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M.J.M.-21
Reporting Techniques

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By: *Kshyama Sagar Meher*

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QUESTION PAPER
June – 2023
(Solved)

REPORTING TECHNIQUES   M.J.M.–21

Time: 3 Hours] [*Maximum Marks : 100* *Weightage: 70%*

*Note: Answer any **five** questions. All questions carry **equal** marks.*

Q. 1. Write a crime news story related to violence against women (Assume facts).

Ans. Crime News: Two women in Kerala were allegedly abducted, beheaded and buried as part of a suspected 'witchcraft ritual' to gain financial prosperity at Elanthoor village in Pathanamthitta district, the police said on Tuesday, adding that one person has been arrested in the case while two others are in custody.

While the police took Bhagaval Singh, a traditional healer who used to attend to patients at his home, and his wife Laila, into custody from Elanthoor, a person named Shafi alias Rasheed from Perumbavoor was arrested.

"He is the first accused in the case. The arrest of the healer and his wife would be recorded soon. The women were taken to the healer by Shafi on the promise of money. They adopted a very cruel method to kill the women," Kochi City Police Commissioner C.H. Nagaraju said.

"We suspect that a ritualistic human sacrifice has taken place. We have to exhume the bodies of the women. The women were beheaded and their bodies were buried at Elanthoor in Pathanamthitta," he added.

The police have initiated steps to exhume the bodies. "This is not going to be an ordinary missing case. This is a very complicated case with many layers," Nagaraju said.

According to the police, two lottery vendors from Ernakulam district named Roslin and Padma were reported missing in June and September, respectively. The police learnt of the 'human sacrifice' as part of their investigation into Padma's case.

Police commissioner Nagaraju said the main objective of the human sacrifice was the couple's financial prosperity. "We have already got the confessional statements of the couple and the agent. The women were killed by the couple in a very cruel manner. The couple had been facing a financial crisis and they decided to sacrifice the women to appease God and come out of the crisis," Nagaraju said. The bodies, reportedly chopped into pieces, were buried on the farmland adjacent to the couple's house, he added.

On September 26, a woman named Palaniyamma filed a complaint at the Kadavanthra police station, under the Kochi City police, reporting her sister Padma missing. Padma hailed from Dharmapuri in Tamil Nadu, but had been staying in Kochi for the last few months. An analysis of mobile phone records led the police to Shafi. The police took Shafi into custody and his interrogation led to the expose of the twin murders.

Q. 2. Describe the structure and functioning of a newspaper's newsroom.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-3, Page No. 29, 'Editorial Structure of a Newspaper' and Page No. 28, 'Functions of a Newsroom'.

Q. 3. What are the things an interviewer should keep in mind while conducting a journalistic interview?

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-7, Page No. 76, 'Basic Tools of Interview: The Preparation'.

Q. 4. What are the activities covered under Political Beat? Discuss the importance of sources for a political reporter.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-9, Page No. 103, 'Political News Gathering and Writing'.

Q. 5. Describe the possible sources for a business reporter in detail.

Ans. External information comes in a variety of forms – from printed material to broadcast reports to online dissemination.

Print Information

The category of print covers not only a vast array of books and periodicals, but also includes microfilm and microfiche, newsletters, and other subcategories. State and federal government reports also fit into

this category; indeed, Lavin described the U.S. Government Printing Office as "the largest publisher in the free world; its products can be purchased by mail, telephone or through GPO bookstores in major cities."

Perhaps the most accessible documents in the print category are books and periodicals. Certainly business owners have a wide array of book titles to choose from, many of which find their way onto the shelves of public, business, and university libraries every year. In addition to books that provide general reference information on human resources management, start-up financing, product development, establishing a home-based business, and a plethora of other topics of interest to small business owners, the publishing industry has seen a surge of books that tackle more philosophical issues, such as balancing work and family life, establishing healthy personal interactions with co-workers and employees, the nature of entrepreneurial activity, and many others.

Many other small business owners, meanwhile, get a considerable amount of their business information from print sources. As with books, entrepreneurs and established business owners (as well as corporate executives, human resource managers, and nearly every other category of person involved in business) can turn to a variety of periodical sources, each with its own target niche. Some magazines and newspapers, such as Business Week and Wall Street Journal, provide general interest coverage, while others (Forbes, Fortune) provide more of an emphasis on subjects of interest to investors and executives in large firms. Still others--most notably Inc. Magazine and Inc.com, Small Business Start-Ups, and Nation's Business (published by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce)--publish information specifically targeted at small business owners. These magazines can provide entrepreneurs with helpful information on every aspect of operations, from creating a good business plan to determining which computer system is most appropriate for your enterprise.

Television and Radio Media

This source of business information is perhaps the least helpful of the various external sources available to small business owners. Programs devoted to general investment strategies and the changing fortunes of large companies can be found, of course, but the broad-based nature of broadcasting makes it difficult, if not impossible, to launch programs aimed at narrow niche audiences (like dental instrument manufacturers or accounting firms, for example).

Online Information

As we advance into the first decade of the 21st century, the ever-greater speed and scope of the Internet is beginning to turn the Web into the most powerful source of information for the small business. With appropriate subscription services like InfoTrac, even access to print sources is easier to achieve than actually searching newspapers or trade magazines. Search skills, of course, must be developed, but the small business owner can practice this art in the evenings when libraries and bookstores are closed.

Many of these databases offer information pertinent to the activities of business owners. As Ying Xu and Ken Ryan observed in Business Forum, the Internet includes data on demographics and markets, economics and business, finance and banking, international trade, foreign statistics, economic trends, investment information, and government regulations and laws. This information is provided by Internet news groups, online versions of newspapers and magazines, and trade associations. In addition, "many colleges, universities, libraries, research groups, and public bodies make information freely available to anyone with an Internet connection," stated Robert Fabian in CMA--The Management Accounting Magazine. "Often, the motivation is to make information available to people within the institution. But it can be less costly to provide general access than to screen access." He also noted that "increasingly, governments are publishing information on the Internet and insisting that organizations they fund also publish on the Internet. It's a practical way to move towards open government, and does make information, which is paid for by the taxpayers, far more accessible to those taxpayers (and any others with Internet access). The range of available information is impressive."

Other sources of business information

External sources of business information can be invaluable in helping a small business owner or entrepreneur determine appropriate courses of action and plan for the future. But researchers note that members of the business community often rely on personal contact for a great deal of their information.

"Common experience and the result of numerous research studies show quite clearly that managers, and indeed all seekers of information, frequently prefer personal and informal contacts and sources to published documents and formal sources generally," wrote David Kaye in Management Decision. "The reasons are well understood. A knowledgeable friend or colleague will often provide, not only the facts requested, but also

REPORTING TECHNIQUES

News-Definitions, Concept and Principles | 1

INTRODUCTION

We have an unquenchable and limitless interest for the events taking place around us. We never stop asking questions about the causes of events, the systems that made us happen, the people who were involved, the effects they had, and the implications for the future. We seek out further information when recent events have the attention of the vast majority. A blend of clear and murky details are pieced together to reveal important and helpful facts. The resulting information, which is frequently vital, contains all necessary elements and is referred to as 'news.'

CHAPTER AT A GLANCE

CONCEPT AND DEFINITION OF NEWS

Information that was recently discovered, but was previously unknown is known as news. It covers a wide range of topics, including notable events that occurred in all directions. Famous British editor Lord Northcliffe once said that news is simply what someone doesn't want to print or suppress, and that all other content is simply advertising. News is centred on people, things, and places and how they affect readers. It depicts emotive occurrences that make the audience laugh or cry and provide timely coverage of important events. Chilton R. Bush, a professor at Stanford University, described news as an occurrence that readers can comprehend. However, it can be difficult to define news precisely. It must be engaging, original, and factual, giving the viewer new knowledge. News is disseminated online as well as via newspapers, magazines, radio, and television networks. It covers the accomplishments, scandals, and lives of well-known people. Understanding reader interests is a component of news judgement or news sense. Even while bad news usually sells better, separating what's important from what isn't can be challenging. While all journalists and reporters agree that not every occurrence or event meets the criteria for news, there are differences in how news is defined.

ELEMENTS OF NEWS WRITING

Timeliness, proximity, prominence, dimension, consequence, conflict, empathy, adventure, and weather are a few of the most crucial aspects of news.

Timeliness: In news reporting, the timing of an occurrence is significant. Unless they are extraordinary or very noteworthy, events that happened days ago are frequently seen as stale. In today's quick-paced digital age, news is quickly become obsolete. The public understands the value of timely news coverage and disapproves of stale news.

Proximity: In news reporting, proximity to the audience is essential. Local events are more significant, whether due to geography or audience relevance. For instance, a sequence of explosions in Kolkata's Park Street that resulted in 15 fatalities would make local front-page news, but they would go unnoticed in other cities. Local aspects are more interesting and relevant since it's possible that the victims are familiar to the newspaper's staff, readers, customers, advertisers, or locals.

Prominence: Participation of well-known individuals ensures news coverage. The attention of the public is drawn to the famous, infamous, and unusual, whether the prime minister twists an ankle or a celebrity trips over something in the restroom. Both positive and negative events make them newsworthy due to their high-profile status and privacy.

Dimension: The size of the impact, whether it involves a big number of people, significant monetary losses, or loss of life, determines the news. For instance, a Manila earthquake that results in 500 or more fatalities garners attention on a global scale,

whereas huge news in India is generated by flooding in Mumbai or Patna that results in 23 fatalities and building collapses. Similar to this, a fire in Vadodara that caused extensive property damage and numerous fatalities merits front-page publicity. The audience's proximity is important as well since local news requires a different and serious presentation in newspapers.

Impact: Relations between nations are impacted by statements made by the British prime minister or the US president, such as sanctions on military aid. Similar to this, when the Union Government increases income tax or imposes levies on car sales, national news is produced. The chief minister of a state's decision to eliminate state funding for private schools also impacts lower-middle-class and disadvantaged families, making it important news for all residents.

Human Interest: Reporters for newspapers frequently come across stories that make readers feel pity, compassion, or sympathy. Examples include those with vision impairments climbing Mount Everest or children with hearing impairments excelling academically. Human interest stories also include tales like the son of a rickshaw puller enrolling in prominent schools or the daughter of a teacher making the civil services merit list. One event that stands out was a four-year-old boy named Prince plunging into a 30-foot-deep well. The live rescue effort held Indian viewers' interest for hours.

Conflict: Political, social, cultural, and communal conflicts of many kinds frequently make the news. Examples include disagreements among political parties like the BJP, CPI(M), and Congress over the months-long media attention-grabbing Indo-US nuclear pact. Similar topics are routinely covered in newspapers.

Adventure: The world's news media take notice when disabled people complete difficult jobs with ease. For instance, when a Japanese woman in her 70s successfully conquered Mount Everest, it garnered worldwide attention and made headlines in Japan and other nations.

Novelty: Events that are unusual or remarkable garner media attention. For instance, it made international headlines when an American woman gave birth to eight live infants, each weighing approximately 200 grams. Similar to how an eight-year-old boy from Odisha beat off adults to win a marathon race, it made headline news.

Empathy: Life is full of varied incidents that occasionally express tragedy, humour, weirdness, triumph, and failure. A child falling from its mother's arms in a moving bus or train and getting crushed under its wheels, or an old couple losing all of their children in a fire, flood, or accident, are a few examples of these occurrences that make us feel concerned and sympathetic. These tales speak to our compassion and humanity.

Weather/Climate/Environment: We are significantly impacted by extreme weather events like heatwaves, cold snaps, torrential rain, storms, and pollutants. For instance, the Indian Ocean tsunami attracted attention from all over the world because to the devastation it caused to property, lives, animals, and marine life. This incident emphasised the urgent environmental problems we face and brought to light how extreme weather shifts may be.

PRINCIPLES AND TECHNIQUES OF NEWS WRITING

The lead or introduction, often known as the opening paragraph of the news item, tries to convey the essence of the event or incident in as few words as possible—between 24 and 30.

5Ws and 1H

The 5Ws and 1H should be included in the first paragraph of a news report because this is the most important and conventional rule for doing so. This universally accepted concept guarantees that the crucial information is given right away. The H stands for How, while the 5Ws stand for Who, What, When, Where, and Why.

The major player, object, or subject of the event being described must be clearly identified in the first paragraph, also referred to as the Intro or Lead. It might feature well-known people like the president or prime minister or someone well-known in a certain setting.

The remaining 5Ws and 1H concern detailing what occurred, when it did, where it occurred, why it occurred, and how it occurred. Depending on the circumstances of the occurrence, the significance of each W may change. People with political clout typically garner greater press and attention.

The event's timing is quite important, especially if it has a big impact on a lot of people. Whether it's a government building, a temple, or another major meeting spot, the event's location is also quite crucial.

The British author Rudyard Kipling, who worked for The Pioneer newspaper in the 1930s, is credited with developing the 5W-1H formula for writing the introduction or lead. Kipling's catchphrase of choice for reporting news is as follow:

"I keep six honest serving men
They taught me all I knew
Their names are what, and why and when
And how and where and who"

The context of the article and the intended audience will influence the reporter's choice of which W is essential. Localising the narrative to the newspaper's readership while taking into account the area in which it was written and is intended for publication is also crucial.

The Inverted Pyramid

The Inverted Pyramid is yet another established format for news reporting. The most important information of the story is contained in the first paragraph, also referred to as the intro or lead. The paragraphs that follow go into further depth, detail, and explanation. With the most crucial information at the top and supporting information falling in importance, this strategy creates an inverted pyramid. The significance of each point establishes its place in the overall structure and duration of the news item, resulting in a clear and instructive narrative. The Inverted Pyramid is a term used to describe this form of narrative. The following shows how the lead or introduction of a news piece should typically be based on the inverted pyramid technique:

ILLUSTRATION NO. 1: INVERTED PYRAMID

This story (news) starts off with a great lead.
Then, short summary of the story, and
sometimes a little history for the
context of story. Important
stuff goes here. Becomes
unimportant here. Even
more unimportant
downright dull,
can be cut,
often cut,
cut,
cut.

A very fundamental strategy for news writing is the inverted pyramid technique. The basic justification for it is that the subject point of the story should be condensed into a one or two-paragraph nutshell and placed prominently in the narrative. Also known as the lead or 'nutgraph,' this crucial information is typically contained in the first paragraph of the article. Another example is provided below to further show this:

ILLUSTRATION NO. 2: INVERTED PYRAMID

The most important facts go here
What, who, why, where & how. Then
comes the next most important
facts in the story, followed
by the next most important.
And still some important
fact that could just be
cut, if need to be
cut again, and
and cut,
cut.

ILLUSTRATION NO. 3: PYRAMID
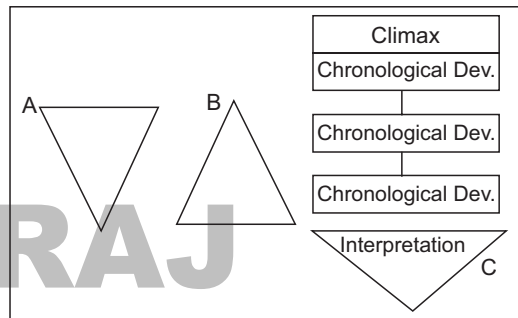
Process of News Writing

A: This figure shows how a typical news story is formatted before it is printed. The story is summarised in the lead, after which the relevance of the information gradually declines until the least important information comes at the end.

B: This pattern, which is used to write stories chronologically, is typically utilised in conjunction with suspended interest elements. The plot widens as it approaches the conclusion, starting with unimportant yet incredibly alluring aspects.

C: This diagram can be used to create a narrative with nearly equal importance throughout. The central character is crucial, and the story's climax and resolution are less crucial.

History of the Inverted Pyramid

Around 150 years ago, during the American Civil War, the inverted pyramid newswriting approach was developed. Prior to this, news reports were told in a narrative fashion, with the most crucial information coming at the end. However, a change in writing style was necessary to quickly convey the most recent war developments. In order to ensure that the news was delivered on time, war correspondents began starting their articles with the most recent information. The likelihood that important news would quickly reach the editorial desk was raised by this practice. The

inverted pyramid technique's initial purpose may have vanished, but it is now the universally accepted way to write news stories. The inverted pyramid arrangement accommodates the hectic schedules of the current audience by giving them access to the most crucial information immediately. It enables journalists to logically arrange facts, and it aids subeditors in coming up with catchy headlines. Saving time, readers can quickly determine whether to continue reading the tale. As reporters work to quickly communicate crucial information and hold readers' attention, the inverted pyramid model is still applicable. It helps journalists at all levels by facilitating effective news presentation and organisation.

Inverted Pyramid: A Critique

In recent times, inverted pyramid journalism has come under increasing attack. Some academics and experts contend that because the pyramid already efficiently accomplishes the goal, it should be used in its original form. They contest the necessity of inverting it. By presenting information in descending order of relevance, the inverted pyramid structure hopes to prevent readers from feeling misinformed if they decide to stop reading at any time. Critics counter that this method lacks organic storytelling aspects and is old and predictable. They claim that feature-style writing and narrative storytelling are becoming more common, especially in well-known American publications. This change is further supported by the declining importance of the 5Ws and 1H concept. When creating a news story, it's crucial to take the readers' requirements and preferences into account rather than strictly adhering to the inverted pyramid framework. Moving away from the conventional inverted pyramid pattern, news writing must now take a more scientific and flexible approach to meet the changing needs of contemporary news consumers.

ACTIVITIES

Q. 1. From the newspapers that you read, identify three items you consider as: *(i)* most important news; *(ii)* less important news; *(iii)* only gossip or rumour or hearsay.

Ans. The following news stories were extracted from The Times of India, published in Delhi on May 30, 2023:

(i) **Most Important News:** Widening ethnic divide in Manipur, major relocation on: Security officials.

(ii) **Less Important News:** The collapse of an abandoned mine results in the deaths of two women.

(iii) **Only gossip or rumour or hearsay.**

There was no such news in the newspaper.

Q. 2. Go through a newspaper of your choice on any day and identify five stories which could have been written without following the inverted pyramid style and re-write them in a different style.

Ans. The following news stories, written in inverted pyramid style, have been taken from Hindustan Times, Delhi, May 30, 2023:

NEWS 1

Headline: ISRO launches navigational satellite aboard GSLV Mk-II

New Delhi: The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on Monday successfully launched NVS-01, a second-generation navigation satellite on board the Geosynchronous Launch Vehicle or GSLV Mk-II, from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) in Sriharikota.

The NVS-01 will augment India's regional navigation system by providing accurate and real-time navigation, the space agency said.

"GSLV-F12/ NVS-O1 Mission is accomplished: After a flight of about 19 minutes, the NVS-O1 satellite was injected precisely into a geosynchronous transfer orbit," ISRO announced after Monday's launch.

The space agency said, "Subsequent orbit-raising manoeuvres will take NVS-01 into the intended geosynchronous orbit."

At the end of a 27.5-hour countdown, the 51.7-metre tall, three-stage GSLV Mk-II lifted off at 10.42am from the second launchpad at SDSC, nearly 130km from Chennai. This was GSLV's 15th flight.

ISRO chairperson, S. Somanath said that the satellite was placed in the precise orbit and the space agency declared the mission successful.

"Congratulations on the excellent GSLV-F12 mission outcome. The satellite has been placed in a precise orbit. This mission is after the debacle of the GSLV-F10 mission, where we had an issue with the cryogenic state. I am happy that the updates and changes we have made to make the stage more reliable have been a success," Somanath said in a post-launch press briefing.

Giving an update about the upcoming missions, Somanath said that ISRO is now gearing for the launch of Chandrayaan-3, India's third moon mission. He said that he is confident of a July launch for Chandrayaan-3.