

District reporting & District Reporter

District news reporting is seen here as a specialized type of reporting that requires specialized treatments and specialized skills. It involves mainly reporting and writing news with a focus or emphases. District news reporting is news written and reported from district perspective, it is news and other related materials gathered and packaged mainly in the rural areas as opposed to the so-called rural news written for ruralites in district areas.

District news is news that informs, educates common district's people and governments about the needs, aspirations, problems, successes, joys, values and general life of the common, and informs and educates common people about government policies, activities, programmes, philosophies, materials, ideas and such other factors they might need for survival, progress or improved living standards. District reporting provide the news and other related to district development.

This kind of rural reporting comes in forms that include rushing to cover a district area only when a major calamity or major incident is taking place.

Quality of the District Reporter

District Correspondent will display experience in district Journalism and in depth understanding regional issues. Presentation of daily content for district event as well as the production of regular feature material are the duties of district correspondent. The role involves travel to remote locations and requires reporting or presenting news content for the news paper.

To do well in district news gathering, the reporter must have to respect and apply the five generally-accepted principles of best-reporting because district reporting is really specialized kind of beat-reporting.

The five principles are that the beat reporter must be always prepare, alert, persistent, wary and must try to be there at the time of happening the event. The District reporter engaged in regional news reporting must be continually guided by a well-defined and contextually-adjusted district-oriented journalistic philosophy.

District reporter should be familiar enough with district's people, he assigned. District Reporting involves depending on rural agricultural, health and other change agents for the procurement of rural news reports. Effective district reporting requires that the reporters live with and understand the rural people and the rural environments, interactions, events, problems, and-issues they will be reporting, and writing about.

It is important for the district reporter to try hard to write his news mostly from human angles because most of the time rural news events and issues have to do with rural people and their environments. Even when rural news is directly related to things, rather than people, it should still be written as much as possible from a human angle that will bring out how that think or object relates to people.

What Are Feature Stories?

- Feature stories are human-interest articles that focus on particular people, places and events.
- Feature stories are journalistic, researched, descriptive, colorful, thoughtful, reflective, thorough writing about original ideas.
- Feature stories cover topics in depth, going further than mere hard news coverage by amplifying and explaining the most interesting and important elements of a situation or occurrence.
- Feature stories are popular content elements of newspapers, magazines, blogs, websites, newsletters, television broadcasts and other mass media.

While journalists reporting late-breaking hard news don't have enough preparation time and copy length to include much background and description, writers of features have the space and time to evoke imagery in their stories and fill in details of the circumstances and atmosphere.

- A feature story is not meant to report the latest breaking news, but rather an in-depth look at a subject.
- Feature articles range from the news feature that provides sidebar background to a current event hard news story, to a relatively timeless story that has natural human interest.
- Features generally are longer than hard-news articles because the feature penetrates deeper into its subject, expanding on the details rather than trying to concentrate on a few important key points.
- In hard news stories, often referred to as *inverted pyramid* style, the reporter makes the point, sets the tone, and frames the issue in the first paragraph or two.
- In a feature story, on the other hand, the writer has the time and space to develop the theme, but sometimes postpones the main point until the end. The whole story does not have to be encapsulated in the lead.

Typical types

There are many kinds of feature stories. Here are some popular types:

- *Human Interest*: The best-known kind of feature story is the human-interest story that discusses issues through the experiences of another.
- *Profiles*: A very common type of feature is the profile that reveals an individual's character and lifestyle. The profile exposes different facets of the subject so readers will feel they know the person.

- *How-To*: These articles help people learn by telling them how to do something. The writer learns about the topic through education, experience, research or interviews with experts.
- *Historical Features*: These features commemorate important dates in history or turning points in our social, political and cultural development. They offer a useful juxtaposition of then and now. Historical features take the reader back to revisit an event and issues surrounding it. A variation is the *this date in history* short feature, which reminds people of significant events on a particular date.
- *Seasonal Themes*: Stories about holidays and the change of seasons address matters at specific times of a year. For instance, they cover life milestones, social, political and cultural cycles, and business cycles.
- *Behind the Scenes*: Inside views of unusual occupations, issues, and events give readers a feeling of penetrating the inner circle or being a mouse in a corner. Readers like feeling privy to unusual details and well kept secrets about procedures or activities they might not ordinarily be exposed to or allowed to participate in.

Non-fiction stories

Feature stories are journalistic reports. They are not opinion essays or editorials. They should not be confused with creative writing or works of fiction.

- The writer's opinions and attitudes are not important to the story.
- The writer keeps herself or himself out of the story.
- Writing in the third person helps maintain the necessary distance.

Telling stories

Hard news stories report very timely events that have just occurred. Feature stories, on the other hand, are *soft news* because they are not as timely, not as swiftly reported. Feature writers have the extra time to complete background research, interviews and observation for their stories.

Here are some suggestions for polishing feature writing skills and developing an eye for feature story ideas:

- Feature stories give readers information in a pleasing, entertaining format that highlights an issue by describing the people, places, events and ideas that shape it.
- Feature stories are really more like nonfiction short stories than hard news stories.

- While there should be a *news peg* for the existence of a story at a particular time, the immediacy of the event is secondary in a feature story. In fact, sometimes there is no immediate event.
- The power of a feature story lies in its ability to amplify the focus on an issue through first-rate story telling, irony, humor, human appeal, atmosphere and colorful details.
- Features have a clear beginning, middle and end and are longer than hard-news stories.

Gathering data

Journalists use three tools to gather information for stories: observation, interview and background research.

After completing these, the writer brings the story to life through colorful description, meaningful anecdotes and significant quotes.

- These elements are obtained when interviewing and observing by jotting down everything encountered – smells, noises, colors, textures, emotions, details seen and heard in the surroundings.
- The journalist keeps an open mind while interviewing subjects and researching sources.
- The writer avoids steering the story or imposing personal ideas on the sources.
- The writer avoids deciding on the theme of the story until sufficient information has been gathered to show a direction or point of view.

Story format

The information in a feature is organized differently from hard news stories. Sometimes a writer uses several paragraphs of copy at the outset to engage the reader before getting on with the main elements of the story.

After the title and opening paragraph grab a reader, narrative hooks are used to persuade the reader to continue reading. These hooks are attractive story elements such as action, mystery, drama, or appealing characters intended to pull the reader forward through the story. They are complex narratives that come to life through colorful description, meaningful anecdotes and significant quotes.

- In hard news stories, the reporter makes the point, sets the tone, and frames the issue in the first paragraph or two.

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In feature stories, the whole story does not have to be encapsulated in an inverted pyramid lead. The writer can develop the storyline in a variety of ways and choose to postpone the main point until later in the copy or even the end.

A writer can choose to tell the story out of order to engage the reader's interest.

- A story could begin with a dramatic moment and, once the reader is curious, the story could flash back to the history needed to understand it.
- A story-within-a-story could be used with a narrator in the outer story telling the inner story to satisfy the curiosity of readers.
- A storyline could alert readers that the story began in a way that seemed ordinary, but they must follow it to understand what happened eventually.

As with any news reporting, feature stories are subject to the journalistic standards of accuracy, fairness and precision. The quality of a story is judged on its content, organization and mechanics.

Features writers use *The Associated Press Stylebook* for correct journalistic style.

How long are these articles?

- Newspaper features often are 500 to 2500 words in length.
- Magazine features usually are 500 to 5,000 words.
- Features on websites and blogs generally range from 250–2500 words, but hard drive space is relatively inexpensive so the length could vary dramatically through the use of non-linear hyperlinking of content.
- Any medium might use a shorter or longer story than usual, depending on its perceived value.
- Attention spans seem to grow ever shorter so brevity is valued. More than ever, all writing today needs to be clear and concise.

Illustrations

Every story is illustrated, usually with one or more photographs, but the art can be drawings, paintings, sketches, video or machinima, colorful graphs and charts, or other creative expressions depending on the medium for which the feature is packaged for dissemination.

Is this just for print journalists?

As newspapers and other print media face stiffer competition today from Internet news media, more feature stories are published because they can be more engaging to read. Wire services, such as the Associated Press and Reuters, which once distributed mostly hard news, now send feature stories to members.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN NEWS AND INFORMATION

In the railway station, people might have noticed the board displaying the train timings. That is not news. That is information. But information becomes news when news value is added to it. For example, if a new train time table is issued by the railways replacing the existing one with changes in train timings, that becomes news. Similarly, the different slabs of income tax rates is not news. But when the government decides to increase or lower the rates, it becomes news. You might have seen weather reports in the newspapers. It gives the day's temperature or rainfall. It does not make news. It becomes news when there is a sudden change in weather, or when heavy rains lead to floods or when continuous absence of rain leads to drought. So information is different from news. News should give something new to the readers, viewers or listeners.

The difference between News and Current affairs

The difference between News and Current affairs may be a little tricky. If care is not taken, one might think that they both mean the same thing.

Really News can be described as *"Information about recent and important events"*, It could be an *"Information reported in a newspaper or news magazine"*, or *"A program devoted to current events, often using interviews and commentary"*. It could also be an *"Informal information of any kind that is not previously known to someone"*.

Current affairs refer to any event that just occurred, this means the affairs that are associated with the present. News is different from Current affairs because not all current affairs make it to the news. For a current event to become News, someone or a reporter must have taken interest in the spread of such event. If not a current event may occur without ever getting into the news until later in the future. In the same way, Not all news item are current events. A person may be interested in an old story. Digging up age long information about remarkable stories becomes news. So an event need not be a current event before it becomes news.

The difference between News and Rumours

Now-a-days there may not be any difference between News and Rumours. Newspaper reporters are often not interested in establishing facts before publishing a story, as long as they cannot be sued, News is published based on entertainment value. Many people get their news from the internet; even blogs. People are more interested in confirming their own ideas than knowing the truth.

Rumours are news rightly considered, News are rumours wrongly considered. A rumour is often viewed as "an unverified account or explanation of events circulating from person to person. When a dog bites a man that is not news, but when a man bites a dog that is news. Though this may seem true, sometimes, when a dog bites a man that can also become news. Suppose a dog bites a famous filmstar, it definitely makes big news.

News is a report of a current event. It is information about something that has just happened or will happen soon. News is a report about recent happenings in a newspaper, television, radio or internet that has some base, whereas rumours have no base for its origination.

Types of Print Media

Print media includes many different ways in which an advertiser can reach a target group. Here are some of the different types of print media.

The modern advertising techniques make use of many ways to convey messages to the consumers. Print media however, is one of the oldest forms of advertising methods. It also remains to be one of the most popular forms of advertising because it can reach a wider target audience. There are various different types of print media, which help advertisers to target a particular segment of people. Here's a quick look at them.

Newspapers

Newspapers are the most popular forms of print media. The advertiser in this case can choose from a daily newspaper to a weekly tabloid. Different types of newspaper cater to various audiences and one can select the particular category accordingly. Advertisers then design press advertisements where in the size is decided as per the budget of the client.

Magazines

Magazines also offer advertisers an opportunity to incorporate various new techniques and ideas. Magazines are one such form of print media that give a more specific target group to the client. The client can make a choice of the particular magazine as per the product.

Newsletters

Newsletters also form an important part of print media. These target a specific group of audience and give information on the product.

Brochures

Brochures give detailed information about the product. These are mainly distributed at events or even at the main outlet when a consumer needs to read in detail about the product.

Posters

Posters are forms of outdoor advertising. The message in a poster has to be brief and eye-catching as it targets a person on the move.

Apart from these media, direct mail marketing, flyers, handbills/ leaflets, banner advertising, billboard advertising, press releases, etc., are also various types of print media.

By Kashmira Lad

Other Print Media:

Textbooks, other books, booklets, pamphlets, brochures, folders, periodicals, wall newspapers, publicity and promotional literature also constitute media for mass reading, information and enlightenment, they less extensively used as compared to the newspapers and magazines.

Books are non-periodical printed publication of at least 49 pages excluding the cover page, published in any country and are made available to public. Today India is among the ten largest book producing countries in the world and ranks third, after USA and UK in the production of English Titles.

It is estimated that there are over 11,000 book publishers in the country. The largest number is that of Hindi publishers followed by those in English and Bengali. India, as a large producer of quality books, has a growing potential for exporting books, and our books reach over 80 countries.

The National Book Trust plays an important role in the promotion of books in the public sector, produces books of good quality at moderate prices. It publishes reading material for children and rural masses.

Central and state governments also publish dailies and periodicals. Administration of Andaman and Nikobar and government of Bengal publish one and two dailies respectively. Language wise largest number of government publications appears in English followed by Hindi and other principal languages.

More than 700 periodicals are published by the government on the subjects like news and current affairs, animal husbandry, commerce and industry, social welfare, banking and co-operation, films, radio, sports and so on.

The Publications Division of the Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting is one of the leading publishing houses in the country. It sells its publications through a network of booksellers and the Division's own sales section. It brings out journals such as Yojna, Indian and Foreign review, Kurukshetra and Employment News.

The Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity (DA VP) is the Central agency of the government of India for undertaking advertising and visual publicity campaigns on behalf of various ministries and departments through press advertisements, printed publicity materials and outdoor publicity items of various forms.

Apart from these, NCERT, Universities, public relations departments, tourist departments, produce pamphlets, brochures, folders, posters, reports, speeches and other informational literature.

There are publications which are not studied by press in India, but they have definite periodicity. They do not contain news or comments on public news. There are astrological magazines, fictions, market reports/bulletins, publicity journals, school/college magazines and so on.

These are published as weeklies, fortnightlies, quarterlies, annuals or dailies. There are bimonthlies and half year lies also.