UNIT 2 TYPES OF NEWS REPORTING: OBJECTIVE, INTERPRETATIVE, INVESTIGATIVE AND CRIME

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2.0 OBJECTIVES

The unit is designed to help you to understand what newspaper reporting is. At the end of the unit you will be able to:

• describe the importance of reporting in a newspaper;
• enumerate various types of reporting: objective, interpretative, investigative and crime;
• explain the procedure of reporting; and
• describe the qualities of reporters and their reports.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In Unit-1 we dealt with the definition of the news, news values and sources of news. This unit is on newspaper reporting and the main components of a news report—the body and the lead. We shall acquaint you with different types of reporting.

The next unit, i.e. Unit-3, will be on the qualities and the responsibilities of a reporter.

Activity 1

You must have seen a road accident. You must have read about such accidents in newspapers several times. Therefore, it can be presumed that you are quite familiar with the way it is reported/written.
Now engage yourself in an activity.

- Recollect a road accident that you have witnessed last.
- Visualise the event again.
- In the space provided below, write an introductory sentence in a manner as if you are writing for a newspaper. The sentence must be between 20 to 25 words.

2.2 THE LEAD

The lead should contain the essence of the story. It should give the reader an idea of what the story is about and help the copy desk or the sub-editor to pick a suitable headline for the story.

Needless to say, a good lead should arouse the reader’s curiosity and egg him on to read the rest of the story. It should be precise and crisp and made up of short, simple sentences.

Rudyard Kipling, who worked as a journalist with the then British-owned “Pioneer” during the Raj days, wrote:

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.
I send them over land and sea,
I send them east and west;
But after they have worked for me
I give them all a rest.

The lead should answer the five W's—Who, What, Where, When and Why—and How. A few examples are given below:

2.2.1 The Who Lead

Mr. Suraj Bandookwala, 65, an industrialist and former President of the Indian Gunmakers’ Association, died in the J.J. Hospital in Bombay on Monday morning after a prolonged illness. He suffered from lung cancer and had undergone surgery both in India and the USA.

2.2.2 The What Lead

The collision between two buses of the Delhi Transport Undertaking on the Ridge on Friday, killing five passengers and injuring 14 others, was attributed by an official spokesman to poor visibility due to heavy rains.

2.2.3 The Where Lead

The hill town of Shimla in Himachal Pradesh lay under a blanket of snow on Tuesday morning after heavy snowfall over-night.

2.2.4 The When Lead

Almost at the same moment that the Prime Minister was assuring agitated members of the Lok Sabha about a definite improvement in the situation in terrorist-hit Kashmir, the Home Minister at a press conference was expressing grave concern about the escalation in violence.

2.2.5 The Why Lead

A boy and a girl, both in their teens, committed suicide by consuming poison in a
Delhi hotel on Sunday because their parents objected to their plan to marry.

2.2.6 The How Lead

A Japanese mountaineer was trapped in a blizzard 150 kilometres from Kathmandu and died on Thursday before rescue teams could reach the spot.

Activity 2

In the preceding paragraphs, you have been acquainted with various types of leads one may come across while reading a newspaper. Now, get hold of a newspaper that you subscribe to at home:

- spread out the front page.
- list all the headlines in the columns provided below in the format.
- analyse each and state what kind of a lead it is in the column.
- give reason(s) for your decision in the column provided in the format.

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2.3 THE BODY

While the lead should arouse the reader's interest, the body should sustain it. The body should flow smoothly and logically from the lead. It should expand each of the points mentioned in the lead and, as far as possible, in the same order. The body should be as complete and as tight as possible. It should provide all the relevant information within the shortest space possible.

The essence of good journalistic writing is brevity and simplicity. Do not use two words where one word would do. And do not use a complex or long word where a short word would do.

Eventually, you should reach the point at which, choosing the story structure becomes second nature to you. This will, of course, come with experience and practice. You will then begin concentrating on the more creative and experimental aspects of writing.
A good reporter will spend a great deal of his time not sitting in the office but visiting places and meeting people who are potential sources of news. He should always keep his ears and eyes open. He should know where to go for the facts he needs for the story, recognise news when he encounters it, select the vital points for inclusion in his story and discard the inconsequential details.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Give your answers in the space provided below.
ii) Compare your answers with the ones given at the end of this unit.

1) What is the relation between the lead and the body?

2) What are the two main points of a good piece of journalistic writing?

3) What are the five W’s of a lead?

2.4 DIFFERENT TYPES OF REPORTING

Let us now turn to different types of reporting such as objective, interpretative investigative and crime reporting.

2.4.1 Objective Reporting

Reporting of news, unlike editorial writing, is often described as a coldly impersonal job. A reporter is essentially a story teller and he should tell the story in an objective and truthful manner, without lacing it with personal opinions or subjective comments.

Complete objectivity is a mere concept. The reporter is a human being, not a robot, and he has certain ideas, feelings, attitudes, opinions and prejudices. However, a good reporter should try to rise above them and tell the facts as he has collected them in his search for truth.

No responsible reporter would behave like the notorious American journalist, Janet Cooke, who won the prestigious Pulitzer prize in 1980 for a story about drugs which was later proved to be fictional and fictitious. The journalist committed a deliberate fraud by dramatising a fake scene in which an eight year-old boy is injected with heroin supplied by the lover of the boy’s mother.

Nearer home, the story of “mass rape” at a students function in a Madhya Pradesh town, published in a national newspaper was found to be baseless. When the report appeared on the front page of the newspaper it caused a sensation. The Editor asked a reporter to investigate. On arriving in the town the reporter first questioned the reporter of the news item, who insisted that the mass rape did take place. By way of corroboration he produced a number of eye-witnesses. However, when they were cross-examined and asked specifically to reveal only what they had seen, and not what
ty had heard, the investigator soon realised that the reporter had written the story on the basis of a bazar gossip and filed it without verifying the facts. All that had happened was that during a function to celebrate the annual day of a local college, a portion of the shamiana came down, the electricity got cut off and a few students entered the women’s enclosure and molested some of the girls.

There is this apocryphal story of a cub reporter, who, on his first day at work wrote a piece with a cocksureness which was misplaced. On reading the piece, the editor advised him to be cautious and a little circumspect when writing about sensitive issues. The press, the editor reminded him, must not ordinarily violate the various laws on the statute book concerning libel, national security and parliamentary privileges.

The next day the cub reporter submitted a story which ran as follows:

“Mrs. Gulab Paniwala, alleged wife of Mr. Rakesh Paniwala, who claims to be the mayor of Shangrila, gave a cocktail party at her house in Model Town on Monday to bid farewell to Mrs. Jyoti Jariwala, reported to be the wife of the well-known industrialist, Samar Jariwala. Among those present at the party were Mrs. Romi Puriwala, said to be the widow of the late Hansraj Puriwala, former cabinet minister, along with her alleged offspring, Jani Puriwala...” and so it went on.

The reporter had quite clearly gone to the other extreme in writing this report which was quickly consigned to the waste paper basket.

In reporting news, you must remember that facts are sacred. You must check and cross-check the facts from different sources until you are absolutely sure of them. Only then should you write your story. The golden rule is: tell the truth.

Objective reporting is, of course, not synonymous with dullness. It means fair and impartial reporting that is free from personal bias or prejudice.

Activity 3

The following news item is taken from the front page of The Hindustan Times, New Delhi, Saturday January 22, 1994.

- Read the item carefully:

BJP SC wing Castigates Shiv Sena

New Delhi, Jan. 21 (HTC) In a significant development, the BJP’s Scheduled Castes wing today came down heavily on the Shiv Sena, for spearheading a violent agitation against the renaming of the Marathwada University after Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. The significance lies in the fact that the BJP and the Shiv Sena are alliance partners in the State.

While the BJP itself has been fighting shy of launching a frontal attack on the Sena since no final decision has been taken on snapping electoral ties with it, the BJP leadership has apparently given due autonomy to the party’s Scheduled Castes Morcha, to lambast the Sena for its attacks on the Dalits.
The dilemma, which the BJP faces in deciding on its stance, vis-a-vis the Shiv Sena, was palpable at the party's Press briefing today. While Mr. Bangaru Laxman, president of the Scheduled Castes Morcha, was forthright in his attack on the Sena agitators, party spokesman Krishanlal Sharma was guarded in his comments.

When Mr. Laxman stated that his party had only entered into a seat adjustment with the Shiv Sena, and that there was no alliance as such, Mr. Sharma gently intervened to say that there was an alliance between the two parties at the State-level. This, however, did not mean that the two had to agree on all matters.

"It is not that our electoral alliance has come to an end. As for the future, we have not taken any decision," Mr. Sharma said, "On certain issues we agree to disagree", he said adding that this should not be taken to mean the end of the alliance as such.

In contrast to Mr. Sharma's measured sentences, Mr. Laxman in a statement on the Marathwada incidents observed: "The misguided agitators, led by Shiv Sainiks, are indulging in acts like torching school buildings, libraries and defiling Dr. Ambedkar's statues, apart from burning Dalit colonies and their petty shops."

Mr. Laxman, responding to queries, said the BJP's SC Morcha had "honest differences" with the Shiv Sena. "We have expressed our differences", he added.

Mr. Laxman said the incidents of burning, looting, stabbbing and destruction that had been let loose in Marathwada "make every Indian hang his head in shame". He said it was a long-cherished dream of the Dalits to rename the Marathwada University after Dr. Ambedkar as a tribute to the father of the Indian Constitution and social revolutionary.

* Would you consider it as an 'objective report'?  

[ ] Yes  
[ ] No  

* Give reasons for your answer in the space provided below:

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2.4.2 Interpretative Reporting

Interpretative reporting, as the phrase suggests, combines facts with interpretation. It delves into reasons and meanings of a development. It is the interpretative reporter's task to give the information alongwith an interpretation of its significance. In doing so he uses his knowledge and experience to give the reader an idea of the background of an event and explain the consequences it could lead to. Besides his own knowledge and research in the subject, he often has to rely on the opinions of specialists to do a good job.

In the USA, the first important inputs to interpretative reporting was provided by World War-I. Curtis D. MacDongall writes in his book *Interpretation Reporting* that when the First World War broke out, most Americans were taken by surprise. They were utterly unable to explain its causes. This led to changes in the style of reporting. The result was that when in 1939 the Second World War began, an overwhelming majority of the Americans expected it or at least knew it was possible.

MacDongall says that a successful journalist should be more than a thoroughly trained journeyman. With his reading of history, economics, sociology, political science and other academic subjects, an interpretative reporter is aware of the fact that a news item is not an isolated incident, but an inevitable link to a chain of important events. An interpretative reporter cannot succeed if he is hampered by prejudices and stereotyped attitudes, which would bias his preception of human affairs.

Interpretative reporting thus goes behind the news, brings out the hidden significance
of an event and separates truth from falsehood.

**Example-1:** The biennial elections to the Rajya Sabha took place in July. The interpretative reporter would give the reader the breakup of the results and acquaint him with the impact they would have on the various political parties and on the composition of the Upper House. He would, for instance, inform the reader that the Congress Party lost its majority in the Rajya Sabha, following the elections and that the Bharatiya Janata Party emerged as the main opposition, pushing the Janata Dal to third place. He will then explain the effect it would have on the working of the Rajya Sabha and on political party affairs generally.

**Example-2:** The election of the new President of India took place in July. The interpretative reporter would not only convey the bare news of the victory of Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma but analyse the reasons behind it and reflect on the consequences of his victory for the future of the Congress and opposition parties.

### Check Your Progress 2

**Note:**
1. Use the space given below for your answers.
2. Tick the right answer, wherever necessary.
3. Compare your answers with the ones given at the end of this unit.

1) How will you define objective reporting?

2) Complete objectivity is a mere concept.
   - [ ] True
   - [ ] False

3) Can an objective reporting be interpretative?
   - [ ] Yes
   - [ ] No

4) Can an interpretative reporting be objective?
   - [ ] Yes
   - [ ] No

5) Name the event which gave impetus to interpretative reporting in the USA.

6) Janet Cooke was awarded the
   - [ ] Noble Prize
   - [ ] Pulitzer Prize

### Activity 4

The following article has been taken from the “Mainstream” Saturday, September 18, 1993. Vol. XXXI No. 45.

Read the article and point out the elements which made this report an interpretative one.

**An Eye Opener**

Nilofar Rizvi

A few signatures on the dotted line at the Geneva “peace” talks— is this really what the conflict in Balkans needs to be resolved by? A splash of ink on paper symbolising a new turn of politicking in old Yugoslavia. To this end, the participants in well-ironed suits, each on the slightly plump side of health, have traversed fruitlessly, perhaps, luxuriously, to and fro from Geneva while thousands continue languishing in the war-torn Bosnia.

The Bosnian crisis has certainly served as an eye-opener on several fronts. The glory of being the only superpower does not sit easily on the United States’ head. Rather, as President Clinton stepped into office, without any clear foreign policy agenda, and still is, any such claim would be equivalent to praising the
non-existent dress of the king. With Soviet Union no more an arch contender for global prowess, the United States apparently is not pressurised to step into every actual or potential trouble spot of the world.

Inaction on the Bosnian front in comparison to the Gulf war against Iraq will, probably, be a classic illustration of this for times to come. The US approach has even prompted the resignation of four American government officials. Missile attacks have been carried against Iraq, merely to pre-empt a reported plan to assassinate one man—the former US President, George Bush—while genocide has been allowed to continue in Bosnia. Even the consideration to air strikes has been given in the wake of Serbians triumphing on their territorial gains.

Is this not in itself a fragile cover on the potentially brewing more dangerous designs of the Serbs? For the present, they may accept the so called “peace” plan, taking it in their hearts, as only the end of a successful phase against the Bosnian Muslims. After a lapse of time, the Serbs may very well get down to “ethnic cleansing” again, to extract more territorial gains from the Croats and the Muslims. It is stranger than fiction, that though the Serb leaders, as war criminals, were not allowed to move out of Washington, peace is being held with them, with the future of thousands at stake. Paradoxically, the UN forces are in hot pursuit of the warlord, Aideed, in Somalia to apparently punish him for his actions. Is action against warlords and/or war criminals being decided by some code, perhaps, colour, region—East and West, or who knows—religion, or is it simply a dress code?

Today, when the communication network is developing and spreading the world over at an unprecedented speed, rhetorical diplomacy and action, cannot deceive the world audience for too long, or perhaps not at all. Clinton’s campaign promise on the Bosnian front has been one such issue. The consideration of American air strikes and the coming is yet another example. So far, the talks have not led to any constructive approach to the cessation of conflict, or the normalisation of arduous strains the society is suffering form. While the conflict continues, the survivors are only sinking deeper in what seems to be a long-lasting quagmire. War or “peace”, the trophies of the ongoing conflict are not limited to the survivors’ sovereigns—their disfigured bodies, lost family members, the symbols of whose memories have also been lost in the destroyed houses.

At the global level this marks a lesser expectation of the US playing any effective role in other potential hot spots, particularly those without oil. Irrespective of whether the US has adopted this approach on the Bosnian front out of its own choice, or under the influence of regional politics, it marks, perhaps, the beginning of another phase in global politics, the decline in the remaining superpower’s importance.

2.4.3 Investigative Reporting

It is difficult to define the term “investigative” journalism. Some newspapers scoff at the very idea of an investigative journalist. In one way, of course, “investigative” journalism is a redundant concept, since all stories require some kind of investigation
on the part of the reporter. However, the investigative reporter is expected to dig deeply beyond the facts stated in the hard news. Though we may face difficulty in defining the term, we cannot ignore the concept of investigative journalism. Many journalism students have an ambition to become “investigative” reporters. An “investigative” journalist sees himself as the conscience of society, pursuing corruption in high places without fear or favour. In his book *Press and Law* (Vikas, New Delhi 1990), Justice A.N. Grover has quoted from the foreword of *Investigative reporting* by Clark R. Mollevhogg. According to the Foreword, investigative reporting has three elements:

- It has to be the own work of the reporter. Under no circumstance should it be of others;
- The subject of the reporting should be such that it is of importance for the readers to know; and
- There must not be any attempt made to hide the truth from the people.

Investigative reporting has made great leaps in western countries. In India, it is still in its infancy. Most Indian newspapers do not have, or do not allocate, the manpower and funds necessary for a first-rate investigative job.

Attempts at investigative reporting, to quote one eminent Indian editor, are like drilling for oil. A fair amount of wastage of effort has to be taken for granted. But when the oil is discovered and becomes marketable, the sense of achievement is usually more than in any other sector of journalistic enterprise.

The best example of investigative reporting in our times, was the Watergate story which led to the disgrace and downfall of U.S. President Richard Nixon. When the two young reporters of *The Washington Post*, Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, started investigating the arrest of four men for a burglary at Watergate, the Democratic Party’s national headquarters on June 17, 1972, they had no idea that their inquiry would culminate in the resignation of the President. The remarkable thing about their investigation was that it kept to the highest standards of professional journalism. The reporters did not start gunning for Nixon from the beginning. They merely pursued the burglary attempt and only later came up with startling facts linking the White House with it. “We did not go after the President, we went after the story”, they explained.

Though the *Washington Post* stories led to the downfall of President Nixon, the same paper, later in 1980, got involved in the most celebrated case of journalistic fraud in modern times — the case of Janet Cooke, already described in this unit. Janet Cooke’s case gives a clear warning that every story whether “investigative” or not, should be handled by editors with great care and caution, otherwise, it will bring the newspaper to disrepute. Z.J. Herbert Altsehull in his book from Milton to McLuhan (Longman, New York, 1990) states how the Janet Cooke story got into the *Washington Post*. An internal investigation by the newspaper’s Ombudsman, Bill Green, blamed “failure of a system” for not checking up thoroughly on Cook’s story. The failure to check was in part, Green said, the result of the fact that Cooke was black and that white editors did not want to be seen as racist. The Cooke’s story appeared in the *Post* on 28 September 1980 and the edition featuring 8 Green’s report appeared on 19 April 1981. Cooke was fired from the *Post* and was forced to return the Pulitzer Prize.

Let us return to Indian situations. In India, investigative reporting started making a mark after the end of the internal emergency in 1977, particularly through the reports published in *The Indian Express*.

In our country, investigative reporters have brought to light a number of scandals—the Bhagalpur blindings incidents by the police, Kuo oil deal, A.R. Antulay’s private trusts, the securities scam involving Indian and foreign banks and stock brokers, etc. An enterprising reporter once got himself arrested so that he could give a first-hand account of life in Delhi’s Tihar Jail.
With governments becoming increasingly secretive and corruption spreading its tentacles far and wide, the need for investigative reporting cannot be over emphasized. Yet we must remember that investigative reporting is not everybody's cup of tea. It requires hard and sustained work. The investigative reporter should be a combination of a crusader, super detective and blood hound and he should have the necessary time and finance to carry out his work.

In the pursuit of his quarry, the investigative reporter must draw a line between candid reporting and muck-raking, mud-slinging, character assassination or blackmail. He should base his report on incontrovertible facts, not on half-truths and lies. He should be wary of lobbies and lobbyists — political or commercial — trying to misguide him. And he should not behave like a peeping Tom or a prosecutor.

The best kind of investigative reporting is that which keeps the public interest in mind. It may highlight an injustice, expose corrupt practices or unmask dishonest politicians and bureaucrats.

Experience has been that unless an investigative reporter or a crusading reporter gets the support of the judiciary, the executive or the legislative, cannot bring his reports to logical ends. The Bhagalpur blinding report would have ended like any other report if a public interest litigation would not have been filed against the police. In the USA the Watergate stories would not have produced any result if they did not get the support of the legislative which threatened the impeachment of President Richard Nixon.

Check Your Progress 3

Note:  
  i) Use the space provided for your answers.  
  ii) Tick the correct answer wherever necessary.  
  iii) Compare your answers with the ones given at the end of this unit.

1) Why are some people opposed to the concept of investigative reporting?

2) Name the US and Indian newspaper which gave a big thrust to investigative reporting in their respective countries.

3) Can an investigative report be objective?
   [  ] Yes   [  ] No

4) Can an investigative report be interpretative?
   [  ] Yes   [  ] No

5) Should a journalist be
   [  ] a journeyman  
   [  ] a scholar  
   [  ] full of enthusiasm and do something for the cause of the public.
Crime reporting is not separate from the objective, interpretative and investigative form of reporting. Here it is separately dealt with because it is a separate and important beat in all big and medium level daily newspapers.

There is a tremendous public interest in crime stories and no newspaper can afford to ignore them without damage to its circulation and credibility. Attempts made by some newspapers to keep crime out of their columns, proved to be counterproductive and were soon abandoned.

Crime is a part of life and it is a newspaper's duty to inform the readers of what crimes are going on in their city, state or country. However, crime reporting should not aim at satisfying morbid curiosity or sensation mongering.

Although crime reporting is usually assigned to one of the junior reporters in a newspaper, it is a highly responsible and specialised job. The reporter should not only have the ability to shift the grain from the chaff, and the truth from lies, he should also have good contacts in the police and other departments of the administration as well as a working knowledge of the penal codes and law on libel and other relevant matters.

Besides, he must observe a code of honour. He should be as objective as is humanly possible and avoid resorting to sensationalism or cheap gimmicks to catch the attention of the readers. He should not suppress news of public interest. Nor should he seek to settle personal scores with police officers or lawyers or judges. And he must be careful that in the course of this work, he does not unnecessarily invade a citizen's privacy.

There has been much criticism of press reporting of crime and not all of it is baseless. Some reporters have been found guilty of unethical standards, thus causing much pain and sorrow to their victims or their families and friends.

In the case of the brutal murder of two Bombay nuns, some newspapers published totally baseless allegations conveyed to them by irresponsible police officials that the nuns were in the habit of receiving male visitors. The reports offended all decent citizens, particularly the members of the Christian Community.

A leading newspaper once published a fictitious report about a couple having been waylaid by a gang on the national highway. The report said that the husband was beaten up and the women was molested. The story was subsequently found to be incorrect, the product of the imagination of a reporter anxious to get his by-line in the paper.

Reports glorifying the activities of criminals or making heroes of them should be discouraged as much as a resort to sensationalism. The crime reporter must never violate standards of decency and good taste.

2.5.1 Crime as News

There are several types of crime news — murders, fires, accidents, robberies, burglaries, fraud, blackmail, kidnapping, rape, etc.

2.5.2 Fires

The reporter must get his facts correct about the essential elements of a fire story — the number of persons killed or injured, the extent of damage to property, the loss of
variables, etc. He must also find out if the fire brigade responded in time or was guilty of delaying the fire-fighting operations through sheer lethargy or incompetence or a lack of water supply. He should question eye-witnesses about any acts of bravery or cowardice. All these are essential ingredients of a fire story.

The lead in a fire story would normally suggest itself. If, for instance, lives have been lost, it needs highlighting in the lead. Where possible, list the names of the dead and the injured.

Example: A major fire caused extensive damage to New Delhi's Vigyan Bhavan, the premier venue of international and national conferences, on Monday night. A chowkidar on duty received minor burns.

According to preliminary investigations, the fire broke out in the kitchen and soon spread to other rooms on the ground floor. The chowkidar raised an alarm which alerted the head clerk on duty who informed the fire brigade and the police. Ten fire tenders soon arrived on the scene. However, their fire-fighting operations were hampered by lack of water in the hydrants. By the time water tankers rushed to the site, the fire had engulfed a large area and damaged files, furniture, curtains and ceilings.

The police suspect electric short-circuit as the cause of the fire.

2.5.3 Homicides

In cases of a major murder, the reporter should rush to the scene as soon as possible after receiving a tip and gather all the relevant facts. In nine cases out of ten, crime reporters in, say, Delhi, depend on police information about murders and there is a time lapse before they can begin their investigations.

This often hampers their search for the truth. The reporter must, in any case, exercise great care in how he handles the story. Otherwise he runs the risk of causing offense.

In reporting dowry deaths or alleged dowry deaths, for instance, the reporter should refrain from levelling uncorroborated statements by one party or the other. He must therefore get his facts correct — by talking to the investigating police officer, the girl's in-laws and her parents, and, if possible, the neighbours.

Example: A 25 year old housewife, Sushmita Malik, died in Pant Hospital on Monday morning from burns received in a kitchen fire. The housewife's parents allege that she was murdered by her in-laws who had been dissatisfied with the dowry she brought at the time of her wedding a year ago.

However, the husband, Keshav Malik, a garment merchant in Chandni Chowk, and his father who were in the house at the time of the accident maintain, that Sushmita's sari caught fire when she was lighting a stove in the kitchen. Since the kitchen door was closed, they did not hear her cries for help.

The police are questioning the women's relatives as well as neighbours and are reluctant to offer an opinion until the investigations are complete. At the insistence of Sushmita's parents, however, they have registered a case against her in-laws.

2.5.4 Accidents

Most accidents are reported on the basis of police bulletins or information supplied by police spokesmen. However, wherever possible the crime reporter must rush to the scene of a major accident to give authenticity to his story.

Example: Three members of a family — husband, wife and daughter — were killed on the spot when a speeding truck rammed into their car on the road to
Indira Gandhi International Airport on Sunday morning. A fourth member of the family had a providential escape. According to the police, the truck driver lost control of the vehicle and swerved sharply to the right and hit the car coming from the opposite direction.

Those killed are Ramkishore Singh, a businessman of Agra, his wife, Sumitra Devi, and their daughter, Sapna. The second daughter, Tanuja, had a miraculous escape and suffered only minor bruises on her arms and legs. She was treated at the Safdarjung Hospital and allowed to go home.

The truck has been seized by the police but the truck driver, Milkha Singh is absconding.

Check Your Progress 4
Note: i) Write your answers in the space provided below.
    ii) Tick the correct answer wherever necessary.
    iii) Check your answers with the ones given at the end of this unit.

1) a) Do you think the names of rape victims should be avoided in stories?
    [ ] Yes  [ ] No

b) Sensationalism should be a necessary part of every story.
    [ ] True [ ] False

c) Invasion of one's privacy for just to satisfy morbid curiosity of readers isn't ethical in journalism.
    [ ] True [ ] False

d) During any communal riots, should a newspaper observe restrain in reporting facts?
    [ ] Yes [ ] No

2) What can be the difference between Interpretative reporting and Investigative reporting?

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Activity 5

We have come almost to the end of the unit. We have had discussions on various types of reporting. You have engaged yourself in some activities which helped you to get first hand experiences on different aspects of reporting. Now, in this activity, analyse a local newspaper and determine the areas of focus of the newspaper.

• First write down in a note book all the headings of the newspaper chosen.

• Classifying them as per the following:
  — Objective Report
  — Interpretative Report
  — Investigative Report
  — Crime Report

• You may come across some news items which could be considered both as Investigative and Interpretative reports, or investigative and objective etc. Consider them as such anyway, because a news item may be a combination of two or three types.
Once you complete categorising all the news items, calculate the percentage of each (total news item of a category divided by the total number of news items of the newspaper multiplied by 100) category of news items and determine the thrust.

The following proforma may be of help to you to complete the activity:

Name of the newspaper: .................................................................
Date of the issue: .................................................................
Total No. of news item: .................................................................

| Objective | Interpreative | Investigative | Crime |
| Reports   | Reports       | Reports       | Reports |

2.6 LET US SUM UP

Newspapers are essentially news organs. A reporter is to a newspaper what a brick is to a mansion. A good reporter should have a “nose for news”, the ability to ferret out information, and the felicity to write it in simple words keeping accuracy and conciseness in mind. Objectivity is an essential quality required of a reporter.

An interpretative reporter must, in addition, have adequate background of the events he is writing about and a capability to bring out their real relevance and significance.

An investigative reporter should have courage, industry, enterprise, patience and stamina to follow the story methodically and logically and put it together in the proper sequence and in the clearest terms possible. He should be guided solely by public interest, not by private profit or personal glory.

2.7 GLOSSARY

Assignment: a reporter’s designated task
Beat: a reporter’s regular territory for news coverage
Box story: a story enclosed in a box to give it prominence
By line story: a signed story
Caption: explanation of a photograph or illustration
Copy: manuscript
Copy desk: desk where copy is edited and headlined
Crusade: a newspaper campaign for reform or improvement
Cub: an unseasoned reporter
Dateline: place of origin and date
Deadline: the time when a story must be completed
Fake: fraudulent story
Flash: a message giving the first brief news of an event
Lead (pronounced lead): introduction of a news story
Libel: a false or defamatory story
Newshawk: a reporter
Nose for news: aptness for sensing news
Running story: a story that continues over a period of time
Scoop: an exclusive story
Sleuth: reporter specialising in stories involving exclusive investigations
Slug: notation placed on copy to identify the story
Story: an article written by a reporter
Yellow Journalism: sensational, irresponsible journalism

2.8 FURTHER READING

Roland E. Wolseley (Editor): *Journalism in Modern India*, Asia Publishing House, New Delhi.

2.9 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: MODEL ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1
1) The lead should arouse the reader's interest in the story. The body should sustain that interest.
2) i) Brevity
   ii) Simplicity
3) i) Who
   ii) What
   iii) Where
   iv) When
   v) Why

Check Your Progress 2
1) Objective reporting means fair and impartial reporting free from the reporter's personal bias or prejudice.
2) No
3) Yes
4) Yes
5) First World War
6) Pulitzer Prize

Check Your Progress 3
1) The opposition to the concept of investigative reporting is due to the fact that most reporting involves some sort of investigation.
2) Washington Post
   Indian Express
3) Yes
4) Yes
5) A Journeyman
   A Scholar
Full of enthusiasm to do something for the cause of the public.

Check Your Progress 4

1) a) No  
   b) False  
   c) True  
   d) Yes

2) Investigative reporting deals with the subject matter where an attempt is being made to hide the truth from the people. On the other hand, interpretative reporting does not always deal with facts deliberately kept hidden from public view.