

Specialization in Reporting:

On the basis of subjects covered reporting can be classified as follows: Crime reporting, Court reporting, Political reporting, Business and Commerce reporting, Sports reporting. The other types of reporting are Parliamentary reporting, Development reporting, and Science and Technology reporting, etc.

CRIME AND ACCIDENTS REPORTING:

Crime reporting is an important beat in all the major and medium-size newspapers. There is Enormous public interest in crime stories and no newspaper can afford to ignore them without Damaging its circulation and credibility.

Crime reporting is a highly responsible and specialized job, involving the shifting of the grain of truth from the chaff of rumours and mis-information.

Contacts with the top brass in the police and administrative machinery as well as a working knowledge of the penal codes, law on libel, etc., are necessary to be successful in this reporting.

Crime reporter must never resort to gimmicks to catch the reader's attention. Nor should he suppress news of public interest to oblige people higher-up in the police or the powers that be. Seeking to settle personal scores with anyone is lowering the dignity of the profession. And so is the intrusion into the privacy of a citizen.

Baseless allegations reported through news columns can damage the victim's reputation or that of his/her family members or community. Fictitious reports of gang rape and 'waylaid on national highway' have appeared in newspapers once considered reputed, which is a sad commentary of Indian journalism.

There are several types of crimes - murders, robberies, burglaries, fraud, blackmail, kidnapping, rape, etc. - which are manometers of law and order and good governance of a society.

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 is also duty-bound to 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. But he must rely on eyewitnesses to reconstruct the story in case he is not present there. The names of the dead and the injured and the cause of the fire are substance of the fire mishap story. Major murders warrant that the reporter rushes to the scene and gather all the relevant facts. Unfortunately, the police are our 'crime reporters' and the journalists merely reproduce the police version, which need not always be true.

A professional journalist worth the name covers the story from different angles talking to the victim's relatives, neighbours, and leading citizens of the neighbourhood who can give an insight into the murder mystery. His story could never be biased and he uses his own investigative techniques to bring out the truth even when the police version is contrary to it. His basic duty is to establish the cause of the death.

Crime Reporting

It has become a common practice to hear and read about crimes taking place in the locality, state or in the country. There is no doubt that today the crime rate has reached up to an alarming situation. The journalists who report of these crime beats and police beats are called Crime Reporters. They cover every aspect of the crime fro robberies to murders, theft, fraud, kidnapping, sexual assaults & many other nuisances that are taking place in our civilized society.

People also take a keen interest in crime reporting now, they like to read and watch news which reports the crimes in the society or worldwide. This has given rise to crime journalism. It also given incentives to report any criminal activities.

Importance of Crime Reporting.

Crime reporting has long been a central part of news coverage in free press societies, because crime stories are usually newsworthy.

There are several reasons why you should report crime and why people want to read about or listen to stories of crime:

- Readers often want an explanation of why crimes happen. They ask: "Could it happen to me?" They may want to know so that they can prevent a similar thing happening to themselves.
- Readers need to know how laws are broken, and how people who break laws are caught and punished. This helps them understand what laws are and what are the penalties for breaking them.
- Most people obey the law, so crime stories are about unusual events - one of the criteria for news.
- Criminals take risks and face punishment if they are caught. This may make them fascinating to read about.

Role of Crime Reporters

Today, a large number of crime reporters are working in this field with various news newspapers. The cut throat competition among news papers has made their job even more challenging and difficult. Since, they also cover terrorism, accidents, airplane collisions, natural disasters and fires so their personal safety also poses a threat. There have been instances in the past, when crime reporters were arrested along with frenzy mob in communal riots and civil wars. They have also suffered injuries while covering perilous circumstances.

Crime reporter has to work closely with police, local authority and judicial officers. Attorneys could also be useful aid for this. They give breaking news about an on-going trial or a high profiled case where big fishes are also involved. Thus, to cultivate harmonial and cordial relations with all of them would be in favour of crime reporters only.

However, if a crime reporter fails to maintain a professional relationship with these lawmen, he invites risks of a losing a sensational crime story. In future, he/she would not be alerted about any new turn in a crime case, new discoveries of evidence or new legal strategies. There are no other liable source of information except police, courts and prosecutors.

Crime reporters find employment in Newspapers, magazines, online publications. It can become a columnist by writing for a daily police column for some newspapers which compile of brief accounts regarding local criminal activities, thefts, arrests and suspects who are in the Wanted list of cops. There are great opportunities for crime reporters, such as he/she could choose to become news analyst, news bureau director, broadcast producers, program manger, publisher, news anchor crime chat show hosts and book writer. The life a crime reporter is hectic and has to meet deadlines constantly. He/she spends most of his/her life in the field collecting crime stories or finding leads unlike other journalists who spend half of their day in the office.

LEGAL REPORTING:

The dramatic success of the public interest litigations has captured media attention, and judiciary today gets better coverage than ever before. Even so, it is the Supreme Court, the High Courts and Criminal Courts that get media attention while Civil Courts are seldom covered. One reason for it is they are slow-moving with thousands of cases pending for several years.

Only the largest newspapers have full time correspondents covering legal proceedings, while the medium-size newspapers hire part-time correspondents or stringers who may be professional advocates. A trainee journalist aiming to be a future Court Reporter must at first acquire some understanding of the court jurisdiction, its procedures and its hierarchy.

Much of the reporter's success depends on his contacts and sources and his ability to gain quick access to records. For a reporter the key person in a court is the clerk who keeps the records. Court reporting involves diligent checking of records. It is a mistaken idea that the judge who presides a trial could be a source. Nevertheless, the reporter should introduce himself to the judge. He should also have good contacts with the lawyers working on either side of the case. For a case that attracts much public attention reporters may be under pressure from rival lawyers for a more favourable coverage. But fairness is what good reporting is all about.

When assigned to cover a major trial, the first thing a reporter should make sure of is a seat in the courtroom and adequate communication links with his/her newspaper or media office. For mid-day tabloids the stories may have to be filed even while the court proceedings are on.

If a reporter misses part of the proceedings, he/she can always approach the court stenographer. To make the report lively, the reporter must quote the major questions, answers, comments and remarks during the court's sittings.

AWARE OF CONTEMPT OF COURT:

The reporter must scrupulously avoid any Contempt of Court in his reporting. This offence is defined and amplified in the Contempt of Court Act, 1971. Contempt may be civil or criminal offence.

Civil Contempt means wilful disobedience to any judgement, decree, direction, order or other process of a court, or wilful breach of an undertaking given by a person to a court. There will be no civil contempt where there is ignorance of the order of a court leading to unintentional breach.

Criminal contempt mainly means publication of any matter or the doing of any other act,

Which are:

Scandalizes or lower authority of any court- The publication of matter, which creates doubts about the ability, or fairness of a judge of a court is prohibited. A newspaper should not impute improper motives to a judge.

Prejudices or interferes with the due course of judicial proceedings- creating disturbing in the judiciary system.

Casting defamatory allegations against a judge or judges, with or without reference to particular cases, is contempt because it.

A case detail cannot be published until the final decision is made.

If a reporter fail to maintain all these thing then he/she will get maximum punishment for Contempt of Court is simple imprisonment of six months, or fine of two thousand rupees or both. If the accused apologizes. Generally, an apology, to be acceptable by the court, should be sincere, unconditional and without delay. An apology should be made in a manner that substantially wipes out the mischief.

BUSINESS & COMMERCE REPORTING:

The focus of Business reporting is the state of business, depending on the country's economic climate. The stock market, capital market, the wholesale and consumer price indices, metals and gold prices, industrial and agricultural production, consumer behaviour, inflation, money supply, foreign and Indian investments, unemployment, wages and labour disaffection, all are areas of interest to the Business Reporter.

The economy operates in a cycle of expansion and contraction known as boom and bust. The markets hit a low during bust, characterized by low demand, piling up of goods product (inventories) and at worst people are thrown out of employment.

At boom, the demand picks up, entrepreneurs invest, employment is generated, there is more cash flow and happier times return as the economy operates at its peak efficiency. After a few years, the economy goes back to bust to repeat its business cycle. The best indicator of the country's economy is the stock market represented by Bulls and Bears, the former denoting buoyancy and the latter low economic activity.

Market-linked technology watch may signal the arrival of new products, impending competition and phasing out of old models. Computer and car markets are changing dramatically and will keep changing in the years ahead. Perceptible Business Journalists keep the readers well informed so that the discerning buyers can wisely choose their monies' worth. Exposing business frauds and manipulators is the high calling of business journalism, but favouring them for a pittance could tarnish the image of the profession.

Like the politician who generates political news, the corporate houses generate most of the business news. And the Finance and Commerce Ministries, the RBI, SEBI, FICCI, Assocham and Indo-American, Indo-British, Indo-German, Indo-French, and Indo-Japanese joint trade organizations keep the business journalist very busy.

Reading newspapers like The Economic Times, The Business Standard, The Financial Express and magazines like Business India, Business World, Business Today and foreign publications like The Economist, The Business Week, The Fortune, The Financial Times, The Wall Street Journal to be well abreast of 'trends and events' that shape business journalism.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY REPORTING:

Science journalism is an relatively new branch of journalism, which uses the art of reporting to convey information about science topics to a public forum. The communication of scientific knowledge through mass media requires a special relationship between the world of science and news media, which is still just beginning to form.

Science journalism is the key to the real treasure of the scientific knowledge, by virtue of which scientific knowledge and concepts could be carried to the common man. Thus the common man is benefited with the new advancements in science and technology and is able to fight against hunger, drought, diseases, and social evils, like superstitions, etc., with self-confidence, courage and faith. Being aware of this fact, science journalism in India has yet to come out of its present stage of infancy.

The first task of a science journalist is to render the very detailed, specific information produced by scientists into a form that the average media purchaser can understand and appreciate, while still communicating the information accurately. Sciencejournalists often, but not always, have advanced training in the particular scientific disciplines that they cover — they may have been scientists or, for example, medical doctors, before becoming journalists — or have at least exhibited talent in writing about science subjects.

In recent years, the amount of scientific news has grown rapidly with science playing an increasingly central role in society, and interaction between the scientific community and news media has increased. The differences between the methodologies of these two "pillars" of modern society, foremost their distinct ways of developing their realities, have led to some difficulties. Journalism tends to have a stronger bias towards truth and speculative theories than science, whereas science focuses more on fact and empirical measurement.

The age of science is the age of reason, and it is by reasoning that human beings have unlocked the secrets of nature. Technology is the application of science in the day-to-day living, and it is by technology that advanced nations have made a great leap forward.

Undoubtedly, science and technology journalism has progressively developed in India, in terms of quality and quantity, but still there are many miles to go to achieve the desired level. Science journalism, during its almost two century long journey thence has crossed several milestones. There has been a considerable progress in science journalism over the years and as a result several science magazines, feature services, programmes on radio and television, etc, emerged, despite the fact that they came into existence much later. The plight of science journalism in India may not be too deplorable at the moment, however, a good deal still remains to be done in this field.

Scientific literacy is necessary for the economic and healthy well being of the social fabric and every person, and for the exercise of participatory democracy. It also implies the ability to respond to the technical issues that pervade and influence our daily lives. It does not mean detailed knowledge of scientific principles, phenomena or technologies, however, it rather points out to the comprehension of what might be called the scientific approach, or the scientific way of conduct or the method of science. Science journalism keeps people aware about the latest in the field of research and development and helps them lead a life with better knowledge and understanding of newer advancements. The last two decades have been characterized by the rapid development of new scientific and technological advancements across a wide range of fields. Access to these advancements is distributed unevenly within the country. Even people in far flung areas often lack access to not only traditional but also modern scientific knowledge. Effective localized science journalism can help enhance public awareness about science and technology confronting their day-to-day lives.