Union Territories) and two representatives of the Anglo-Indian community nominated by the President.

Functions : As in other parliamentary democracies, Parliament in India has the cardinal functions of legislation, over-seeing of administration, passing of budget and ventilation of public grievances.

The scheme of distribution of powers between the Centre and the States, followed in the Constitution of India, emphasises in many ways the general predominance of Parliament in the legislative field. Apart from the wide range of subjects allotted to it in the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution, even in normal times Parliament can, under certain circumstances, assume legislative power over a subject falling within the sphere exclusively reserved for the State.

Further, in times of grave emergency when the security of India or any part thereof is threatened by war or external aggression or armed rebellion and a proclamation of emergency is made by the President, Parliament acquires the power to make laws for the whole or any part of the territory of India with respect to any of the matters enumerated in the States List. Similarly, in the event of the failure of the constitutional machinery in a State, the powers of the legislature of that State become exercisable by or under the authority of Parliament.

Besides the power to legislate on a very wide field, the Constitution vests in the Union Parliament the constituent power or the power to initiate amendment of the Constitution.

Under the Constitution, the Council of Ministers at the Centre is collectively responsible to the Lok Sabha. One of the effective methods by which Parliament exercises check over the executive is through its control over finance. This financial power in the hands of Parliament helps in securing executive accountability. Besides, the procedures of Parliament in India afford ample opportunities for the enforcement of ministerial responsibility, for assessing and influencing governmental policies as well as for ventilating public grievances. The procedure of questions (with possibilities of supplementaries and, in the case of inconclusive or unsatisfactory answer half-an-hour discussions, calling attention, short duration discussion), enable information to be elicited and attention focussed on various aspects of governmental activities.

The more significant occasions for review of administration are provided by the discussions on the motion of thanks on the President's address, the budget, including demands for grants of various ministries, and departments and proposals to raise funds to meet the expenditure. These apart, specific matters may be discussed through motions on matters of urgent public importance, private members' resolutions and other substantive motions. In extreme cases, government can be censured or a motion of no-confidence moved against it. Along with these, a close and continuous check on governmental activities is exercised through a comprehensive system of parliamentary committees.

Relative Role of the Two Houses : As between the two Houses, the Lok Sabha has supremacy in financial matters. It is also the House to which the council of ministers, drawn from both the Houses, is collectively responsible. On the other hand, the Rajya Sabha has a special role in enabling Parliament to legislate on a State subject if it is necessary in the national interest: It has a similar power in regard to the creation of an All-India Service common to the

Union and the States. In other respects the Constitution proceeds on a theory of equality of status of the two Houses.

Disagreement between the two Houses on amendments to a bill is resolved by both the Houses meeting in a joint sitting where questions are decided by majority vote. However, this provision of joint sitting does not apply to money bills and constitution amendment bills.

The Presiding Officers : In the Lok Sabha, both the presiding officers—the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker—are elected, by the House. In the Rajya Sabha, the Vice-President of India is the ex-officio Chairman of the House. He is elected by the members of an electoral college, consisting of the members of both the Houses of Parliament in accordance with the system of proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote. The Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha is, however, elected by the members of the Rajya Sabha from amongst themselves.

The Constitution of India makes certain specific provisions in regard to the office of the Speaker, Lok Sabha, laying particular emphasis on the importance and the independent character of the office in the context of a parliamentary polity. His salary and allowances are charged on the consolidated fund of India.

The Speaker of the Lok Sabha enjoys vast authority and powers both under the Constitution and the rules as well as inherently. As the conventional head of the Lok Sabha and, as its principal spokesman, the Speaker represents its collective voice. He is guardian of the rights and privileges of the House, its committees and members. It is through the Speaker that the decisions of the House are communicated to outside individuals and authorities; he issues warrants to execute the orders of the House wherever necessary, and delivers reprimands on behalf of the House. Within the precincts of the House, his authority is supreme. His conduct cannot be discussed except on a substantive motion.

The committees of the House function under his overall supervision and control. The chairman of any parliamentary committee is nominated by him. Any procedural problem in the functioning of committees is referred to him for directions. Committees like the business advisory committee, the general purpose committee and the rules committee, however, work directly under his chairmanship.

He enjoys a special position in so far as the relations between the two Houses of Parliament in certain matters are concerned. He certifies money bills and decides finally what are “money” matters by reason of the Lok Sabha’s overriding powers in financial matters. It is the Speaker of the Lok Sabha who presides over joint sittings called in the event of a disagreement between the two Houses on a legislative measure.

In his overriding concern to see that the Lok Sabha fulfils its rightful role as the prime centre for decision-making and policy formulation, and a major mediating force in the country’s democratic policy, the Speaker has to strive to reach a position of dynamic balance in which the forum and the needs of orderly

debate and efficient dispatch of the ever-growing volume of public business are harmonized.

Sessions : Normally three sessions are held in a year:

- (i) Budget Session (February-May);
- (ii) Autumn Session (July-August); and
- (iii) Winter Session (November-December).

In the case of the Rajya Sabha, however, the Budget Session is split up in two sessions and so the Rajya Sabha has four sessions.

President's Address : The Constitution enjoins that the President shall address both the Houses of Parliament assembled together, at the commencement of the first session after each general election of the Lok Sabha and also at the commencement of the first session of each year and inform Parliament of the causes of its summons. The address contains a review of the activities and achievements of the government during the previous year and their policy with regard to important internal and current international problems, besides a brief account of the programme of government business for the session.

The President's address is a solemn occasion. The President arrives at the Parliament House where he is received at the gate by the presiding officers and secretaries-general of both Houses and conducted in a formal procession to the high-domed Central Hall of Parliament. As the procession enters the Hall, the Marshal announces the arrival of the President, and the members rise in their places. With the President reaching his seat on the dais, a band positioned in the lobby of the Central Hall to the right of the President, plays the national anthem. During this time everyone keeps standing. Thereafter, as the President takes his seat, the presiding officers occupy and members resume their seats. The President then addresses the members. After the conclusion of the address, the President rises from his seat followed by the members when the national anthem is played again, whereafter the President leaves the Hall in a procession in the same way as he arrived. The entire ceremony is marked by utmost decorum and dignity befitting the occasion.

Break for Questions

The first hour of every sitting is normally devoted to questions. Questions are of three types. A starred question is the one to which a member desires an oral answer in the House. Any member may ask a supplementary question germane to the main one, while it is being answered. In the case of an unstarred question, a written answer is laid on the table by the concerned minister. A short notice question is the one which relates to a matter of urgent public importance and can be asked with shorter notice than the normal period prescribed for a question. For questions other than short notice questions, the period of notice prescribed is not less than ten and not more than twenty-one clear days.

Closely connected with questions procedure is the provision or half-an-hour discussion. Under this procedure a member may give notice for raising a

discussion on a matter of sufficient public importance which has been the subject of a recent question, oral or written, and the answer to which needs elucidation on a matter of fact. Such discussions are held during the last half an hour of the sitting on specified days of the week.

Besides questions, there are various other means by which members may bring up matters of urgent and current public importance before Parliament.

Call Attention Notices : Calling attention notices, essentially an Indian procedural innovation, enable a member to draw the attention of the government to an important development of public interest and to elicit government's views or stand thereon. A calling attention notice may be admitted straightaway by the Speaker at his discretion and the government have to come forward with a statement. The matter is normally raised after the question hour. Although there can be no debate at the time the statement is made, the members concerned may raise points for clarification and elucidation by the minister. There is no bar also to a notice being given for a debate on a subsequent date on a matter contained in the statement. This procedural device, without the implied censure of the treasury benches normally associated with an adjournment motion, is popular with members on all sides of the House.

Raising of Matter Under Rule 377 : A member who wishes to bring to the notice of the House any matter, which is not a point of order and cannot otherwise be raised through any other procedural device, can do so by giving a notice for the same with a full text thereof. On permission being granted by the Speaker for raising the matter under Rule 377, the member concerned may make a brief and specific statement in the House relating to one matter only without any allegations of a defamatory or incriminatory nature. The Speaker in such cases does not direct the minister to make a statement in response to a matter concerned. The minister may, if he so desires, make a statement on the subject with the permission of the Speaker.

Motions for Discussion, No-day-yet-named and for Short Duration : Members may raise discussion on a specific matter of public importance by giving a notice of a motion popularly termed as No-day-yet-named motion. It is so worded as to record the decision of the House on the subject. A short duration discussion provides an opportunity for discussion of a situation or a statement, but there is no question of putting it to the vote of the House.

After admission of notices by the Speaker, any one of these motions may be selected by the business advisory committee for discussion in the House and thereafter, it is included in the list of business. The mover of the motion in the case of a no-day-yet-named motion has the right to reply in addition to the privilege of initiating the discussion; no such right of reply is available to the member raising a discussion for short duration. The minister intervenes towards the end to clarify the government's stand. Experience has shown that the members make full use of these alternative procedures for raising discussion on matters of current public importance.

Adjournment Motion : The primary object of adjournment motion is to set aside the normal business of the House and take up for discussion an urgent matter of public importance. A motion for an adjournment of the business of the House for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance can be moved with the consent of the Speaker and leave of the House. Normally, no business not included in the list of business can be taken up in the House. The adjournment motion is an extraordinary procedure.

The Speaker may, give his consent for moving an adjournment motion if he is satisfied that the matter sought to be raised is definite, urgent and of public importance and there is a failure on the part of the central government to perform the duties enjoined on it by the Constitution and the law.

The question of public importance is decided on merits in each individual case. The refusal to give consent is at the absolute discretion of the Speaker and he is not bound to give reasons.

After leave of the House to the moving of an adjournment motion has been granted and time fixed for its discussion, the Speaker allows the motion to be moved at the appointed hour which is normally at 1600 hours. The time allotted for discussion is two and a half hours unless the debate concludes earlier. Private members' resolutions: Specific matter may be discussed also through private members' resolutions and other substantive motions. In an extreme case, the government can be censured on a motion of no-confidence moved against it.

A bill, that is draft of a legislative proposal, has to pass through the following stages before it becomes an Act of Parliament.

First Reading : A bill can be introduced in either House by a minister or by a private member, depending upon whether it is a government bill or a private member's bill. Money bills, or financial bills attracting the provisions of article 117(1) of the Constitution can be introduced in the Lok Sabha only.

On the day appointed for introduction of a bill, the minister (or member) in charge of the bill moves for leave of the House to introduce the bill. On leave being granted by the House, the bill is introduced. If the motion is opposed, after brief statements by the member who opposes the motion and the member who moved the motion, the question is put to the vote of the House.

Second Reading : The second reading consists of consideration of the bill, which is in two stages. First, a general discussion on the bill as a whole takes place, when the principles underlying the bill are discussed. At this stage it is open to the House to decide to refer the bill to a select committee of the House or a joint committee of the two Houses or to circulate the bill for the purpose of eliciting opinion thereon or straight away take it into consideration.

When a bill is referred to a select or joint committee, the committee gives it a close and detailed scrutiny clause-by-clause and makes such amendments therein as it deems necessary. Where necessary, the committee may also take evidence of associations and public bodies representing the affected interests or of experts who have special knowledge of matters having a bearing on the

measure before it. Thereafter, the committee submits its report to the House, which considers the bill as reported by the committee.

The second stage of the second reading consists of clause by clause consideration of the bill as introduced, or as reported by select/joint committee, as the case may be.

Third Reading : When all the clauses and schedules, if any, of the bill have been considered and voted upon by the House, the member-in-charge moves that the bill be passed. At this stage, debate is confined to arguments either in support of the bill or its rejection, without referring to the details thereof further than is absolutely necessary. Only formal, verbal or consequential amendments are allowed at this stage.

Bill in the other House : After the bill is passed by one House, it is sent to the other House where again it passes through similar stages.

In the case of a money bill, the Rajya Sabha can only recommend amendments therein and return the bill to the Lok Sabha within fourteen days of its receiving the bill. The Lok Sabha may accept or reject any or all of the recommendations of the Rajya Sabha. If the Lok Sabha rejects any of the recommendations of the bill, it is deemed to have been passed by both the Houses. If the Rajya Sabha does not return the bill within fourteen days it is deemed to have been passed by both Houses in the form in which it was passed by the Lok Sabha.

Joint Sitting : In the event of final disagreement between the two Houses on a bill other than a money bill and a constitution amendment bill, or if more than six months elapse from the date of receipt of the bill by the other house without the bill being passed by it, the President may call a joint sitting of the two Houses to resolve the deadlock. At the joint sitting the bill may be passed by a majority of the total number of members of both the Houses present and voting.

Assent of the President : When a bill is passed by both Houses, it is presented to the President for assent. The President may give his assent or withhold his assent to a bill, or he can return the bill (provided it is not a money bill) with his recommendations for reconsideration. If the Houses pass the bill again with or without amendments, the bill has to be assented to by the President. In the case of a constitution amendment bill, the President is, however, bound to give his assent.

Any matter requiring the decision of the House is decided by means of a question put by the Chair on a motion made by a member. At the conclusion of a debate, the Chair puts the question to the House. Those in favour of the motion are invited to say 'Aye' and those against to say 'No'; and then the Chair says 'I think the Ayes (or the Noes, as the case may be) have it'. If the opinion of the Chair as to the decision goes unchallenged, he repeats twice; "The Ayes (or the Noes, as the case may be) have it"; and the question before the House is determined accordingly. If the opinion of the Chair is challenged by any member or member exclaiming 'The Noes (Or Ayes) have it', the Chair directs that the lobbies be cleared.

On the Chair directing that the lobbies be cleared, the division bells are rung. When bells ring continuously, it indicates that a division is to take place in the Lok Sabha. (When bells ring intermittently, it indicates that a division is to take place in the Rajya Sabha. After three and a half minutes the Chair puts the question a second time and declares whether in his opinion, the 'Ayes' or the 'Noes' have it. In case opinion so declared is again challenged he shall direct that the votes be recorded by division.

Divisions : There are three methods of holding a division that is, by operating the automatic vote recorder, by distributing 'Aye' and 'No' slips in the House or by members going into the lobbies.

In the case of recording of vote through the automatic vote recorder, members cast their votes from their seats, respectively allotted to them, by pressing according to their choice 'Aye'/'No'/'Abstain' push buttons provided for the purpose. After the result of the voting appears on the indicator boards any member who may not have been able to cast his vote by pressing the button on account of any reason considered sufficient by the Chair, may with the Chair's permission, have his vote recorded. Similarly, any member having by mistake pressed the wrong button, may also be allowed by the Chair to correct his mistake. The result of automatic voting is thereafter declared by the Chair.

When the Chair directs that votes would be recorded on slips, each member is supplied by the division clerks, at his seat, an 'Aye' or 'No' or 'abstain' slip according to the choice indicated by him. On these slips, members are required to record their votes by writing their division numbers and signing them at the appropriate place. After the members have recorded their votes these are counted by the officers at the table and the totals of 'Ayes', 'Noes' and 'Abstentions' are presented to the Chair. The result of the division is then announced by the Chair.

Another alternative procedure for division is that members may be asked, to record their votes by going into the lobbies. This procedure is not much in vogue now.

Constitution Amendment

A bill seeking to amend the Constitution may be brought forward by a minister or a private member. Where the bill is from a private member, the bill, apart from being subject to the normal rules applicable to private members' bills, has also to be examined and recommended by the committee on private members' bills and resolutions, before a motion for leave to introduce it is included in the list of business.

Barring the requirement of a special majority (majority of the total membership of the House and a majority of not less than two-thirds of the members of the House present and voting) for its adoption, and in certain cases, of ratification by the legislatures of not less than one-half of the States, a bill for amendment of the Constitution follows practically the same legislative process as any ordinary legislation.

The Budget : The annual financial statement laid before both the Houses of Parliament embodies the estimated receipts and expenditure of the

Government of India in respect of the ensuing financial year. In India the “financial year” commences on the first of April.

The estimates of expenditure are split up into what are called “demands for grants”. These demands are arranged ministry-wise and they generally cover the requirements of each administrative service. Under each demand the estimates are sub-divided according to the categories of expenditure included in the demand.

In India, the budget is presented to Parliament in two parts: the general budget and the railway budget. The general budget is presented to the Lok Sabha by the finance minister usually at 5 p. m. on the last working day in February, that is, about a month before the commencement of the budget year. The budget speech of the finance minister is in two parts. One part deals with general economic and financial situation in the country and the other part relates to taxation proposals. A copy of the budget is laid on the table of the Rajya Sabha. The railway budget is presented by the railway minister about a week or ten days earlier.

The budget is discussed in two stages in the Lok Sabha. First, there is the general discussion when only the broad outlines of the budget and the principles and policies underlying it are discussed. Discussion and voting on the demands for grants of each ministry is taken up thereafter.

The Lok Sabha has the power to assent to, or refuse to give assent to any demand or even to reduce the amount of any grant sought by government. In the Rajya Sabha there is only a general discussion on the budget. It does not vote on the demands for grants.

Vote on Account : Before the budget for the whole year is passed, a special provision is made, by which the government is enabled by Parliament to have finances, sufficient for running the administration for part of the year. This provision is called ‘vote on account’.

The Finance Bill : The finance bill, which seeks to give effect to the government’s taxation proposals is introduced in the Lok Sabha immediately after the presentation of the budget. The provisions in the bill relating to duties of customs or excise, etc., come into effect immediately with the introduction of the bill by virtue of a declaration under the provisional Collection of Taxes Act, usually included in the bill.

The Appropriation Bill : After the voting on the demands for grants has been completed the appropriation bill is introduced. The appropriation bill seeks to authorise the government to draw monies from the “consolidated fund of India” to the extent shown in the budget passed by Parliament.

Supplementary/excess Grants : No expenditure in excess of the sums authorised in the budget by Parliament can be incurred without the sanction of Parliament. Whenever a need arises to incur extra expenditure, a supplementary estimate is presented to Parliament. If any money has been spent on any service during a financial year in excess of the amounts granted for that service and for that year, the minister of finance/railways presents a demand for excess grant. The procedure followed in Parliament in regard to

supplementary/excess grants is more or less the same as is adopted in the case of the expenditure estimates included in the general budget.

Parliamentary Committees : In India as elsewhere, the work done by Parliament is not only varied in nature, but considerable in volume. The time at its disposal is limited. It cannot, therefore, give close consideration to all the legislative and other matters that come up before it. A good deal of its business is, therefore, transacted in the committees.

Both Houses of Parliament have a similar committee structure, with a few exceptions. Their appointment, terms of office, functions and procedure for conducting their business, are also more or less similar and are regulated under the provisions of the rules made by the two Houses under article 118(1) of the Constitution.

Broadly, parliamentary committees are of two kinds—Standing Committees and Ad hoc Committees. The former are elected or appointed every year or periodically and their work goes on, more or less, on a continuous basis. The latter are appointed on an ad hoc basis as need arises, and they cease to exist, as soon as they complete the task assigned to them and have submitted their reports.

Standing Committees : Among the standing committees, the three financial committees—committee on estimates, public accounts and public undertakings—constitute a distinct group and they keep an unremitting vigil over governmental spending and performance. (While members of the Rajya Sabha are associated with the committees on public accounts and public undertakings, the members of the committee on estimates are drawn entirely from the Lok Sabha). The control exercised by these committees is of a continuous nature. They gather information through questionnaires, memoranda from representative non-official organisations and knowledgeable individuals, on-the-spot studies of organisations, oral examination of non-official and official witnesses. Between them the financial committees examine and report on a fairly large area of the multifarious governmental activities at the Centre.

These committees have adequate procedures to ensure that their recommendations are given due consideration by the government. The progress in the implementation of the recommendations as well as any unresolved differences between the committees and the government are set out in 'action taken reports' which are presented to the House from time to time.

Providing Context and Analysis is Essential

Unlike breaking news reporting, parliamentary reporting usually requires sufficient background knowledge to make sense of proceedings. That's because the parliamentary reporter or correspondent is expected to provide adequate context and analysis as well as being able to put developments into perspective.

- 1: Respect the power of words

The word parliament comes from "parlement" - a word in Norman French meaning a conversation or a "talking". In written European records, it has been used for more than 800 years to describe gatherings to talk about affairs of state.

The forerunner of modern parliaments met in 1265 in Westminster, England. By tradition, opposing parties sat two swords length apart - they had to resolve their differences with words, not weapons. Parliament, therefore, is all about words, argument, debate. The parliamentary reporter has the special responsibility of reporting those debates to the public.

2: Reflect the importance of parliament

Parliaments make and modify the laws of the land. In most parliamentary systems, the executive needs the support of parliament to stay in power. A vote of no confidence in the government will usually cause it to fall. Parliament is also an important stage for the testing of arguments. And as with any stage, it can throw up moments of great drama. The parliamentary reporter witnesses, summarises and reflects all of this to the public. And if, for whatever reason, parliament becomes impotent, it is just as important to reflect that.

3: Know the local laws

Different legislative bodies have different rules concerning access, privilege, use of cameras and recorders and so on. Parliaments, perhaps understandably, tend to take a severe view of anyone who does not respect their rules. Familiarise yourself with these rules, otherwise you may find yourself in contempt of parliament.

4: The importance of getting it right

At the most obvious level, check spellings, titles, party allegiances, etc. But it is equally important to quote people correctly and summarise their arguments fairly. The public will make up their minds about the big issues of the day partly informed by what they read and hear and see in the media. Make sure they have all the information they need.

5: Be clear and comprehensible

Your audience should be able to understand every word and every sentence you write, immediately and without possibility of confusion. This means, in the first place, that you must be clear about what you want to say. Then you must say it simply and without ambiguity. Choose your words carefully and eliminate any possibility of misunderstanding. As the 20th-century journalist, Cyril Connolly, wrote: "Literature is the art of writing something that will be read twice; journalism what will be grasped at once."

6: Keep your own views out of it

A good reporter is open-minded and determined to give fair treatment to all the arguments he or she witnesses. A bad reporter lets his or her own views interfere. This is particularly true in reporting political controversy. It is not for the parliamentary reporter to decide which argument is the strongest. Instead, the good reporter lays out all the arguments, fairly and accurately, and lets the audience decide for itself.

7: The political context

Politicians always want to be presented in the best possible light. They will brief journalists to try to influence the way something is reported. For example, after the weekly Prime Minister's Questions in the British Parliament, the press spokesmen for the party leaders will give journalists their own interpretation of who "won" and who "lost" the exchanges. Such briefings can be useful, but they should be treated with caution. Don't let "spin" distort your reporting of what actually happened.

8: Make it interesting

Parliamentary proceedings can sometimes be dull. But they are important. So make them interesting. Capture the attention of your audience. Write clearly and simply. Engage interest with your first sentence and make the report flow naturally from there. The press fought hard, over centuries, for the right to report on the proceedings of parliaments, so don't waste their sacrifice.

9: Avoid exclamation marks!

Print journalists sometimes call exclamation marks "screamers". They should be used very sparingly, if at all. The exclamation mark suggests that something is dramatic. But either the thing you're describing is genuinely dramatic, in which case you don't need an exclamation mark; or it is not dramatic, in which case, adding an exclamation mark will not make it so. "Prime Minister resigns!" is a worse headline than "Prime Minister resigns".

10: Keep a careful note

However good your memory, keep an accurate note of any parliamentary debate that you are reporting. Keep it somewhere safe. It might be needed later if your story is disputed.

Reporting : A Mandatory Requirement

The Rules of Procedure require that the Secretary-General has to arrange for the preparation of a full report of the proceedings of each sitting of the House. Accordingly, everything said in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha—every question, remark and speech—is meticulously recorded by the Parliamentary Reporters, who represent the acme of the shorthand-writing profession. However, certain words or expressions, which are specifically expunged or ordered not to be recorded by the Speaker or the Presiding Officer, do not form part of the record.

The entire proceedings of the day's sitting, comprising a couple of hundred pages, have to be edited, compiled and made available by the next morning. This remarkable feat is accomplished to perfection by a combination of professional skill of the highest order and excellent team-work aided by modern technology.

Origin of Reporting

The mode of Parliamentary reporting has undergone various changes before it reached its present verbatim form. In early days, namely from 1777 to 1835, when the Legislature functioned as a part of the Executive, the proceedings in the then Council of the Governor-General of India exclusively dealing with

matters of law, were recorded in the Revenue Department of the East India Company. In 1835 the proceedings concerning the legislative business began to be recorded separately in the form of minutes, which indicated only the title of the legislation considered by the Council. However, from 1860 the Official Gazette of the Government of India contained brief references to the legislative business transacted in the Council.

When the proceedings of the then Legislative Council were thrown open to the outsiders in 1854, a decision was taken to release an authentic report of its proceedings for publication. It is obvious that the Secretary to the Council, who was charged with the responsibility for the preparation of the report, would have found it difficult, without the aid of shorthand-writers, to keep pace with the continuous flow of oratory of Members. Apart from the abstracts of the proceedings being published, portions of the proceedings began to appear in direct speech, although in a summarized form from 16 March, 1864.

Entry of Reporter

The Rule pertaining to the preparation of the proceedings was amended in 1897 to provide for the preparation of a full report of the proceedings instead of mere abstracts. The responsibility for the preparation of the report cast on the Secretary till then was thus transferred to the high speed shorthand-writers or Reporters. Consequently, the abstracts were discontinued and verbatim reports were issued and also published in the Gazette. The individual style of Members was then reflected in the proceedings, which gave a foretaste of the authenticity and vitality of the modern verbatim report. The right to ask questions, conceded in 1892, added to the liveliness and readability of the reports. In 1920 as the first bicameral legislature under the Government of India Act of 1919 was in the offing, the question of publication of its proceedings in separate book form was examined. It was considered that the proceedings of a popular Legislature would be in greater demand and it was, therefore, decided to publish them in book form for sale to the public. Simultaneously, it was also decided to change the title from 'Proceedings' to 'Debates'. Today, the Official Report of the House of the People is issued under the title "Lok Sabha Debates".

The Job & its Requirements

Reporting in the Parliament is a highly specialized knowledge-intensive job carried out under great pressure, completed within a fixed time-frame and continued for long hours without a break. The twin tasks of reporting, namely writing shorthand at high speed and transcription of shorthand notes, demand the utmost concentration and intellectual effort. Needless to say, physical stamina, mental alertness and quick reflexes are the essential attributes of a Reporter's job, without which he cannot deal with situations like the one which usually prevails in the House immediately after the end of the Question Hour. A statistical analysis has revealed that a majority of the Members of the Lok Sabha speak at speeds ranging between 120 and 150 words per minute, some of them go up to 180 words per minute and a few reach the speed of 180 to 200 words per minute. Reporters must, therefore, possess a speed of 180-200 words

per minute in shorthand along with a comprehensive grasp of the language and an encyclopaedic general knowledge, so that they can perform their duties with confidence.

Reporters at Work

Reporters record the proceedings singly in relays or turns of five minutes each. Since the floor language is normally either English or Hindi, there is always an English and a Hindi Reporter on duty in the Chamber for taking down verbatim the proceedings of the House.

After his turn each Reporter goes through any portion of the notes that may have been 'tough' writing. In case of doubt, he checks up his notes with the tape-recorded version which is available for checking after every ten minutes, before going in for transcription of the proceedings.

Till the end of the Budget Session, 1993, the Reporters used to transcribe the proceedings straight on stencils. From the Monsoon Session, 1993, computers were introduced in the Reporters Branch. Since then proceedings both of the House as well as those of the Committees are fed into the computers.

As the Reporters complete their transcription, they pass it on to the Director/Chief Parliamentary Reporter, who with the assistance of two supervisory Senior Parliamentary Reporters, monitors the work of Reporters, coordinates the transcripts of the various reporting turns, does the necessary editing, attends to the procedural formalities to be complied with and makes the transcripts as perfect as possible.

At the end of the day, after editing, amalgamation of day's proceedings and pagination, one master copy with the contents pages is prepared. That master copy is sent to the Distribution Branch for multigraphing and issue.

The work of multigraphing and making complete sets of debates is carried out at top speed. Copies of the multigraphed debates are supplied to different sections of the Secretariat and also to the Ministries for reference. Members/Ministers are supplied with a copy of their speeches or observations for confirmation or correction of inaccuracies which might have occurred during the process of reporting. Some copies are also kept in Parliament Library for consultation by Members.

Compilation of Official Report

Until early 1990s the Reporters used to transcribe the proceedings on stencils from which copies were made through cyclostyling. The Monsoon Session of 1993 was marked by the installation of computers in the Reporters Branch. Since then the entire process of transcription and compilation of the proceedings has been fully computerized, and the proceedings are also placed on the official website of Parliament of India (<http://parliamentofindia.nic.in>) The preparation of the Official Report is a complex operation demanding both precision and speed. As soon as Reporters complete their transcription, they pass on the draft print-outs to the Chief Parliamentary Reporter. The latter, with the assistance of Supervisory Senior Parliamentary Reporters, carefully scrutinizes the transcripts, checks their continuity, verifies the texts as well as

the disposal of Motions, Clauses and Amendments etc., carries out necessary editing and corrections and makes sure that every segment of the proceedings is in conformity with the prescribed forms and procedures. This elaborate exercise in 'quality control' is aimed at making the Official Report absolutely flawless. When all transcripts have been examined and finally approved, they are amalgamated and page-numbered to form an unabridged, continuous and factual chronicle of the proceedings of the day's sitting. This compilation, together with contents pages, is then despatched for multigraphing and distribution. Copies of multigraphed Debates are made available to various Branches of the Lok Sabha Secretariat as also the concerned Ministries for reference. A few copies are also placed in the Library for the convenience of the Members. The transcript of every speech delivered, question asked and interruption made by a Member is sent to him for confirmation or correction of inaccuracies, if any.

Verbatim Report : An Important Document

The Verbatim reports of the proceedings of the Parliament are not a mere narration of Questions, Adjournment Motions, Bills and Resolutions, etc. As a matter of fact, they are a rich source of contemporary history. They provide detailed information on all matters touching the life of a citizen. They bring to light the political, economic and social conditions of even the remotest parts of the country. Besides, they serve as a mirror of the hopes and aspirations, concerns and apprehensions of the nation as voiced by its chosen representatives.

The verbatim report entitled "Lok Sabha Debates" is issued in two parts : Part I contains Questions and Answers and Part II contains the rest of the proceedings. The printed version is available about two months after the date of the sitting. Its copies can be had from the Sales Section of the Lok Sabha Secretariat or from the authorized agents for Government publications on payment.

Speed Range of Members' Speeches

How do the Reporters cope up with the varying speeds of the Members' speeches? A statistical analysis of the speed of Members in Lok Sabha revealed that a majority of them speak at speeds ranging between 120 and 150 words per minute. Some, of course, go upto 180 words and a few average as high as 190 to 200 words. The Official Reporters must, therefore, possess a speed of 180 to 200 words per minute so that the speeches may be well within their range.

The Question Hour is a great challenge even for the most experienced Reporter. In recording its proceedings he has to understand the details of some dry, technical subject, or comprehend unfamiliar names or hurriedly-quoted figures. The supplementary questions and answers, shot forth and back in quick succession, fly like dry leaves in a summer storm. Question-time is one of the most interesting aspects of Parliamentary proceedings, but to the Reporter engaged in recording it, it is a swift race to note down every word of what is said, and, what is equally important, also to record the names of the Members who ask the supplementaries from different parts of the House.

A Reporter has to have mental alertness of a very high order, without which he cannot deal with situations like the one which usually prevails in the House immediately after the close of the Question Hour. The Reporter has also got to possess enough physical endurance to face the increased workload when the House sits through the day. He weaves into the web of his memory all that he heard at the time of writing and producing the fine tapestry therewith of the speech he had covered. If there could be the most intense concentration, he had it at the time of writing. His motto is "When in doubt, don't leave out, but find out". The Hansard Reporter in India richly deserves the reputation for reliability.

The preparation of the computerised version of the Official Report is a process demanding the two opposites of accuracy and expedition. The Reporters in Parliament have been entrusted with the very important responsibility of producing an accurate verbatim of the proceedings of the House within a few hours of the adjournment of the House for the day. These are issued in two parts--Part I containing the Questions and Answers, and Part II containing proceedings other than Questions and Answers.

The verbatim reports of the proceedings of the House are a rich source of contemporary history. They provide an authentic and detailed picture of the work transacted by Parliament as against the newspaper reports which give only a gist of the work done. While the verbatim reports are multigraphed for immediate reference, they are later printed both in English and in Hindi so that they are available for sale to the general public, besides serving as permanent record of the proceedings of the House. Those who want to buy copies of the printed debates may do so from the Sales Section of the Lok Sabha Secretariat or from the authorised agents for Government publications.

• IN DEPTH REPORTING COURTS

Court reporters may conduct business within a courtroom setting, but just as many are found in other settings. This is because court reporters, who are educated and trained to record and transcribe verbatim, are in demand in a number of settings and for a number of purposes, from broadcast closed captioning and captioning services for the deaf or hard-of-hearing at live events, to legal depositions and shareholder meetings.

A court reporter is a professional who is most often licensed and/or certified to record proceedings using a stenotype machine. Through a comprehensive post-secondary court reporting program, reporters are able to capture spoken words in a phonetic code on a stenotype machine, with each line of characters representing a sound or syllable. From there the court reporter (or dedicated transcriber) translates the code into written text to produce a final transcript.

Court reporters working in realtime situations connect their stenotype machines to a computer, which then translates the phonetic code and displays it on a screen.

Beyond stenography, which is the term used for using a stenotype machine to provide verbatim transcripts, some court reporters engage in voice writing, which is the process of echoing the spoken words of a proceeding into a special,

mask-like device that is connected to a computer. As the court reporter speaks into the machine, the computer software translates the spoken word into a transcription, which is then reviewed by the court reporter upon the conclusion of the proceeding.

Court reporters, in general, must:

- Achieve an expert shorthand speed (usually about 225 wpm)
- Be proficient in realtime writing and computer-aided transcription (CAT)
- Be proficient in English grammar, spelling and punctuation
- Have an excellent understanding of legal principles and medical terminology
- Possess excellent interpersonal communication skills
- Have an understanding and appreciation of legal and business ethics
- Possess a high level of professionalism

Court Reporter

Court reporters — often referred to as stenographers or short hand reporters — are the professionals called upon to ensure that all spoken words and gestures of a proceeding are recorded to produce an accurate transcript. These courtroom professionals, who are often referred to as guardians of the record, must be impartial, responsible, and reliable, and they must be properly educated, trained, and certified to expertly perform their job.

With outstanding employment and salary potential, it's no wonder many are pursuing careers in court reporting and stenography. But before embarking on a career as a court reporter, candidates must complete a comprehensive program in court reporting, and, in many states, satisfy requirements for licensure or certification.

Standard Requirements Among Court Reporters

While job descriptions for court reporters will, of course, depend on the industry in which they work, they often have very similar standard requirements, including:

Court reporters must have proficient knowledge of:

- Principles, practices, methods, and techniques of court shorthand reporting
- Clerical and legal recordkeeping practices and procedures
- Legal, medical and related technical terminology
- Advanced spelling, punctuation, vocabulary and grammar skills
- The English language

Court reporters must have the ability to:

- Operate a stenographic machine at 200 wpm
- Read back verbatim records
- Work independently

- Perform legal clerical work with a high degree of accuracy and speed

Court reporters must be able to successfully:

- Follow oral and written directions
- Remain seated for long periods of time
- Concentrate for long periods of time
- Communicate effectively in writing and orally
- Establish and maintain working relationships with coworkers, supervisors, and members of the public
- Operate a variety of equipment, including transcription machines, computer terminals, audio equipment, and printers

Typical Court Reporter Duties

A court reporter within a courtroom or legal setting must be prepared to:

- Attend courtroom proceedings and other proceedings to make verbatim official recordings and to record formal and/or informal meetings
- Read back transcripts during trial and courtroom proceedings
- Prepare transcripts according to standardized formats
- Review and certify the accuracy of printed transcripts
- File transcripts with the county clerk in a timely manner
- Review court calendars and making arrangements for other court reporters to provide services when needed
- Provide administrative and court management support, as needed
- Take court notes during hearings to note significant events and to locate and present prior testimony
- Perform clerk duties, which include administering oaths, marking documents, maintaining logs and other forms, transferring stenographic files and notes to authorized personnel for reference
- Coordinate meetings and maintain the calendar for the judge and/or court
- Schedule trials and other court proceedings (in cooperation with the clerk of court)
- Perform administrative tasks, such as: answering phones, purchasing office supplies, maintaining law library, and preparing expense vouchers

A court reporter working in a closed captioning, realtime captioning, webcasting, or CART must:

- Be punctual, dependable, and flexible
- Have extensive knowledge of world-events, sports, business and entertainment
- Maintain a flexible schedule, particularly for realtime captioning
- Possess extensive job dictionaries

- Possess stamina, concentration and endurance for commercial-free and/or intense programming

Stenography

Stenography is a highly specialized skill that requires considerable training, placing these reporters in an elite group of professionals. Stenographic court reporters use a computer and a stenotype machine, striking specific combinations of keys and applying a shorthand language to record words and phrases with lightning speed and precision. Brown College graduates master this skill at 225 words per minute with 95 percent accuracy. Many liken stenography more to playing classical piano than to typing words.

Mastering the stenography method takes patience and dedication, driven by the knowledge that a range of compelling and lucrative opportunities lie ahead. Our faculty are expert instructors with a deep knowledge of the industry and a desire to see their students succeed.

Voice Writing

Voice writing is increasingly in demand for court reporting and other real-time communications needs, such as live captioning for TV. Audio-recognition technology is evolving fast, and our instructors are committed to giving our students the best and most current preparation for a dynamic career in voice writing.

Voice writers speak into a mask-like device containing a microphone that transfers their speech into a laptop computer equipped with special voice recognition and translation software. The mask silences the reporter's voice so as not to disturb the courtroom proceedings, while the software translates the spoken words into text. To achieve the speed and accuracy needed, the court reporter learns to speak rapidly in a shorthand language that is recognized and translated by the software. Like stenography, this method produces a verbatim record of events.

Official Court Reporting

Official court reporting, often referred to as judicial reporting, involves stenography in a court of law or legal setting. Court reporters in this type of setting are generally employed by the local, state or federal agency through which the court operates, and they often work exclusively for one judge or court.

Although many court reporters utilize the traditional stenography method, some are called upon to provide realtime court reporting using computer-aided transcription (CAT), which is displayed inside the courtroom and even to remote locations. Some may even perform their job using voice writing capabilities.

Beyond the courtroom, many judicial reporters provide services for depositions or testimony in law offices, and many are called to provide stenography services in private business settings for events such as shareholder meetings and executive proceedings.

Closed Captioning

Closed captioning, which is also referred to as broadcast captioning, is a swiftly growing field of court reporting that involves providing written text for broadcast programming. Congress requires, as of 1996, all video programming distributors to provide closed captioning for their television programs. As such, court reporters working in closed captioning are in high demand as to allow programming distributors to meet this standard.

Realtime Captioning

Realtime captioning is another form of captioning services for the deaf and hard-of-hearing; but, unlike closed captioning services, realtime captioning is more demanding, as court reporters must be able to provide written transcripts during live broadcasts and events.

Court reporters may provide realtime captioning for live sports events, live news programs, and weather emergencies or disasters.

CART Reporting

CART Reporting, which stands for Communications Access Realtime Reporting, allows court reporters to provide realtime transcription during a live event, such as during a courtroom proceeding, lecture, seminar, speech, or other event where captioning is desired. CART reporting involves stenography that is immediately translated by a computer-aided transcription (CAT) programs and transmitted to a large screen.

Webcasting

Webcasting is a growing subspecialty of court reporting that provides realtime captioning for Internet-based events, such as sales meetings, product introductions, and training seminars.

Electronic Reporting

A method of court reporting that has grown markedly in recent years is electronic reporting, also referred to as digital reporting. Typically used in a courtroom setting, electronic court reporting involves the use of digital audio equipment that is designed to record proceedings.

The court reporter engaged in electronic reporting is generally called upon to monitor the recording as it takes place, while at the same time taking notes to aid in the transcription process. Once the proceeding has ended, the court reporter views the transcript that was produced using specialized computer software, and makes any edits or corrections to the final transcript.

• FOLLOW-UP STORY

A follow-up is a journalist's term for a story which is written so that you can report more of a story which has already been published or broadcast. Those extra details can be new facts, later developments, reactions or new issues which have been raised by the original event. What all follow-ups have in common is that they depend for some of their news value on a story which has gone before.

Follow-up stories are articles that reporters write in the days and weeks following a major news event. Such stories may focus on certain aspects of the event, or simply update readers on the latest developments surrounding the event.

Reporters don't do follow-ups for every event they cover, but follow-ups are often necessary. That's because many of the events reporters cover unfold over a period of days, weeks or even months, or have implications and consequences that can't be adequately covered in a single story.

Developing Ideas: Causes and Consequences

Follow-up stories start with ideas. Obviously, the trick is to come up with those ideas. One way to do this is to observe and then investigate, a method used for enterprise reporting.

Another way to develop follow-up story ideas is to think about the causes and consequences of the story you're following.

Why are Follow-ups Needed?

Follow-ups are needed because one story on its own may not cover all aspects of an event or controversy properly. Although life goes on second-by-second, day-by-day, journalists cannot report it all. Journalists have to concentrate on bits of life and report them to their readers or listeners in 20 centimetre stories or 40-second news reports, three-minute current affairs segments or half-page features. Journalists impose space and time limits on their reports which do not always reflect how important the event is in the real world.

Journalists also attempt to show continuing events in self-contained "chunks" called news stories. With the amount of information now available from throughout the world, you have no alternative if you are to share out your limited time effectively.

However, just because you as a journalist have described an event in a single-column story or a 30-second report does not mean that the event itself has been described completely. There are often side-issues which have not been touched or later events which will need reporting themselves.

We have to distinguish follow-ups from what we call breaking stories, which are reports of events (or controversies or debates) which are still happening as we report them. The hourly reports on a hijacking are part of a breaking story, the report of the eventual trial of the hijackers is a follow-up.

We normally catchlines the latest version of a breaking story UPDATE (for example "HIJACK UPDATE") because it still relies on the same news angle (what is happening at the hijack) but gives us a more up-to-date report. By contrast, we would normally catchline a follow-up according to the angle of the follow-up story itself. For example, we might write a follow-up story about the Transport Minister announcing new security measures to prevent further hijackings. We might catchline it "SECURITY PROMISE". (For more details on this, see Chapters 44 and 45: The breaking story.)

Because events are often connected, it is not always easy to know the difference between a follow-up and a new story or an update of a breaking story.

However, a special feature of a follow-up is that it relies for its significance or interest on at least one previous story. Remember though that just because your follow-up describes the effect of a previous story, you cannot expect all of your readers or listeners to remember the original story, even if they did see or hear it. Later in this chapter we will discuss how you should use background information to remind your audience of the original story. The term follow-up will have no meaning to your readers or listeners; it is simply a label we use as journalists.

Use of Follow-up

We use follow-ups for a variety of reasons:

Continuity

Follow-ups show how different parts of life are connected. Whenever we finish writing a story, at that point we limit our report of the event or debate to a single moment in time. Follow-ups help us to set stories in context over a longer period of time and to explain cause-and-effect. Most events are like dropping a stone into a pool of water: the stone forces ripples to spread out, disturbing the water in all directions. Just because we stop reporting an event (such as the stone dropping) does not mean that the ripples themselves stop spreading. We must watch and report the ripples too.

To Satisfy Curiosity

When we arouse the reader's or listener's curiosity with a news story, we have a duty to satisfy that curiosity. With issues or events which are self-contained, a well-written news report or feature article will tell your audience everything they want to know. However, very few events and issues can be packaged so conveniently. Many news reports raise questions, particularly: "But what happens now?" Having given your audience an appetite for the story, you have a duty to provide answers to those kinds of questions. Every time you think that you have finished with a story, put yourself in the place of your readers or listeners and ask: "Is there anything else I want to know about it?" If there is, perhaps you should research and write a follow-up.

To Add Balance

Because of a shortage of time or because sources were not available when you needed them, you are often forced to run stories which are not properly balanced. The follow-up gives you a second chance to provide that balance.

If the Finance Minister announces a controversial new tax, you need to report what the opposition and people affected by it think. If you cannot get them in time for the first story, you must write a follow-up which concentrates on the reaction rather than the measure itself. Such reaction stories are vital in maintaining your reputation for fairness.

Also, major events or controversies produce large amounts of information. Your readers or listeners need time to absorb all that information. Giving it all in a single story may only confuse them, so you can split it up into a series of follow-up stories run over a number of days or weeks.

To Cover Missed Stories

No matter how good a journalist you are, you will occasionally miss stories which the competition gets. Perhaps the first you know of this is when you hear the story on another station or read it in another newspaper. By that time, it is usually too late to report the same story yourself. It is usually best to accept that you have been beaten for this story, and try to produce a follow-up.

The follow-up in this case still needs to have the information from the original story (which you did not carry), but should have a fresh news angle. For example, the competition may beat you to a story about a government decision to deport someone. Rather than repeat this in your next edition or bulletin, try to interview the person or a relative, to get their reaction for a follow-up. The story will be up-to-date, and anyone comparing your story with the competition's will not think that you are copying from them.

The Structure of Follow-ups

Although follow-ups rely on previous stories for their news value, you should still treat them as separate stories when writing them. They should be written in the inverted pyramid style, with the most important aspect (the news angle) first, in the intro. Although the news angle will usually refer to a previous story, your story will not be news if it only reports something your readers or listeners already know. The strength of the follow-up is that it tells your audience about a new aspect of an old story, preferably in a refreshing and lively way.

For example, the original story may have been that the Finance Minister imposed a consumption tax of 10 percent. In the follow-up, the opposition attacked the tax, so you would write:

The Opposition has attacked the Government's new consumption tax as unworkable.

Labour leader Filo Toro said the 10 percent tax would be a nightmare to administer and impossible to collect.

Finance Minister Jo Hero announced the tax in an emergency debate in Parliament on Wednesday etc...

Background

All follow-ups must contain at least one paragraph of background to put the whole story in context. That background can come anywhere in the story. The more essential it is to understanding the latest aspect, the higher up the story it should come.

If the follow-up is full of new and very important material, you may have to put the background near the end of the story, even in the last par. If you do this, it is sometimes useful to insert a few words of background higher up the story, again just to place the story in context.

For example, in your consumption tax story, the third par on Hero's announcement is enough to set the story in context. The real background details (what will be taxed and how) can come at the end of your story.

With major events or arguments, you may have to do several follow-ups over a period. You could use the same background parts, but it is more usual to shorten the background as you get further away from the event. Besides, each follow-up may provide material which needs including as background in subsequent stories.

Write Great Follow-up News Stories

Writing a single basic breaking news article is a pretty straightforward task. You start by writing your lede, which is based on the most important facts in the story. But many news stories are not simply one-time events but rather ongoing topics that can last for weeks or even months. One example would be a crime story that unfolds over time - the crime is committed, then police search for and finally arrest a suspect. Another example might be a long trial involving an especially complex or interesting case. Reporters must often do what are called follow-up articles for long-lasting topics such as these. At this link you can read about developing ideas for follow-up stories. Here we'll discuss how to write follow-ups.

The Lede

The key to writing an effective follow-up story starts with the lede. You can't write the same lede every day for a story that continues over an extended period of time.

Instead, you must construct a fresh lede each day, one that reflects the latest developments in the story.

But while writing a lede that includes those latest developments, you also need to remind your readers what the original story was all about to begin with. So the follow-up story lede really combines new developments with some background material about the original story.

An Example

Let's say you cover a house fire in which several people are killed.

Here's how your lede for the first story might read:

Two people were killed last night when a fast-moving fire swept through their house.

Now let's say several days have passed and the fire marshal tells you the fire was a case of arson. Here's your first follow-up lede:

A house fire that killed two people earlier this week was deliberately set, the fire marshal announced yesterday.

See how the lede combines important background from the original story - two people killed in the fire - with the new development - the fire marshal announcing that it was arson.

Now let's take this story one step further. Let's say a week has passed and police have arrested a man who they say set the fire. Here's how your lede might go:

Police yesterday arrested a man who they say set the fire last week that killed two people in a house.

Get the idea? Again, the lede combines the most important information from the original story with the latest development.

Reporters do follow-up stories this way so that readers who may not have read the original story can figure out what is going on and not be confused.

The Rest of the Story

The rest of the follow-up story should follow the same balancing act of combining the latest news with background information. Generally, the newer developments should be placed higher in the story, while the older information should be lower down.

Here's how the first few paragraphs of your follow-up story about the arrest of the arson suspect might go:

Police yesterday arrested a man who they say set the fire last week that killed two people in a house.

Police said Larson Jenkins, 23, used rags soaked with gasoline to set the fire at the house that killed his girlfriend, Lorena Halbert, 22, and her mother, Mary Halbert, 57.

Detective Jerry Groenig said Jenkins was apparently angry because Halbert had recently broken up with him.

The fire started around 3 a.m. last Tuesday and quickly swept through the house. Lorena and Mary Halbert were pronounced dead at the scene. No one else was injured.

Again, the latest developments are placed high in the story. But they are always tied to background from the original event. This way, even a reader learning about this story for the first time will easily understand what has happened.

Sources

Some follow-ups, such as a reaction, automatically suggest a different source to that used in the original story. With other kinds of follow-ups it may be more natural to go back to the original source for more information.

Such stories could be news of a plan, with the follow-up a story about the plan in action. In this case, you might go back to the same source for new information.

However, it is better to find new sources for follow-ups. They not only add variety (with a new name or voice), but they also add a different view, even though your new source may only be another spokesman from the same department.

The Diary

A journalist without a diary is totally at the mercy of events. The diary allows you to plan ahead and keep track of current events and controversies. If you see the chance for writing a follow-up some time in the future, make a note in the diary to remind you. (You must, of course, look at the diary every day, otherwise the reminder will be useless.)

It is important to enter details of possible follow-ups whenever they suggest themselves. The police may announce that they are charging a man with murder. If you run the story, you should also make a note in the diary of where and when he will appear in court. An association may launch a charity appeal; you should make a note to check how much they raised.

If you are working with other journalists, it is a good idea to keep one central newsdesk diary so that everyone is kept informed about what stories might be coming up. In such a case, your entry needs to be slightly longer than a single word, but not too long that it wastes space - a reference to the original story is usually enough. A diary entry for Monday, June 12 could look something like this:

Check Alfred Nagi appearing in Central Magistrate's court on Chinatown murder charge (See story of May 23).

Anniversary Follow-ups

It is also useful to do the process in reverse - to go back over old stories to find ideas for follow-ups and updates. One useful method is to go through the diary, cuttings or copy files for six months, a year or five years ago. There will be many stories which have developed since, but you have not covered recently.

Anniversaries are a useful time to update stories. If a politician promised action a year ago, now is the time to ask him what he has achieved. If police were hunting a murderer six months ago, ask whether they have any new clues.

Some people regard this as manufacturing news. This would be true if all you are doing is rewriting old stories. However, events often have long-term effects, promises should be kept or explanations provided as to why they were not. Journalists have a duty to monitor the consequences of events or controversies which we regarded as newsworthy in the past. Very often, the journalist will be the only person who tries to make people accountable and reminds them of their responsibility to keep promises.

Prelims

Preliminary stories (called prelims) are the opposite of follow-ups. Prelims are stories you write before the event happens. When you are told about an important forthcoming event, as well as putting the date, time, place and other details in your diary, you can also write a preliminary story. These are particularly useful on "slow news days", when there is not much happening elsewhere.

Be careful, though, to guard against giving free publicity to any forthcoming event which is not itself newsworthy. The organisers of a sale, a concert, a demonstration or a conference will want you to write a prelim story to promote the event. If it is newsworthy, write your prelim story. But if you have any doubts, you can always wait till the event happens, when you can judge the newsworthiness directly and decide whether or not to write a news story. Remember that your job is to serve your readers or listeners, not the organisers of events.

• CATEGORIES OF REPORTER

A reporter has a more specific function within the realm of journalism. Reporters are usually engaged in the direct gathering and communication of public information, usually through primary information sources such as first-person interviews, news conferences and attendance at news events. The material they communicate is usually -- but not always -- limited to the facts they have gathered; editorializing or sharing opinions on the news is not considered part of the reporter's role.

In professional news media, all reporters are journalists but not all journalists are reporters. News reporters require some postsecondary education. Learn about the education, job duties and requirements to see if this is the right career for you. News reporters are often journalism majors whose job is focused on reporting news, whether in-studio or out in the field. The courses they take teach the necessary reporting skills and introduce them to topics they will potentially report on. Experiential learning courses are beneficial.

More so than most other journalists, reporters must be able to develop and locate their own sources of information. They must be able to work quickly; usually reporters work under deadline pressure, and some must meet multiple deadlines per day. Reporters must be able to keep accurate notes and record information faithfully. As eyewitnesses to events, it is their perceptions that determine what readers will learn about the news.

Someone who gathers facts and information from multiple sources, verifies them and writes a story or relays (reports) those findings in a TV, radio or Internet broadcast.

"Journalist" includes anyone who is part of the editorial process of gathering and disseminating news: Reporters, editors, producers, photographers, camera operators, news columnists, etc.

In a literal sense, anyone can be a reporter by relaying their direct observations. (e.g. I saw a car crash.) With the advent of social media such as Twitter, amateur reporters are increasingly a breaking news alert network for traditional news organizations.

Ordinary people can also commit acts of journalism by following the journalistic process of fact-gathering, multi-source verification and putting those facts in context (e.g. A high-speed police chase after a million dollar bank robbery yesterday ended when the suspect's car crashed into a lamp post at a busy downtown intersection.)

Today, reporters' roles are being blurred as they are required to take on more tasks that include photography, editing, blogging, shooting and producing video, audio, etc., so "journalist" is increasingly the most appropriate catch-all term.

Reporters gather information on a subject and then write about or broadcast it. This profession is present in a wide array of media outlets: you may work for a newspaper, magazine, radio show, TV show, or website. The possibilities

within each of those mediums are endless, especially as many of those media outlets are needing more and more online coverage.

Your daily tasks as a reporter are to find information, look over documents, travel to the scenes of the events, and do interviews. Reporters have to work under tight deadlines, so being calm under pressure is a great attribute to have.

To do all this, you may end up working long/odd hours, depending on the company you work for, and especially if there is a big, breaking news event. But the result is rewarding and your work is important to many people in your community.

You may also do some traveling beyond your own city if your reporting covers a great distance, like for a national news program. If that is the case, then you have to be flexible and ready to meet challenges, and be open to changing your schedule...and your time zone. The fun and the privilege of this position are infectious, though, and you often find yourself doing whatever it takes to break the next big story.

City Reporter

City reporter means local reporters. A reporter is a type of journalist who researches, writes, and reports on information in order to present in sources, conduct interviews, engage in research, and make reports. The information-gathering part of a journalist's job is sometimes called reporting, in contrast to the production part of the job such as writing articles. Reporters may split their time between working in a newsroom and going out to witness events or interviewing people. Reporters may be assigned a specific beat or area of coverage.

Depending on the context, the term journalist may include various types of editors, editorial writers, columnists, and visual journalists, such as photojournalists (journalists who use the medium of photography).

Journalism has developed a variety of ethics and standards. While objectivity and a lack of bias are of primary concern and importance, more liberal types of journalism, such as advocacy journalism and activism, intentionally adopt a non-objective viewpoint. This has become more prevalent with the advent of social media and blogs, as well as other platforms that are used to manipulate or sway social and political opinions and policies. These platforms often project extreme bias, as "sources" are not always held accountable or considered necessary in order to produce a written, televised or otherwise "published" end product.

Matthew C. Nisbet, who has written on science communication, has defined a "knowledge journalist" as a public intellectual who, like Walter Lippmann, David Brooks, Fareed Zakaria, Naomi Klein, Michael Pollan, Thomas Friedman, and Andrew Revkin, sees their role as researching complicated issues of fact or science which most laymen would not have the time or access to information to research themselves, then communicating an accurate and understandable version to the public as a teacher and policy advisor.

A city editor is a title used by a particular section editor of a newspaper. They are responsible for the daily changes of a particular issue of a newspaper that will be released in the coming day. Mostly they stay at the publication at night and track news that happens anytime.

In North and South America it refers to the editor responsible for the news coverage of a newspaper's local circulation area (also sometimes called metro editor)

In the United Kingdom (often with a capital C) it refers to the editor responsible for coverage of business in the City of London and, by extension, coverage of business and finance in general.

Local metropolitan and state-level coverage represent the areas of greatest concern—especially when it comes to how often and how thoroughly journalists report on powerful institutions such as city hall, the school board, the statehouse, and the local hospital. Almost every sector of media that covered these beats in the past has been shaken and transformed. Throughout Part One we looked at the positive and negative developments. To summarize:

- Newspapers, which had been the main source for this kind of reporting, have cut back staff. There are strong signs that these cutbacks have weakened coverage of schools, health care issues, city government, state legislatures, religion, and other important topics. Although many newspapers have become quite innovative online in the past couple of years, it generally has resulted in an increase in the ways news is presented, but not in the number of reporters gathering news. Even when beats have not been eliminated entirely, beat reporters have become responsible for covering more territory and “feeding the beast” by tweeting and writing blog posts in addition to their regular stories. These days, many newspapers reporters spend less time interviewing sources and more time producing copy. They have less time for enterprise journalism of the sort that anticipates problems and uncovers information that those in power want to conceal.

- Local radio has not stepped in to fill the void. In fact, the number of cities that had all-news radio stations dropped from 50 in the 1980s to 30 in 2010. Robert Papper, who surveys radio station news directors for the Radio Television Digital News Association, says:

“I can say this without a doubt—there are far fewer stations doing news than 10 years go, there are far fewer people hired by commercial radio to work in the newsrooms, and the median number of people employed in a commercial radio newsroom has been ‘one’ for quite a few years.”

- Although there are notable exceptions around the country, it’s not realistic to expect that radio will counteract the loss of newspaper jobs. Local TV has, in some ways, expanded its role in the local news ecosystem. The number of hours of news aired has grown, and increasing numbers of stations are making full use of social media to enliven and enhance the quality of broadcasts. For instance, many stations now incorporate user videos, photos, and commentary to enhance coverage of natural disasters. Some stations continue to produce high-quality investigative journalism, as well. But on

balance, stations have not increased their reportorial capacity, and in many cases they have cut it back. As a result, several long-standing maladies of local news have persisted, or even worsened, including: minimal coverage of local government, insufficient in-depth reporting, and a strong emphasis on crime coverage. Although they are not in the majority, a disturbing number of stations have allowed advertisers to dictate news content or in other ways blurred the lines between journalism and advertorial. In short, many stations are doing excellent work—and many more have the capacity to do even better—but, as yet, most stations have not been fielding enough reporters to fill the vacuum left by local newspapers.

- Cable TV, like radio, is thriving nationally (financially and in terms of audience), offering more national and business news programming than ever. But locally focused models have stalled, with local cable news efforts currently reaching only about 20 to 30 percent of the population. There are some hopeful signs—for instance, Time Warner and NBC/Comcast have announced plans to expand their local news efforts—but most other cable operators seem more inclined to freeze or cut back their local operations, as they are costly to maintain.

- Satellite TV has technological limitations and financial disincentives that make it an unlikely platform for increased local public affairs programming.

At first blush, it seems that there is more than enough exciting Internet-based activity to make up for the aforementioned gaps. But on closer inspection, it appears that in this one area—local accountability reporting—Internet-based properties have made insufficient progress.

Special Correspondents

Reporters and correspondents, also called journalists, often work for a particular type of media organization, such as a television or radio station, newspaper, or website. A journalist writing for a newspaper on special events or a special area of interest is called special correspondents. A correspondent or on-the-scene reporter is usually a journalist or commentator for magazines, or more speaking, an agent who contributes reports to a newspaper, or radio or television news, or another type of company, from a remote, often distant, location. A foreign correspondent is stationed in a foreign country. The term correspondent refers to the original practice of filing news reports via postal letter. The largest networks of correspondents belong to ARD (Germany) and BBC (UK).

A correspondent generally includes some of his/her own perspective on the news. For example, a correspondent is expected to provide considerable context to the events being chronicled. A reporter, on the other hand, offers largely fact-based reporting. In Britain, the term 'correspondent' usually refers to someone with a specific specialist area, such as health correspondent. A 'reporter' is usually someone without such expertise who is allocated stories by the newsdesk on any story in the news. A 'correspondent' can sometimes have direct executive powers, for example a 'Local Correspondent' (voluntary) of the

Open Spaces Society (founded 1865) has some delegated powers to speak for the Society on path and commons matters in their area including representing the Society at Public Inquiries.

A correspondent is an on-the-scene news reporter who is also sometimes called a journalist. Correspondents contribute news to newspapers, radio stations, and television stations. Whenever anything newsworthy occurs in the world, a correspondent is often sent to the front lines to report back on what is taking place. Most correspondents work from remote areas and often from foreign countries. Unlike reporters, a correspondent places some of their own opinions into the news piece and report as they see things happening. They may provide this information through video, vocal recordings, or written articles.

Those who work in television and radio set up and conduct interviews, which can be broadcast live or recorded for future broadcasts. These workers are often responsible for editing interviews and other recordings to create a cohesive story and for writing and recording voiceovers that provide the audience with the facts of the story. They may create multiple versions of the same story for different broadcasts or different media platforms.

Most television and radio shows have hosts, also called anchors, who report the news and introduce stories from reporters.

Journalists for print media conduct interviews and write articles to be used in newspapers, magazines, and online publications. Because most newspapers and magazines have print and online versions, reporters typically produce content for both versions. Doing so often requires staying up to date with new developments of a story so that the online editions can be updated with the most current information.

Some journalists may convey stories through both broadcast and print media, as well as help manage the organization's web content. For example, television stations often have a website, and a reporter may post a blog or an article for the website. Similarly, a reporter working for newspapers or magazines may create videos or podcasts that people access online.

Stations are increasingly relying on multimedia journalists to publish content on a variety of platforms, including radio and television stations, websites, and mobile devices. Multimedia journalists typically record, report, write, and edit their own stories. They also gather the audio, video, or graphics that accompany their stories.

Reporters and correspondents may need to maintain a presence on social media networking sites. Many use social media to cover live events, provide additional information for readers and viewers, promote their stations and newscasts, and engage better with their audiences.

Some journalists, particularly those in large cities or large news organizations, cover a particular topic, such as sports, medicine, or politics. Journalists who work in small cities, towns, or organizations may need to cover a wider range of subjects.

Some reporters live in other countries and cover international news.

Some reporters—particularly those who work for print news—are self-employed and take freelance assignments from news organizations. Freelance assignments are given to writers on an as-needed basis. Because freelance reporters are paid for the individual story, they work with many organizations and often spend some of their time marketing their stories and looking for their next assignment.

Some people with a background as a reporter or correspondent work as postsecondary teachers and teach journalism or communications at colleges and universities.

Broadcast news analysts are another type of media occupation. Broadcast news analysts are often called upon to provide their opinion, rather than reporting, on a particular news story. They may appear on television, radio, or in print and offer their opinion to viewers, listeners, or readers. However, most broadcast news analysts come from fields outside of journalism and have expertise in a particular subject—for example, politics, business, or medicine—and are hired on a contract basis to provide their opinion of the subjects being discussed. Becoming a broadcast news analyst is typically not a career path for new journalists.

Common types

Capitol correspondent: A capitol correspondent is a correspondent who reports from headquarters of government.

Legal/justice correspondent: A legal or justice correspondent reports on issues involving legal or criminal justice topics, and may often report from the vicinity of a courthouse.

Red carpet correspondent: A red carpet correspondent is an entertainment reporter who is selected to report from the red carpet of an entertainment or media event, such as a premiere, award ceremony or festival.

Foreign correspondent: A foreign correspondent is any individual who reports from primarily foreign locations.

War correspondent: A war correspondent is a foreign correspondent who covers stories first-hand from a war zone.

Foreign bureau: A foreign bureau is a news bureau set up to support a news gathering operation in a foreign country.

Work

Correspondents travel all over the world and communicate (by recording or writing) what they see to news companies. They work on the front lines of breaking news, sometimes in very dangerous situations.

A correspondent must be available at all times to catch the next big story. They often work on little sleep. They may be called on, in the middle of the night, to report on breaking news. Frequently, correspondents do not know what city, town, or country they will be in next. Travel is constant and they may be away from home for extended lengths of time. Correspondents may investigate and follow a story for weeks or even months. In times of war,

correspondents can spend months and even years in one location, reporting on the news and events as they happen in the area.

Often, news correspondents work in teams with editors and photographers, as many correspondents are required to transmit live broadcasts. This could include events such as natural disasters, war, murder trials, or crime scene footage. Unlike a news reporter who only speaks on the facts of the news, a correspondent often lends their own opinions to the piece. Though they provide factual information, they may also colour the news piece with some of their own thoughts on what is taking place.

Workplace of a Correspondent Like

Correspondents travel all over the country and the world. They may have to fly out of the country at just a moment's notice. Correspondents often are away from home for weeks, months, or even years at a time. They may report from the front of a court building, or from the midst of a natural disaster or war zone. Since correspondents try to capture news as it happens, they are sometimes put into dangerous situations.

• FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT

A reporter who visits or resides in a foreign country in order to report on its affairs is called foreign correspondent. Foreign correspondents are journalists or commentators stationed in a foreign country. They gather and analyze events of international importance, and they write news stories for newspapers, magazines, and radio and television broadcasts. The job involves interviewing people and collecting background information and details of events. Once the news has been gathered, foreign correspondents prepare reports and review the copy for errors in grammar, punctuation, content, and accuracy. While making such reports, they have to follow formatting and editorial guidelines.

The job of a foreign correspondent is much the same as that of a reporter. However, correspondents often have the liberty to express their own views or interpretations of news and events, whereas reporters are confined to unbiased fact-based reporting. Correspondents also provide substantial context to the news events, highlighting the important facts and details.

To become a foreign correspondent, start by getting a journalism degree or mass communications degree. Before being considered for assignments overseas, in most cases you will have to “earn your chops” by working as a journalist/reporter for a local or national news source for several years. Foreign correspondents are more likely to earn opportunities to cover the news abroad if they become fluent in the language of the region they wish to cover and knowledgeable in that region's history, current events and culture. Some print, broadcast and online media employers prefer foreign correspondent candidates to also have a graduate degree, such as a Masters in Journalism with a specialization in international reporting or foreign affairs.

The majority of large publications do not recruit inexperienced correspondents. However, a lot of journalism schools offer job placement

assistance to their graduates. New foreign correspondents can begin by working for a relatively small or local newspaper or station. Information regarding such openings is available on Internet career sites and in classified sections of newspapers. Interested candidates can also look up opportunities directly at local stations and newspaper offices. State employment offices also provide journalism employment news.

Education and Training Requirements

Candidates interested in becoming foreign correspondents should earn a bachelor's degree in journalism, mass communications, or a similar field. Ideally, a student should enroll in a program accepted by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications. Those interested in taking jobs in publication houses should specialize in news-editorial journalism, while those keen on broadcasting careers should focus on television and radio news production. Since the Internet also offers great employment opportunities, it is a good idea to pick up the basics of computer software use.

Further studies in journalism can prove beneficial in finding better opportunities. A master's or doctorate can also help prepare a correspondent for related careers as researchers, theorists, advertising specialists, public relations specialists, and journalism teachers.

Apart from academic qualifications, candidates need a significant amount of practical reporting experience. A number of publications and broadcasting stations offer internship programs. Students of journalism can also opt for summer or part-time jobs and should work on college magazines and newspapers. Such experience is advantageous, and candidates with hands-on training are often preferred over others by employers.

Advancement Possibilities and Employment Outlook

Foreign correspondents may start out as freelancers or working for smaller broadcast stations and publications. Initially, they may have to work as copy editors or on general assignments. After extensive training and practice, they may be given independent projects to handle. It is only after years of relevant experience that foreign correspondents will receive jobs in large stations, magazines, and newspapers. They can also move on to careers as columnists, writers, editors, public relations specialists, program managers, or publishing/broadcasting industry managers.

Though the job market for correspondents and reporters is not expected to experience a major growth in the next few years, competition will remain strong for good opportunities. There will be a greater demand for jobs in broadcast stations, national newspapers, and magazines. However, new foreign correspondents and freelancers will have better prospects in local news stations and papers. Foreign correspondents are also likely to find excellent opportunities in new media, like online magazines and newspapers. On the whole, candidates with experience in reporting or a related field, such as public relations or advertising, will receive the best offers.

Working Conditions

Foreign correspondents either work for one particular news media source or as a freelancer. They work in the field, in a foreign news head office or both. According to seasoned foreign correspondent John Tulloh, life as a foreign correspondent is the polar opposite of a 9-5 gig. When posted in another country, you are in a sense “on call” 24 hours a day so you are always available when a news story breaks. You may always be in transit, spending little time at your home base, and not always able to predict when you will be posted next and for how long. You will initially find yourself in culture shock as you adapt to living conditions that may be significantly different from your home. There is also the chance that you will be posted to a region of conflict or war and you must accept the potential associated risk.

Despite these warnings, foreign correspondents that have found their niche lead a fulfilling career. At times, they will also be telling happy stories, such as the coverage of The Olympic Games or of new found freedom in an area previously at unrest. Plus the multitasking involved can be thrilling – Tulloh adds that the most successful foreign correspondents not only report, but also film or take photos.

Numerous foreign correspondents’ clubs are found all around the world. These meeting hubs are places for foreign correspondents to meet their peers, socialize and relax after an intense assignment. For example, one of the world’s most famous press clubs is the Foreign Correspondents’ Club, Hong Kong, which was started in the 1940s (originally in Shanghai) by a group of international reporters. Today at the Hong Kong club, all media representatives are welcome to join and attend dinner and drinks, press conferences, business meetings and other networking opportunities. There are literally foreign correspondents’ clubs all over the world.

• STRINGER

In journalism, a stringer is a freelance journalist or photographer who contributes reports or photos to a news organization on an ongoing basis but is paid individually for each piece of published or broadcast work.

As freelancers, stringers do not receive a regular salary and the amount and type of work is typically voluntary. However, stringers often have an ongoing relationship with one or more news organizations, to which they provide content on particular topics or locations when the opportunities arise.

The term is typically confined to news industry jargon. In print or in broadcast terms, stringers are sometimes referred to as correspondents or contributors; at other times, they may not receive any public recognition for the work they have contributed.

A reporter or photographer can “string” for a news organization in a number of different capacities and with varying degrees of regularity, so that the relationship between the organization and the stringer is typically very loose. When it is difficult for a staff reporter or photographer to reach a location quickly for breaking news stories, larger news organizations often rely on local

stringers to provide rapid scene descriptions, quotations or photos. In this capacity, stringers are used heavily by most television news organizations and some print publications for video footage, photos, and interviews.

The etymology of the word is uncertain. Newspapers once paid stringers per inch of printed text they generated. The theory given in the Oxford English Dictionary is that a stringer is a person who strings words together, while others use the term because the reporter is "strung along" by a news organization, or kept in a constant state of uncertainty. Another possibility is that using a sports analogy, the freelance journalist is seen as a "second string" whereas the staff journalist positions are more of the "first string". (This in turn comes from music, where the first string is the premiere violin in the orchestra, the second string is the next most talented player and so on.)

Another possible derivation of the term "stringer": journalists at newspapers and television news stations sometimes use the expression "I'm still gathering string" to refer to the initial stage of reporting or fact-finding. Put another way, "Still gathering string" is newsroom jargon for the process of "looking for something that you can't yet name." The "string" being "the stuff that accumulates in a journalist's pocket." "String" may be used by journalists or researchers to describe a piece of information discovered in the process of looking for something else or "the anomaly that jumps out at you" while conducting research. The significance, however, of this serendipitous discovery has yet to be determined.

• FUNCTIONS OF A REPORTER

Reporters are the eyes and ears for any news channel as they move around in a range of beats throughout the day and gather the news items from various sources. They get back to the news desk and make the news stories for the preparation of different bulletins. A reporter is one who observes the passing show in the widest sense of the word and pictures its detail for the benefit of the whole society.

A reporter may be accurate, conscientious, a good citizen and take part in moulding the views of other people, but he cannot play his part successfully unless he keeps his eyes open and his mind attuned to the present, future as well as the past. He is a leader of men in many senses of the word.

He must not express his own views in what he writes—he must know in most sets of circumstances—but everything he writes must express his mind and its condition. He holds up a mirror and how much clouded or clear it is, depends on the truth or a twist of the truth which he makes in accordance with his nature and mental equipment.

A good reporter seldom sticks to a newspaper for long. Usually he passes on to news agencies or gets promotion to look after other aspects of newspaper production like a news editor or a chief correspondent.

A reporter's mind is like a sponge, paying a good deal of attention to purely mundane things but learning something every day and cleaning his mind of

matters not upto the mark. He must organise his knowledge and codify it. He must understand the principles of government in general and in some details.

He must know general history, particularly the history of his area. Though he can pick up these things as he goes along his duty, it is better for him to supplement his knowledge by a planned study.

There are following functions of a television reporter:

- To cover the city events
- To lead the production team
- To make the news reports
- To move into respective beats
- To go to press conferences
- To attend the media briefings
- To jot down the notes To gather the news
- To dig out the news To have liaison with PROs
- To get the relevant documents
- To write a news To rewrite a news
- To edit a news
- To make the quick decisions
- To select a newsworthy occurrences
- To investigate the reasons of an incidents
- To write down follow-up stories
- To have acquaintance with existing situations
- To have general knowledge
- To have time management
- To be a team leader
- To be good at language
- To follow press laws
- To abide by code of ethics
- To be socially responsible
- To avoid sensationalism
- To have decision power

• RESPONSIBILITIES

A reporter is the gatherer of news, and as such performs an important function in a newspaper establishment. As he has to gather news, he is required to be on the move most of the time usually within the area allotted to him. He has to interview persons and attend public functions and meetings, press conferences and law courts to investigate events of public interest, to collect news and to ascertain news on contemporary events.

The nature of the job being such, an 'up-and -doing" type of person proves successful in this line. Naturally, persons who prefer fixed working hours and regular routine in daily life are unsuitable for this job. His work changes daily; as such he should be prepared to handle any assignment and move anywhere. He should have special knack of meeting all sorts of people in all types of circumstances.

A person of snobbish, uppish and patronising temperament has little or no chance of success in this line. A shy and a reserved type of young person is totally unfit to become a successful reporter. He must possess abundant self-confidence, so as not to be over-awed by the rank or position of an individual. He should be a man of initiative and should not be easily disheartened or discouraged. He should possess mental and physical perservance. He should be able to grasp the situation quickly and reduce it into writing in the shortest time and in a readable form. But while reporting news he must be able to judge its authenticity and then report the news so collected with absolute honesty. The narrative should be attractive so that the readers should enjoy reading it.

He should be able to record the happenings and incidents in a condensed form, as he has to take into account the space available in the newspaper for it. Suppose, he has to write a report on some important meeting which lasted for over two hours. In such a circumstance, he must have an eye for the important discussions/ decisions which are to be included in the report, omitting all other unimportant/irrelevant matter. He must be temperamentally so framed that he does not get irritated, even if at times he has to wait for hours to meet an impor tant person or come across an event. When a news-worthy occasion does come he should be able to grasp it quickly, and write it out with great speed. Many reporters specialise in reporting particular types of news such as those relating to political events, commerce or sports, theatre, etc. In large newspapers, there is also a Chief Reporter responsible for allocating and coordinating work of different reporters.

Legal Responsibilities

In addition to serving the public interest, journalists must also follow the law, especially regarding the confidentiality and privacy of the people they interview or write about. For example, while journalists often tape record their interviews to ensure accuracy, federal and state laws generally make it illegal to record a conversation without the permission of the other party. In this case, journalists must tell their sources they're recording the interview before it begins. Journalists must also understand the laws regarding libel and invasion of privacy. If a journalist is careless when reporting criminal allegations against a person, for example, he could face a defamation lawsuit if the accusations are proved untrue.

Ethical Responsibilities

Some aspects of a journalist's job are not subject to any kind of law but are just as important. Journalists must strive to present an accurate, well-balanced explanation of the stories they cover. For example, they have an

obligation to present all sides of an issue, and to conduct extensive research and talk to several sources knowledgeable about the subject. If they present only popular opinion, or if they conduct minimal research without fully exploring the subject, they don't give readers and viewers the information they need to understand the implications of the event or issue. Journalists must also be honest with the people they interview, telling them before talking to them what the article is about and that they plan to quote them in the piece.

Reporting Duties

Before journalists can write about a subject, they must first gather information. They usually conduct several interviews with people involved in or having knowledge of the subject. They may also go to the scene of an event, such as a crime or an accident, to interview witnesses or law enforcement officers and to document what they see. In addition, they often search public records or other databases to find information and statistics to back up their stories. Researching a story is often similar to conducting an investigation, and journalists must sometimes ask difficult questions. They may have to invest a lot of time tracking down information and people relevant to the story.

Working With People

Even though a news article bears a single journalist's byline, the process requires significant collaboration. How good a journalist's story is often depends on how adept he is at communicating and working with others. For example, journalists take instruction from their editors regarding what angle to approach when writing a story, how long the story should be and whom to interview. They also need strong people and communication skills so they can persuade sources to talk to them. Journalists frequently approach people they don't know, whether when reporting from the scene or calling to request an interview. If they're uncomfortable around strangers, they'll make others uncomfortable as well, making it less likely that people will want to be interviewed.

