

121.8.19

## 2. JOURNALISM

What is Journalism? - History of Journalism - The Role of the Press - Functions of the Press - Journalism as a Career - Qualification of a Successful Journalist

### Introduction:

Journalism is an account of history of any incident, event or happening. It highlights the reports of things as they appear at the moment of writing. It is a contemporary report of changing scenes, intended to inform readers of what is happening around them. The words 'journal', 'journalist' and 'journalism' have their Latin origin in a French derivation from it. Around 130 BC the early Romans put up two hand-written bulletins, called 'Acta diurna' which described the daily events of interest and importance to the senators and the public. It was also made a newspaper which dealt with the events rather than views.

Journalists are accountable to the people for the fairness and accuracy in presenting the news item. The public should know what exactly happened and not a fabricated or sensationalized version of it. A journalist should never deviate from the sense of decency, when reporting the news. He should never break his word of confidentiality. If circumstance demands, the source of news should be made public. The journalist has the duty to maintain the highest professional and ethical standard. He should defend the principle of freedom of the press and other media in relation to the collection of information and expression of comment. He should seek to ensure that the information disseminated is fair and accurate and avoid conjecture. He should rectify any harmful mistakes and ensure that the correction and apologies receive due prominence. Any information, photographs

conjecture - assumption

*examples*  
 and illustrations, should be obtained only through fair means. He should do nothing which entails journalism into private <sup>sad</sup> grief and distress. He should not accept bribes or other <sup>influenced</sup> inducements to influence his work or employers. He should never indulge in processing material which encourages <sup>discrimination</sup> discrimination, ridicule, prejudice or hatred on any subject. He should not take private advantage of information obtained in the course of his duties before the information is made public. This unit highlights on the subject of journalism and the scope it offers for the would be – journalists.

### Definition of Journalism

The definition of Encyclopedia Britannica is as follows:  
 "Journalism includes the writing and editing of newspapers and periodicals... The gathering and transmission of news business management of journals and advertising in all its phase are often thought of as coming within the field of journalism and following the <sup>advent</sup> advent of radio and television, there is a trend toward including all communication dealing with current affairs in the term."

Journalism means writing for journals. It is communication of information through writing in newspapers, periodicals or magazines. People have an inborn desire to know what is new. The journalists satisfy their curiosity by writing in news papers and journals about the current events and news.

### The Journalist:

*In born - by Birth.*  
A Journalist is one who takes up journalism as his profession

To-day, a journalist is anyone who contributes in some way to the gathering, selection and processing of news and current affairs for the press, radio, film, television, cable, the internet, blogs, the mobile, PDA and the I pod. Thus editors, correspondents, assistant editors, reporters, sub-editors, *type* *Sch*

proof-readers, cartoonists, photographers, on line  
journalists and news-oriented bloggers are journalists; so are  
camera crew, audio and video editors, news readers, producers,  
directors and managing editors.

A Journalist reports news and offers interpretation and  
opinion on the news. He may also write an account that is  
entertaining as well as newsworthy.

### Role of Journalism:

All the media are listed under the general head 'Press'  
or Journalism. Human beings are curious to know about their  
fellow beings and their doings. They are interested in knowing  
what goes on around them. The press tries to cater to this basic  
mental inquisitiveness of the human beings.

Journalism communicates with people, with as many  
people as there are in the world. Journalism means a nose for  
news and a feel for words. It means, being able to size up a  
situation on the spot. It is an art. None can teach the fairer  
aspects of journalism and no cosmetic surgeon can give us a  
nose for news.

So, journalism is of information about people and for  
people. It mirrors the world to the world.

### Functions of Journalism:

The functions of the press are to inform, to instruct, to  
entertain and to merchandise. The various departments in the  
newspaper organizations are engaged in this job. On the editorial  
side, it has two important wings of reporting, that is field work  
and editing, that is, desk work. The journalist, particularly the  
reporter, gathers news as things happen. He is called the  
unknown historian. The gathered news of the reporters are being  
shaped to suit the needs of the readers, listeners and viewers.

In a democratic society, the press has been rightly called as the 'Fourth Estate.' It is the media's obligation to focus the attention of the people on the many administrative errors of commission and omission. It does this by moulding public opinion along the right lines. The media can construct and destroy, blacken and brighten, quicken and slacken anything or anybody.

It was Macaulay who first used the term 'Fourth Estate'. In 1828 he said, 'the gallery in which reporters sit has become the Fourth Estate'. In the Parliament there were three Estates namely, Royalty, Lords and Commons. In the reporter's gallery, there sat a Fourth Estate, most important than them all. This shows the importance of the media.

### **Qualification of a Journalist** 29.8.19

In the past journalism did not demand educational qualifications or professional training. It was an open profession for all. Anybody who had a flair for writing and an aptitude for journalism could join it. His success depended on his capability and hard work.

Some people say that journalism must always be an open profession, and hard and fast rules about educational qualifications and professional training should not be prescribed. They point out that Gandhi Tilak, Ambedkar and Mohan Roy had no journalistic training and yet brought glory to the journalistic field. Some of the top journalists of the present day have had no worthy educational qualifications and formal training. They have risen to eminence by sheer aptitude and untiring work.

All this, however, does not imply that journalism requires no qualification and training. Journalism has become a challenging profession. It is full of career opportunities. It has become every much a high-tech industry. Naturally it demands certain academic qualifications, special knowledge, professional

training and technical skills. The following are some of the qualification and requirements expected of aspirants to the journalistic profession now:

1. A minimum basic educational qualification that enables a person to express his ideas fluently in writing. Managements of most newspapers insist on university degrees.
2. A Diploma in Journalism is desirable. Some newspapers insist on it. Nowadays many Universities are offering graduate and post-graduate courses in Journalism as well as mass communication. Students of these courses definitely have better chances than others, to enter the field of Journalism.
3. Good knowledge of shorthand and type-writing.
4. Good knowledge of English. Knowledge of Hindi and regional languages will be greatly helpful.
5. A good knowledge of grammar and the correct use of language.
6. A strong vocabulary and a desire to pick up new words in different subjects.
7. A flair for writing & a command over language.
8. An inquisitive mind and willingness to learn more and more about different fields.
9. A vast general knowledge about national and international affairs.
10. Voracious reading of famous books and important national and international newspapers and journals, to increase general knowledge and acquaintance with current affairs.
11. Acquisition of some background knowledge of science, history, culture, civilisation and other interesting facts of life.
12. Effort to pick up some fundamental knowledge of business, industry, trade, commerce, banking etc. which will be very useful in journalism.

13. Desire to know about places, men and matters.
14. Knowledge of the political affairs of the country.
15. Rudimentary knowledge of general laws.

### **Qualities of a Successful Journalist**

Journalism is a challenging profession and a person needs certain qualities of head and heart to become a successful journalist.

First and foremost, a journalist should have "a nose for <sup>valuable</sup> news. He must be able to discern the <sup>separate</sup> chaff from the wheat. He must be on the lookout for news, and must be able to assess the value of news." <sup>as</sup>

To thrive in his field, a journalist should be a jack of all trades. He must be an all-rounder. He must have a fairly good knowledge of law, religion, science, economics, politics, war, etc. He should be interested in philosophy, music, sports, cinema and other cultural activities. In brief, he must acquire a vast general knowledge.

A journalist should have a thirst for learning. He must constantly read books, newspapers, periodicals and magazines. He must continually enlarge his acquaintance with men and matters.

To flourish in his profession, a journalist should be far-sighted and resourceful. He must be tactful, diplomatic and alert.

A sound mind in a sound body is essential to a journalist. He must have the stamina to withstand the stress and strain of long hours of arduous and tedious work.

A journalist may have to travel a lot. He may have to visit interior and dangerous areas. He has to put up with all sorts of inconveniences. Sometimes he may have to travel without rest on a special assignment, visit strange places, meet all sorts of

people. In some places he may get a warm welcome, in some other places a harsh treatment. He must take things in the proper stride and face problems with a smile.

The spirit of adventure must make a journalist a daredevil. He must be ready to take risks while securing curfewed or prohibited areas. An adaptive nature can be a tremendous advantage. He must be courageous enough to face challenges and hardships. He must dig out news if he is doing investigative journalism. People may not readily divulge information or facts. So a journalist must use all the tact and resourcefulness at his command to dig out news. Ashwin Sarin boldly proved that women were being sold in Madhya Pradesh. He exposed the abominable conditions of Tikar Jail of Delhi. Arun Sinha created a sensation by reporting the blinding of under-trial prisoners by the police in Bihar. Gopal of Nakkeeran wrote a number of investigative stories through his exclusive interviews with the sandalwood brigand Veerappan at his hideout in the jungles of TamilNadu.

A Journalist has to cover riots and war risking his life for the sake of his profession. A person needs a lot of guts to survive in the journalistic field. He should be bold and judicious in a moment of crisis, especially when covering riots, communal disturbances, workers' demonstrations, etc. He may have to be present at the scene of a baton charge, police firing or teargas. Like a soldier, he cannot back out from such dangerous situations, and he must be ready to undergo all such ordeals.

A good journalist should have a proper understanding of public relations. He has to develop a rapport with all kinds of people - from the Prime Minister to a local leader.

Journalism is a highly competitive profession today. We are now in an era of computers. Faxing, E-mail, internet and other electronic media have put modern man on the information

highway. A modern journalist should therefore become acquainted with these technologies which have shrunk the world into a global village.

Above all, a journalist should possess honesty integrity and character, to win the faith and respect of the people. Love of his profession and hard work will definitely bring tremendous success to a journalist and reputation to his paper.

**Role of the press in India:** 30.8.19

Since independence press in India has grown vastly in size and circulation. But it suffers from many ills. It has yet to identify its true- post independence role, so as to ensure against haphazard growth and directionless expansion.

The role of the Press in India need not be that of adversary or of blind support to the government. The press should be the watch-dog and act as a catalytic agent to hasten the process of social and economic change and thus secure people's participation and involvement in the country's development.

The Press in India to-day is too much obsessed with politics. The country needs creative reporting, particularly on non-political themes such as unemployment, malnutrition, population growth etc. The emphasis should be not on what public wants but on what it needs. Reporting should provide adequate local coverage and cover human activities in farms, factories, schools and universities. All this can be accomplished only if the Press is able to evolve a philosophy of mass communication and code of ethics through consensus.

In order to function efficiently, the Press needs well paid and well trained journalists to report events particularly from small towns and rural areas.

Credibility is the life-blood of communication. Whatever is given out by the media is believed only if dissent is permitted, otherwise any message received through oral communication would be more acceptable.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### SHORT ANSWERS

#### 1. What Is Journalism?

Journalism is an account of history of any incident, event or happening. It highlights the reports of things as they appear at the moment of writing. It is a contemporary report of changing scenes intended to inform readers of what is happening around them. Journalism is information and communication. It is basically news.

#### 2. Define Journalism:

'Journalism is a contemporary report of the changing scene, intended to inform readers of what is happening around them.'

#### 3. Who is a journalist?

A journalist is one who takes up journalism as his profession. He reports news and offers interpretation and opinion on the news. He may also write an account that is entertaining as well as newsworthy.

#### 4. What are the functions of Journalism?

The main functions of the press are to inform, educate and entertain the public. Of these, the primary function is to provide comprehensive and objective information on all aspects of the country's social, economic, political and cultural life.

#### 5. What are the objectives of the Press Council of India?

The objectives of the Press Council of India are to preserve the freedom of the press and to improve standards of newspapers and news agencies in the country.

**6. What are the functions of the Press Council?**

The functions of the Council are to build up a code of conduct for newspapers, news agencies and journalists in accordance with high professional standards and to encourage the growth of sense of responsibility and public service among all those who are engaged in the profession of journalism.

**7. Write a note on the scope of journalism.**

The scope of journalism has to-day extended vastly. It comprises news and views, information and instruction, entertainment and enlightenment. A journal may consist of a single news sheet meant for a factory or a small village, or it may be a national newspaper, an international magazine or a journal for the whole world.

**8. What is the role of the Press?**

The press should help secure and protect a social order in which justice would prevail. The role of the press in India need not be that of an adversary or of an ally of the government. The press should be a watch dog and act as a catalytic agent to hasten the process of social and economic change.

**9. Write a note on Press Laws**

The most important laws among the press laws are law of libel and defamation, contempt of court and legislature, copyright etc. Those who are engaged in journalistic profession should be familiar with the laws which affect them in their day to day work.

**10. What is freedom of the Press?**

Freedom of the Press means the right to publish books, pamphlets, newspapers, magazines or other periodicals without having to submit them in advance for government approval. The same freedom applies to cinema, television and radio. The writer or reporter is liable for prosecution if he publishes false scandalous or malicious materials that are libellous in nature.

## 6. Write a note on the Freedom of the Press.

The Press should be free in order to provide information to the people. It also provides a forum for public discussion. This freedom has been made possible because of the fight for it by the people of this country. As Milton has rightly said, it is "the liberty to know, to utter and to argue freely according to conscience." The Press nowadays is better known as the Fourth Estate. This term has been differently understood by different people. It might mean freedom to publish any matter. Some others think that it is freedom from prejudices, freedom from the control of the government and freedom from the influence of the advertisers and pressure groups. According to the First Press Commission of India, it means "freedom to hold opinions, to receive and to impart information through the printed word without interference from the public authority."

Freedom of the Press has three distinct characteristics: a) freedom of access to all the sources of information b) freedom of publication and c) freedom of circulation. The duty of the Press is to circulate the correct news and spread it far and wide. Freedom of thought is applied to an individual, while freedom of expression is a collective freedom. Whatever is fit and beyond controversy, the Press readily takes such matters to the public through its organ. The rights of the Press have to be harmonized with its duties and responsibilities. In a democratic country like India, there should be public order, decency, morality and friendly relations with other countries. Any improper or abusive news should be punished according to the law. In the Indian Constitution Freedom of the Press has been guaranteed as a fundamental right. But there are restrictions on this freedom put forward by the central government. The government exercises control over the Press. The privileges of the Indian Parliament put restrictions on this medium.

**2. What are the Important principles that a Journalist should follow?**

A journalist has to respect, cultivate and defend the right to information of all people; for these reasons he researches and diffuses every piece of information that he considers of public interest in observance of truth and with a wide accuracy of it.

A journalist researches and spreads news of public interest in spite of the obstacles which can arise in his work. He makes every effort to guarantee people knowledge and control of all public documents.

A journalist's responsibility towards people always prevails over any other thing. A journalist can never subordinate his responsibility to other people's interest and particularly to the publishers' interest, government's interest or the interest of the other organizations of the state.

A journalist has to respect people, their dignity and right to secrecy and never discriminate against anyone due to his race, his religion, his sex, his mental and physical condition, and his political views.

A journalist rectifies, speedily and with accuracy, his mistakes or his ambiguity in conformity with the duty to rectify as established by law, he favours his possibility of rectify.

A journalist always respects the right of presumption of innocence.

A journalist has to observe professional secrecy when it is required by the fiduciary (involving trust, especially with regard to the relationship between a trustee and a beneficiary) character of his sources. In any other cases a journalist has to respect the transparency of the sources.

A journalist may not belong to secret associations.

A journalist cannot accept benefits, favours or tasks that damage his independence and his professional integrity. A journalist cannot omit facts or details essential for a complete reconstruction of events. Titles, summaries, photos and subtitles must not either misrepresent reality or forge (falsify, counterfeit) the contents of all articles and news.

A journalist must not publish images and photos of people involved in daily episodes which are particularly terrifying or prejudicial to people's dignity, nor may he dwell upon details of violence or brutality unless for a preeminent reason of social interest. He may not intervene in reality to create artificial images.

Comments, opinions belong to the right of speech and of criticism and, therefore, they have to be absolutely free from any obligation, except for the constraint set by law against offence, damnatory (conveying or causing censure or damnation) and violence of people.

### 3. What are the responsibilities of a journalist?

#### Introduction

Working as a journalist is not a job to be taken lightly. Journalists have a duty to report the news thoroughly and without bias. If you aspire to be the mouthpiece for your audience, understand your role, your audience and the power of your words. Strive every day to uphold the journalistic integrity that comes with the power of the pen and work to achieve the goal of delivering the most complete and balanced story possible to your audience.

## **Upholding the Truth through Verification**

A journalist is responsible for reporting the truth, not because he is essentially impartial and balanced, but because he upholds the importance of objective verification. This means that he should constantly test every fact used in his story, including researching all information shared with him by his sources. A strict adherence to verification ensures that personal and cultural biases don't sneak in and take over reporting.

## **Unbiased Reporting**

A journalist's report should be unbiased. This means that if he has a financial interest in his subject, he should give the report to someone else. If the company that owns a news agency has a financial interest in a story, the agency should take extra care to ensure its reporting is not affected. A journalist's report should present all sides and all viewpoints on a matter. He should seek more than one source for a story to ensure that multiple sides are represented. If someone comments on a person, he should seek to get the other person's response.

## **Serving the Public as a Watchdog**

The journalist's duty is to the public, not the government. They should hold the government and others in power accountable to the citizens. By being independent from the government, they can monitor power and serve as an information source and not a propaganda mouth. Journalists serve as a watchdog (overseer, regulator) to balance government power and hold it accountable to its citizens.

### **Forum for Public Comment**

The journalist provides a forum for public comment. It allows an avenue for criticizing the government and corporations. Journalists help stir up discussions that might later lead to change and problem solving. But by serving as a point of public discussion, journalists must strive to represent all sides of the discussion, not only the richest or loudest voices.

### **Comprehensive Reporting**

Journalists create a type of map of events, making it easier for citizens to navigate through the important research. They must endeavor for proportion in reporting, not excessively sensationalizing entertaining stories or neglecting important issues for the purpose of getting more viewers. A news agency that hires a diverse staff can more easily achieve such diverse reporting.

### **Making Important News Interesting**

A news agency must engage its audience to get them to tune in. But it also must find ways to make significant stories interesting, so that readers and viewers don't miss out on what they need to know. It should frame important world events in ways that will be relevant to its audience, while still getting the most important messages across.

### **Personal Conscience in Reporting**

The ethics of journalism should not dominate each individual journalist's personal ethics and conscience. A good news agency should allow reporters to have differences of opinion, as this can lead to more diverse reporting. Individuals

should be able to voice their concerns in the newsroom and be governed by their personal conscience. Diversity should be sought in this way without simply trying to get higher ratings from day to day.

### **Conclusion**

The journalist's job is inspired by principles of freedom of information and of opinion. The relationship of trust between information organs and people is the foundation for every journalist's job.

#### **4. Give an account of the four theories of the Press.**

##### **Introduction:**

In 1956 three professors of communication—Fred S. Siebert, Theodore Peterson and Wilbur Schramm – came out with their four theories of the press. It created a kind of typology in the minds of the students and researchers of journalism. It has done much to legitimize the fourth theory, namely social responsibility. The book's impact has been great in spite of what some people believe are significant weaknesses. These four concepts put forward by these three communication experts go a long way in solving all kinds of problems faced by the journalists today. They only stress the fact that one's conscience is to be given due respect and that the right of free expression constitutes the much-needed creative thinking and useful pursuits like journalism and mass communication. As long as the press freedom is ensured, the society would always be in the grip of the latest information. This essay highlights on the need for press freedom in a democratic country like India.

received in regard to that subject. He is entitled to select and publish only some of them either in entirety or the gist thereof. But he must be honest in his discretion.

### Conjecture, Comment and Fact:

Newspapers should not pass on or elevate conjecture, speculation or comment as a statement of fact. All these things should be stated distinctly.

### Conclusions:

These are some of the Press Councils guide to Journalistic ethics.

### 6. Write an essay on Press Laws.

#### Introduction:

Those engaged in journalistic profession should be familiar with the laws which affect them in their day to day work. The most important among them are law of libel and defamation, contempt of court and legislature and copyright.

#### Libel - *contempt*

It is a writing tending to injure and degrade the character of a person, who is the object of it. Libel is the publication of a false and defamatory statement expressed in writing, printing or in some forms which is permanent, published without lawful justification or excuse concerning a person and which injures his reputation.

#### Parliamentary Privilege:

The Parliamentary Proceedings Act, 1956 is known as Feroze Gandhi Act. It provides that no person should be liable to any proceedings civil or criminal, in respect of publication in a newspaper of a substantially true report of any proceedings of either House of Parliament.

While reporting the proceedings of Parliament or Assemblies, care should be taken that the writings do not constitute breach of privilege or contempt of the House.

### Contempt of Court Act 1952:

Any act done or writing published, calculated to bring a Court of law into contempt or lower its authority or to obstruct or interfere with due course of justice or lawful process of the court, amounts to contempt of court.

The press enjoys the privilege of fair comment but personal attack on judges attributing incompetence, corruption, partiality, bias amount to contempt of court.

### Copyright:

Copyright is a right accruing to a person in respect of a work produced by him as a result of exercise of still, judgement and labour. Under the Copyright Act, protection is afforded to literary, dramatic, musical, artistic, archeological or any work relating to craftsmanship engraving, films, television, broadcasting diffusion.

Copyright Act of 1957 is meant to consolidate the law relating copyright. It protects the right of the authors.

### Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867

This act regulates printing presses, newspapers, registration of books and newspapers printed in India. It places a duty on the publishers of any newspaper to furnish annual statement etc. to the Registrar of Newspapers along with returns and reports. Under the Act, the publishers of newspapers are required to send one copy of the paper to the Press, Registrar, New Delhi.

### Indian Official Secrets Act, 1963

The Act consolidates the law relating to official secrets. The Act makes it an offence if any person for any purpose prejudicial to the safety or interest of the state (a) approaches, inspects, passes over or enters any prohibited place or (b) makes any sketch, plan, model or note which might be directly useful to enemy or (c) obtains, collects records or publishes or communicates to any other person any sketch, model plan, article, note or document which might be directly or indirectly useful to the enemy.

### Indian Post Office Act, 1898:

This Act prohibits transmission by post of newspapers which are printed and published contrary to the press and Registration of Books Act 1867. It empowers its officers to detain in the course of transmission any newspaper, book or document containing any seditious matter.

### Working Journalists Act 1958:

This Act provides for the fixation of rates of wages in respect of working journalists. It provides interalia for the payment of gratuity and provident fund to working journalists. The Act regulates hours of work holidays with pay, notice period for termination of service, etc.

### Conclusion:

These laws see to it that the Press functions freely and is useful to society.