
UNIT 8: NEWS AND NEWS REELS

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8.0 INTRODUCTION

News play a significant role in our life. It is often said that modern man lives every minute of his life on news from radio, television or newspapers. It requires special skills to plan, produce and deliver high quality news based programmes. In this unit, we take a look at the concept and definition of News, its various elements, sources, news values etc. We will examine as to how 'Radio News' is written, edited and bulletins are produced in a large broadcasting organisation like All India Radio.

8.1 LEARNING OUTCOMES

After reading this unit you will be able to:

- define the concept of News;
- enumerate the elements and qualities of the News; describe important sources of News;
- discuss the different types of radio news bulletins; and
- outline the various steps in preparation of Radio Bulletins and Newsreels.

8.2 CONCEPT OF NEWS

You must be watching television, listening to radio or 'reading newspapers to update yourself with the happenings of the country and the world. Have you ever thought about the purpose of news? Your answer must be 'to get information'. In rapidly changing times, you may feel lost without information as you would not be able to relate yourself with the society politically, socially and economically. Before we proceed further, let us try to understand what is news.

In common parlance, news is what is new. News is what everyone wants to know. A radio station, television news channel or newspaper office's main concern is to gather and report news-local, regional, national and international. You would not like to read Monday's newspaper on Thursday to up-date yourself. We do go back to the old newspapers to confirm certain information but that is once in a while. So news means novelty.

8.2.1 Definition of News

There are several definitions of news. News may be defined as 'anything timely that interests a large number of people, and the best news is that which has the greatest interest for the greatest number'. In other words, news is a timely report of events, facts, opinions that interests a significant number of people. The news is a new piece of information about a significant and recent event or development that affects the listeners/viewers/readers and is of interest to them. However, news is also relative, what may interest one person may not be of interest to the other. The definition of a radio news item is dependent on:

- the size of community (listeners);
- the periodicity of the broadcast (once, daily, twice, thrice a day);

- the social character and economic base of the community and;
- the focus of attention or emphasis of the community.

You must be aware of the famous definition of news developed by Jhon B. Bogart, City editor of New York, 'Sun'. He defined news like this, "when a dog bites man, that is not news; but when a man bites dog, that is news". Jhon Bogart pointed out very correctly that unusual events fall under the purview of the news. Later another famous editor of the Sun defined the news as "... everything that occurs, everything which is of sufficient importance to arrest and absorb the attention of the public or of any considerable part of it". You must be familiar with the name of Joseph Pulitzer, the publisher of the New York World. He defined news as "original, distinctive, romantic, thrilling, unique, curious, quaint, humorous, odd and apt-to-be-talked about". The founder of the first School of Journalism, Walter William, defined news as, "...News, in its broadest sense, is that which is of interest to the readers-the public". The former Managing Editor of the New York Times said that the news is "...anything you can find out today that you didn't know before".

There are some more definitions of News but the essence has been captured in these definitions. Let us recapitulate the salient points. The News is:

- perishable — when the event is understood and the tension is eased off- the news gets less informative and more of history;
- is of interest to a large number of people;
- of unusual events and happenings;
- what is new to the public; and
- an event put forward by a reporter, as without a reporter, a news item does not exist.

However, you should remember that the general notion of news varies with people and situations. Generally, though some of the points about news, may vary, but essential ingredients of the news are universally recognised.

8.2.2 Elements of News

From the preceding discussion, we have identified some basic elements or ingredients of the news. We shall learn about them systematically in this section.

Timeliness: News must be timely and new. It will not arouse interest if it is already known, or brought to notice long after its occurrence.

Nearness or Proximity: People are more interested in what happens in their own village, town, country rather than distant places. Similarly, they are more concerned in the occurrence of an immediate impact on them. The news that the price of rice may rise due to strike of local transporters, will make them sit up than a report that Government subsidy for fertilizers has been abolished.

Conflict: People gather in street if and when there is a fight. Conflicts of all kinds are a part of life and make a good copy.

Prominence: What happens to important people makes news. The value of the news increases with the prominence of the person involved. What the prominent people say is also very important for a reporter, particularly,

if they make some announcements which have an impact on the common people.

Human interest: People are interested in what is happening to other people. The oddities, humour, tragedy, triumph over handicaps, stories involving children, animals- all make good human-interest stories.

Government action: The passing of 'a law or other orders concerning general people, cabinet meetings, parliament and assembly sessions, notifications about new rules and regulations are newsworthy.

Development projects and issues: News related to development issues such as Environment, Ecology, Gender, Health, Population control, Agriculture etc. need to be reported and disseminated.

Weather and Sports: Both the weather and sports have great news value. The arrival of monsoon or cyclones make important news. Similarly, fury of drought and floods make news.

Follow-up: A good news story does not end at the first reference, it needs a follow-up. Follow-up keeps the interest of the listeners alive by updating them on the latest development of an event or an issue.

8.2.3 Qualities of News

There are some basic qualities of the news. These are; accuracy, balance, objectivity, and clarity.

Accuracy: Accuracy is basic to any news item. When you fail in accuracy, you lose credibility. Hence it is important to cross check your facts and information. Check figures, names and facts. Check how names are spelt. Did you get your first name correct? People are generally offended by misspelt names. If you are paraphrasing a speech from a text given to you, make sure you do not change the meaning or quote statements out of context. Rumours and speculation need to be avoided at all costs. Sensationalisation of news must be eschewed.

Balance: To be balanced in reporting is as important as being accurate. If you are writing about a controversy, give both sides of the story. When reporting a strike, for instance, give the claim of authorities and also that of the workers on how far it is successful. A story may appear to be imbalanced and thus biased, if it has too much of Government's views, or tends to give, too much foreign news which has little relevance to your listeners.

Objectivity: You should not mix your opinion in the story. Report only facts and other people's opinions. You should be a disinterested observer, reporting events without taking sides. News must be presented objectively in an unbiased manner and it should not be allied to any selfish interest.

Clarity: A story must be best in the 'way it expresses the theme. Your introductory sentence should be short and in active voice to the maximum extent possible. The ideal length of each para may be 3-4 lines containing two-three small sentences to facilitate easy comprehension.

8.2.4 Hard News and Soft News

The news is divided into two broad categories- Hard and Soft News. The Hard News is mostly event centred. It is narration of an event. The Hard

News items are centred on, “what, when, where and why”. The major thrust of a daily newspaper is the hard news as the main task is to provide information to the readers. However, mere accounts of events do not satisfy the readers as they would like to have more of analysis, background and interpretation. This type of news is called Soft News which is becoming an important segment of the daily newspapers, television news channels and radio bulletins.

Activity

Read the news stories in a newspaper. Listen to the radio bulletins of the same day. Write down the points of difference between the two.

8.2.5 Radio and Newspaper News

Radio news writing demands the same standard of accuracy, speed, clarity and objectivity as the news writing for newspaper. A question often asked is what is the difference between news written for a Newspaper and a Radio bulletin. To find the answer to this question, we must know the difference between a printed word and a spoken word. The relationship in a newspaper is between the printed word and the eye, whereas in radio it is sound and the ear, thus, you read a newspaper; while you hear a radio bulletin. While reading a newspaper, if you come across a difficult word or expression, you have the option of consulting a dictionary or a reference book. In the case of Radio news, if you do not understand a difficult word or expression, you cannot go back in time. Moreover, while reading a newspaper you have the option of reading any page first, e.g., most young people like to glance through the sports page first. Some may prefer political news, while others may opt for stories dealing with economic news, crime or scams, but with radio news, you cannot exercise such preferences. Moreover, the radio bulletin begins at a fixed time and if you miss it, you cannot retrieve it, at best, you can only wait for the next news broadcast.

Radio is a live instant-media where the listener has the choice to switch off the radio, if the bulletin is dull, drab and boring. The radio news has to be presented in a nutshell cutting out non-essential and less essential aspects. The news items and stories are to be rewritten using simple and familiar words, which even an average listener can easily comprehend. Being an audio medium, care is taken towards the tone and pitch of the speaker so that it does not create ennui.

Radio news is undergoing a great deal of changes. The style is becoming more and more informal and many voice casts are included in the bulletins. Efforts are also being made to make radio bulletins people-centred by highlighting the problems, hopes and aspirations of the common man. Ideally, the emphasis of radio news should shift from political news to human-interest stories with a focus on social, cultural scientific and economic news.

Check Your Progress: 1

- Note:** 1) Use the space below for your answers.
2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

- 1) Enumerate three characteristics of the news.

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- 2) State three differences between radio and newspaper news.

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- 3) What are the elements of news ?

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8.3 SOURCES OF NEWS

The main sources of news for radio are the following:

- News Agency and Monitored reports
- Reporters and Correspondents
- Foreign correspondents
- Interviews
- Press releases

8.3.1 News Agency and Monitored Reports

A News agency is an organisation which collects or gathers news and supplies to different newspapers, magazines, radio stations and television station subscribing to its service. News agencies have a well-organised wide network which provides a continuous flow of information through electronic teleprinters or computers. The Press Trust of India and United News of India are the two major Indian news agencies. Their Hindi wings are known as Bhasha and Univarta which were launched to meet the demands of news in Hindi. For foreign and sports news, radio networks mostly depend on foreign news agencies such as Reuters, Associated Press (AP), Agence France Presse (AFP) etc.

Various radio and television broadcast channels of other countries are monitored to obtain information. These are known as monitored reports. After receiving and selecting news from the agencies, the copy has to be rewritten in the spoken word idiom to meet the requirement of the radio. The slant and bias in stories needs to be carefully looked into and weeded out.

8.3.2 Reporters and Correspondents

A fairly large team of trained reporters and correspondents based in the capital is responsible for covering, national and international events, activities of various Government departments, political parties and other events. They also take care of the parliamentary proceedings. A reporter files

a factual report of a happening while the correspondent sends commentative analytical dispatches including commentaries to the background to the news. Some broadcasting organisations deploy their Correspondents in a few select foreign locations and also hire part-time Correspondents abroad. Correspondents are also stationed in the State capitals and other cities where news-fall is usually heavy. They have to cater to national bulletins broadcast from Delhi and regional bulletins broadcast from local stations. Working alone, a correspondent has to prepare two versions of the same story in two different languages. S/he also has to cover visits by the Prime Minister, President and other dignitaries to the State. S/he has to be quick in filing reports and accurate in facts as s/he faces a tough competition from other sources. These correspondents are generally Part-time Correspondents (PTCs) at District headquarters, who may be newspaper reporters or stringers.

8.3.3 Foreign Correspondents

The work of a correspondent abroad is a challenging task. Although some administrative help from the Indian Mission is provided, s/he has to manage the professional front on one's own. S/he has to be in constant touch with various sources of news which include officials, the diplomatic corps, local newsmen, other foreign correspondents, local radio, TV and newspapers. The functions of a foreign correspondent include:

- Reporting major developments in the area, keeping in view the Indian interest. At the same time, guarding against the in-built bias in stories filed by foreign agencies,
- reporting developments of particular interest to India and the region and,
- collecting material for spotlights and commentaries.

For a foreign correspondent, command over English as well as Hindi is an asset. A bilingual can file stories and voice dispatches in Hindi as well as in English. Knowledge of the country, including the language spoken there is also an added asset.

8.3.4 Interviews

Interviews can lead to exclusive stories and scoops. However, for producing a good interview, a great deal of planning and home work are essential. The areas which need probing need to be identified in advance. The interviewer should build up a rapport with the interviewee and make the interviewee comfortable by having some pleasant preliminary conversation as relaxed atmosphere is conducive for a good interview. S/he should also be conversant with the handling of recording equipment. Before starting an interview, the correspondent should carry out a thorough check of the equipment.

8.3.5 Handouts and Press Releases

The Government offices and private organisations issue handouts and press releases from time to time. Most of these handouts and press releases are exercises in publicity and public relations. The news value of these handouts should be closely examined before including them in the news bulletin. Many a time, the handouts are not written in a logical manner and need

rewriting. There is need to look for the lead point, give the story a logical sequence, roundup the figures and add background information wherever necessary.

8.4 RADIO NEWS BULLETINS

To understand the planning and production of Radio News Bulletins, we need to take a look at the working of the News Services Division of All India Radio, which handles all news bulletins and news related programmes. The General News Room of AIR called GNR, functions round-the-clock in four shifts and handles over 300 bulletins in 24 hours. Each shift is headed by an Editor-in-charge, assisted by a number of assistant editors, sub-editors and compilation editors.

A normal radio bulletin is of ten-minute duration. However, there are also bulletins of 15 minutes and five minutes duration. A news bulletin begins with headliner, followed by main news, consisting of two 'bunches' with a break in between and repeat of headlines/main points at the end. A fifteen minutes bulletin has two breaks while there is no break in a five minutes bulletin. 'Bunching' means the placement of items and it plays an important role in making the bulletin lively and interesting. The first bunch is generally packed with hard news. Of the four headlines in a ten minutes bulletin, one should invariably be on sports.

A radio bulletin must have variety and should include Political, Economic, Cultural, Sports, Science and Technology and other important items. Regional, national and international events, parliamentary news and important court cases should also find their due places in the bulletins. Weather and human-interest items also need to be included. Continuity in the bulletins needs to be ensured and transition from one set of related items to the other should be smooth without jerks. In moving from one story to another, which is not connected with the previous one, the transition should be smooth. For example; 'The World Trade fair opened in Delhi today' or 'In the Mumbai stock market today.....' or 'In the Wimbledon The word 'meanwhile' is also used appropriately to facilitate such demarcation of items.

As far as possible, voice casts of correspondents on important events should be used. Radio being a spoken medium, voice casts help to enliven the bulletin and break the monotony thus make it lively and interesting. While giving a voice cast, a correspondent tries to take the listener on the scene. In an event like a big fire, floods, accidents, the correspondent gives a first-hand account about what s/he saw and how it was being there, on the site. The voice cast is ideally of 40 to 45 seconds duration, however in some cases, it can go up-to one minute. Mostly, it is recorded, but it can also be live. A studio-based voice cast can be edited tightly.

8.4.1 Main Bulletins

AIR broadcasts hourly news bulletins. There are however, three main bulletins in English and Hindi, broadcast in the morning, afternoon and evening. The morning bulletin in English is called the Morning News and Samachar Prabhat in Hindi. It is divided into three segments; the main

news, a topical commentary and 'a look at the newspapers' and finally the main points. The segment, 'A look at the newspapers' has been designed to provide the listener with an overview of the lead and other front page stories, editorials and sports stories in the National Dailies. The compiling editor is assisted by two editors, one looks after the segment on Commentary and the other 'A look at the newspapers'.

Generally, the break-up of 15 minutes programmes is like this:

Main News	8 minutes
Commentary	2.5 minutes
A Look at the Newspapers	2.5 minutes
Headline and Signature tune	2 minutes



News hours bulletin going on air

8.4.2 Language Bulletins

Language bulletins broadcast from Delhi and Regional stations are widely listened. You would be surprised to know that the listener-ship of these bulletins is much more than the combined listener-ship of all the English bulletins! The language bulletins broadcast from Delhi have a national character to give the listener a feel of the important national and international events in his/her language. The bulletins, however, do include important regional items.

The master-copy is compiled in the General News Room in English and normally there is one script for each language bulletin. The compiling editor is required to ensure that items of interest for a particular region and particular state are highlighted in the language bulletin of that region/State. Sometimes, if the regional item is very important, it can be the lead or a headline in that language bulletin. Language bulletins are broadcast from Delhi thrice a day and each one is of ten minute duration. They have the same format as English bulletins of similar duration, i.e., four headlines, one break and repeat headlines.

8.4.3 External Bulletins

The News Services Division of All India Radio, broadcasts three types of External bulletins. English bulletins targeted at foreigners and Indians living abroad, foreign language bulletins like Chinese, Burmese, Russian and French for foreigners and Hindi and other language bulletins for Indians living abroad. Indian languages such as; Bengali, Tamil, Telugu, Punjabi, Sindhi and Urdu are spoken in our neighbourhood and bulletins in these languages have a wide listenership.

A common misconception among people is that external bulletins should carry more foreign news. In these days of satellite television the notion that we will be the first to break a news, say about African region to the people of that area will be entirely misplaced as other local sources are better equipped to tell them about the happenings in their regions.

The external bulletins present the perceptions and reactions of the people, leaders and the government of the country from where the bulletin originates in respect of happenings in the other country/countries. The external bulletins need to highlight the social, political and economic developments at home to provide adequate background information on these issues and also explain the programmes and policies of the country. External bulletins have the added responsibility of countering the mis-information campaign being carried out by some foreign networks. Care is also taken to highlight the Indian viewpoint on various issues.

8.4.4 Specialised Bulletins

The News Services Division broadcasts a couple of specialised bulletins. These include the Human Interest Bulletin and the Youth Bulletin, which generally carry soft stories. In addition, special weather bulletins are also broadcast for the benefit of various mountaineering expeditions.

8.4.5 Comments from the Press

Comments from the Press is a review of the different viewpoints presented in the editorials of the national dailies on a particular topic. The editor preparing the Press Comments brings out the main thrust of an editorial by highlighting critical comments in a balanced manner. Care is taken to have some common thread to give a sense of continuity so that the programme does not sound like an unrelated collection of extracts from the editorials of the National dailies.

8.5 WRITING RADIO NEWS COPY

A Radio news bulletin must have everything of the front page attention. The selected items are rewritten and edited for the bulletin. While editing one has to be brief, as time is a big constraint in a radio bulletin. The target listeners of the news are also kept in mind while selecting and writing the news items. The news items are written in an 'inverted pyramid' style with the climax in the lead. The details follow the lead which is called 'Intro' (introduction).

While writing a radio copy, the style book of the broadcasting station needs to be followed. Broadcast organisations all over the world have their own

style rules for their copy. Style rules help the editors in producing a copy, which has consistency and reflects the style and values of the organisation.

8.5.1 Headlines

In a radio bulletin, the number of headlines is generally restricted to five for a fifteen-minutes bulletin and four for a ten-minutes bulletin. Headlines should be crisp, concise to the point and always backup the story. A good story can be killed by a dull and vague headline. Basically, a good headline should:

- tell the listener what the story is about;
- provide the information in quick and easy form and;
- entice the listener to listen to the full story.

8.5.2 Words and Sentences

The overall objective of a news bulletin is to communicate and not to impress the listener. While writing the news, the simple rule is to write the way you would say it aloud to a group of people. The language of news is in the conversational spoken word idiom so that the listener understands everything easily. Words of everyday use are preferred to long and difficult words used by newspapers. Direct tense and short sentences with conversational ring are preferred.

The length of a story is important in a radio news. Ideally, a story should not generally be more than hundred words, however, stories like parliamentary news, policy statements, political crisis and election news can be a few exceptions. The most relevant and interesting part of the story should constitute the lead sentence. Efforts are made not to cramp too much information in one item as the interest of listener begins to fade if the item is too long and complicated. As a news reporter you should ensure that the listener is not bombarded with difficult and long expressions which may intimidate him/her and lead to switching off the radio set.

8.5.3 Number and Dates

While including Number and Dates, the following steps should be taken into consideration:

- Numbers from 1 to 11 should always be spelt (one, two, three...nine); otherwise they may get lost in the copy. However, numerals from 12 to 999 can remain as it is, as they are easy to read.
- Thousands, lakhs and crores should be spelt out.
- In case of financial figures, the currency should follow the figure, say, ten crore rupees and not the other way, rupees ten crores.
- Figures like 990 can be rounded off to 'about one thousand'.
- Dates should be written as they are read, 'the sixth of January', and year should always be written in full 1994, 1997 and not '94, '97 etc.

8.5.4 Honorifics

In radio, honorifics are also used with great care.

- Mr., Mrs. and Miss are used in English and Shri, Shrimati and Kumari in Hindi and other Indian languages.

- The designation always precedes the name. It is correct to say 'President Biden', or 'The President, Mr. Biden'.
- Some names carry the surname first and do not require Mr. or Mrs., 'Sheikh Abdullah', 'Maulana Azad'. Honorifics like, 'His Majesty', 'His Holiness', or 'His Excellency' are not used.
- Officers of the defence services are identified by their rank before their names and Judges as 'Mr. Justice'.
- Dead persons are mentioned without any honorific 'Jawahar Lal Nehru', 'Lal Bahadur Shastri', 'Rajiv Gandhi' rather than 'Late

8.5.5 Abbreviations

Abbreviations are normally avoided and a word should be written the way one wants it to be used. Acronyms like UNESCO, SAARC, NAM, which are familiar to Listeners and pronounced as a word are acceptable. If one has to use an abbreviation, the best way is to spell out the full name, "The World Trade Organization", and then W-T-O, so that listener easily relates with it.

8.6 EDITING RADIO NEWS

By now, you know the difference between a printed word and a spoken word and the basics for writing a radio copy. You also know the difference between radio copy and a story written for a newspaper. Now let us see how a radio editor handles a story/copy.

A good editor should have the skill, knowledge and experience to produce a good copy. The task of a radio editor requires:

- checking and correcting all errors related to facts and expressions in the copy;
- condensing the copy by eliminating unnecessary verbiage and;
- clarifying by rewriting the material and make it conform to the spoken-word style.

8.6.1 Checking the Copy

As a News Editor you should always think of yourself as the first reader of any story. First of all, you must satisfy yourself with the newsworthiness of the copy. If a story does not make sense to you, it cannot make sense to the listener. This simple rule is often forgotten. The story must answer all questions that might arise in the listener's mind. You should check and double check all the facts, because once a wrong news items has been broadcast, there is no way to retrieve the item. Reference material and library should be used whenever required.

8.6.2 Clarifying

Editing works on the premise that there is always room for improvement in any story. A second critical eye can always help in making a story better. The following questions should be raised in order to improve the story:

- Has the story been written in a simple conversational style?
- Does it include all the important and interesting points?

- Is the story easy on the ears and conveys the meaning clearly?
- Will the listener be able to understand the story if s/he has not heard the previous bulletin? Is there any point left to the imagination of the listener?
- Is there any scope to trim the story further without losing any important points?

Answers to these questions would help in clarifying the story further.

8.6.3 Condensing

We have already stated that time is the biggest constraint in a radio bulletin. A good editor always insists on simplicity and brevity. As a beginner, you should first understand the story, then cut out whatever is irrelevant. The aim should be to produce a compact copy, which cannot be trimmed or edited any further. Words or phrases that might not be needed in the story should be edited. Repetition of names and designations should be avoided. Editing becomes a second habit with experienced editors whose pen is often drawn magnetically to superfluous words and phrases. However, there are times when a brief story may need some flesh and background details have to be added.

8.6.4 Preparation of News Bulletin

Once the story is rewritten and edited, it is put in the pool, indicating the pool number, date and shift. For example, during the day shift, the number can be DP I for home stories and DP II for foreign based items. Here, DP means Day Pool. During Parliament session and elections, separate Parliament Pool and Election Pool are made. These stories are numbered as DPP (Day Parliament Pool) and DEP (Day Election Pool). While compiling the bulletin, the pool copies can be further edited and integrated with other stories.

These news items need to be arranged in a bulletin. The structure of a ten minutes News Bulletin is as indicated below:

- Headlines;
- Body of the bulletin;
- A break midway, where the news reader identifies the station;
- Body of the bulletin; and
- Repeat of headlines/recap of major news items.

The position of an item in the bulletin depends upon its news value; the lead story should be of prime interest to most listeners. The order of news is a matter of judgement under the theory that a listener wants to hear all the top news first. There is no need to follow mechanically an order of foreign and home items, although related items should be taken together. Transition from item to item should be intelligently done to keep the listener tuned from start to finish.

The broadcast copy should be typed in triple space as this is easy on the eye, readable and allows room for corrections. Ideally, there should be about ten words per line. The length of lines should be consistent, so that by counting the lines at the time to read a story can be determined. Generally,

only one story should be typed on one page. However, connected stories, which have to go together, may be typed in one page. In order to facilitate smooth reading of a bulletin some care needs to be taken while typing the broadcast copy:

- A sentence should never be split at the end of the page;
- If a complete sentence does not fit on a page, the whole sentence should be typed on the next page;
- Efforts should be made not to split words at the end of a line; and
- The spellings should be double-checked as wrong spellings could affect the flow of a bulletin.

Many a time, some corrections need to be made in the copy at the last minute. Such corrections must be typed or written in capitals — exactly when they are supposed to be read. The News Reader must be shown these corrections in advance, so that s/he rehearses them and does not fumble while going on the air.

Activity
Select some Hard News from a newspaper and re-write for use in a radio bulletin.

Check Your Progress: 2

- Note: 1) Use the space below for your answers.
2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

Write three points each which should be kept in mind while:

- 1) Writing a radio copy
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- 2) Editing a radio copy
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- 3) Preparing a radio bulletin
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8.7 NEWS PRESENTATION

The production of a news bulletin is complete only when it is presented on the air by the news reader. The news reader is the kingpin in news broadcasting and as far as the listener is concerned, it is the news reader who matters. The role of a news reader varies widely depending on the practices prevalent in the news set up. In AIR, the English and Hindi news refiners

read the news bulletins prepared by compilation editors whereas in respect of regional languages, the news reader also does the translation. In several other broadcasting organisations, the news reader gets freely involved in the various stages and processes of news production.

News readers have a good trained voice and they present the news after fully grasping the content of the news stories included in the bulletin. For this, they keep themselves abreast of the various developments in country and abroad. They have to pronounce the words including proper nouns correctly. For this they have to check with various sources. They have to rehearse the script thoroughly and be in readiness to read correctly 'the flash news' brought to them while they are already on the air. They have to make the necessary indications on the script to facilitate appropriate emphasis and pauses and ensure that they do the reading at a uniform speed.

8.8 NEWSREELS AND CURRENT AFFAIRS PROGRAMMES

Radio basically deals with sounds and voices. Newsreel programme provides an opportunity to handle the news story in detail, including voice dispatches, interviews and actual background sound. Usually, a newsreel programme of ten minute duration has four to five news items, The newsreel should have a good lead and proper lead-ins and throw lines for each and every cut. The editor writing the narration should ensure that transitions from one cut to another are smooth and repetitions are avoided as far as possible. The ten minutes programme should have three or four headlines written in snappy style. Newsreel programme in English is broadcast on AIR four days a week and Samachar Darshan in Hindi thrice a week. On special occasions such as 3 December, a news reel programme of extended duration is broadcast on the theme, "Year-end Review". There are a number of ways to enliven a newsreel programme by including music etc.

The current affair programmes aim to explain to the listener in detail the intricacies of the major news developments. Generally, journalists and subject experts deal with these subjects but sometimes, in-house correspondents and editors also write them. Besides, there are the Weekly current affair programmes in English and "Charch ka Vishay hai" in Hindi. Care is taken to follow the principles of news in these programmes and provide fair, balanced, accurate and objective information.

The Current Affair programmes can be presented on radio in many formats-talks, discussions, interviews etc. In a discussion on current affairs, generally, four to five specialists participate with one of them moderating the programme. During elections, interactive programmes through Phone-in, Radio Bridge are also planned. The Radio Bridge is an extended form of current affair programme in which experts in a number of state capitals take part in the discussion. The moderators and experts in Delhi are connected with the studios in different state capitals through a Radio Bridge. Similarly, in Phone-in programme, three to four experts along-with the moderator sit in the studio and answer the questions posed by listeners on telephone. The Phone-in programme on the occasion of Budget presentation is immensely

popular with listeners from various parts of the country asking questions on the budget proposals.

8.9 LET US SUM UP

In this Unit, the concept, definition and sources of News were discussed. The news was described as a timely report of events, facts and opinions that interests a significant number of people. The concept of news varies with people and places, what is news to one may not be news to another. Some factors, which decide news-worthiness, are timeliness, proximity, conflict, prominence, Government action, human interest, weather sports and development activity. The news should be accurate, balanced, objective and clear. The definition and principles of news are the same for radio, television and newspaper news.

Radio news deals with spoken-word. Use of simple language, short sentences and conversational style is the hallmark of radio news. Difficult words and expressions are avoided. The story is thoroughly checked for facts and figures and all important and interesting points are included. A compact copy is produced, which cannot be edited any further.

The radio copy should be typed in triple space. A sentence should never be split at the end of a page and efforts should be made not to split words at the end of a line. Numbers from 1 to 11 should be spelt out, however numbers from 12 to 999 can remain, as they are easy to read. Thousands, lakhs and crores should always be spelt out. The figures should be rounded off. Dates should be written as they are read. Abbreviations are normally avoided. All correction in the copy should be typed or neatly written in capitals.

8.10 GLOSSARY

Bunching : Placement of items in a news bulletin. The first bunch is generally packed with hard news.

Copy: Written material offered for broadcast

Copy editing: Improving the clarity and correctness of the copy by editing and rearrangement of the material

Handouts : Pages of press information or publicity sheet issued to draw attention towards an event

Lead story : The first most important story in a news bulletin

Stringer : Self-employed broadcaster who is not a regular staff and is paid by the items used by the channel.

Style rules : Set of rules and guidelines to help the editors in producing a copy, which has consistency and reflects the style of the organisation.

8.11 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: POSSIBLE ANSWERS

Check Your Progress: 1

- 1) The news is:
 - new and of interest to a large number of people;

- it is generally related to unusual events and happenings; and
 - is perishable.
- 2) Three differences between radio news and newspaper are:
- while reading a newspaper, a difficult word or expression can be understood by consulting a dictionary. However, on radio a difficult word or expression cannot be understood;
 - while reading a newspaper the reader has the option of reading any page first but with radio news, such preferences cannot be exercised; and
 - the radio bulletin begins at a fixed time as such it cannot be retrieved, while one can go back to a newspaper page.
- 3) The elements of news are; timeliness, proximity, prominence, conflict, human interest, Government action, developmental project or issue, weather and sports.

Check Your Progress: 2

- 1) While writing a radio copy:
- the conversational spoken word idiom are used to make the listener understand everything easily;
 - difficult words and long expression used by newspapers are avoided; and
 - direct tense and short sentences are used.
- 2) While editing a radio copy:
- errors related to facts and expressions in the copy are thoroughly checked and corrected;
 - unnecessary verbiage is eliminated and the copy condensed; and
 - the material is rewritten and the copy confirmed to the spoken word style.
- 3) While preparing a radio bulletin:
- a variety of news, regional, national and international is included to cater to varied tastes and needs;
 - the position of an item, in the bulletin is planned according to its news value; and
 - transition from item to item is smoothly done to keep the listener tuned from the start to the finish.

