

Indira Gandhi
National Open University
School of Journalism and
New Media Studies

Block

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TELEVISION JOURNALISM

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UNIT 11 TELEVISION: AN AUDIOVISUAL MEDIUM

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11.0 INTRODUCTION

Every living creature on Earth needs to communicate with its fellow creatures, and sometimes even with creatures of other species. Even human beings are no exception to this. Now the question arises: how can one communicate with their fellow living being(s) cutting across barriers of geographical location, language, culture, background etc? To fulfill such a need, the first requirement is to identify a suitable medium. We all are familiar with the easily available media such as newspaper, street play, radio, television, film, internet, mobile phone and so on which are also referred to as the Traditional/Folk/Electronic/New media (even though the usage of some of these media are slowly on the decline). Besides, not all these media may be accessible to any particular individual as it is based on his/her socio-economic background. So how do we select a medium? The golden rule for that could be that we should select a medium whose characteristics and strengths can be easily exploited for transmitting the messages, symbols etc. to the target audience (or, we may call them the 'receiver'). For example, researchers like Barrow, Jr. & Westland claim, "a medium which utilises both visual and auditory dimensions, such as television or sound motion pictures, is more effective in transmitting information

than one which utilises the auditory dimension alone, such as radio.”

We may suggest that a particular medium is more appropriate for a given situation if it is expected to produce better effect on the receiver. There is an old saying: “Seeing is believing”, but someone may choose to differ and argue that whenever we see a visual or an image or an event on television, we do not completely believe and accept it as true because we all tend to perceive the message or event differently. However, it would be difficult for us to completely ignore a visual vis-à-vis its reliability and authenticity. Most frequently, we call television a visual medium. And interestingly, we all tend to forget that television is an audio-visual medium rather than only a visual medium. At this juncture, would it be appropriate to call television as an audio-visual medium instead of calling it as only visual medium. Although, we may all agree that TV is an audio-visual medium with dominance of visual elements. It also further consolidates the age old argument: “A picture speaks thousand words.”

In this Unit, an attempt has been made to make you understand ‘Television’ as a medium and further to recognize its strengths so that you may use it to your advantage in every sphere of life.

11.1 LEARNING OUTCOMES

After reading this Unit, you will be able to:

- describe the strengths and weaknesses of television as a medium;
- describe the journey of Indian television;
- analyse the role and use of television in education; and
- discuss the integration and convergence of television with new media.

11.2 TELEVISION AS A MEDIUM

What is television ? The literal meaning of television is ‘vision at a distance.’ It is a composite word derived from the Greek tele- ‘at a distance’, and the Latin word vision - ‘sight’. According to Alfred Dinsdale (2000), ‘television’ may be briefly defined as “vision by telegraphy.”

It is believed that on 26 January 1926, the world’s first demonstration of true television was given by John Logie Baird in front of 50 scientists in an attic room in central London (BBC-History-John Logie Baird, n.d.). But at the same time, we should not forget Marconi, an Italian inventor, who developed wireless transmission, without which invention of television could not have been possible. But the question arises as to why television was invented? As we all know that the necessity is always the mother of every invention. It would be wise on our part to understand the vision behind introducing television to the masses.

“When television is good, nothing —not the theatre, not the magazines or newspapers — nothing is better. But when television is bad, nothing is worse. I invite each of you to sit down in front of your own television set when your station goes on the air and stay there, for a day, without a book, without a magazine, without a newspaper, without a profit and loss sheet or a rating book to distract you. Keep your eyes glued to that set until the station signs off. I can assure you that what you will observe is a vast wasteland.”- Newton N. Minow, Chairman, Federal Communications Commission (FCC), who referred to American commercial television programming as a “vast wasteland” and advocated for ‘programming in

the public interest', in his speech, "Television and the Public Interest", popularly known as 'Wasteland Speech' (American Rhetoric: Newton Minow — Address to the National Association of Broadcasters (Television and the Public Interest, n.d.).

It was a landmark speech for the medium of 'Television', delivered during the convention of the National Association of Broadcasters held on May 9, 1961, at a time when there were only three TV networks in the United States and when the domination of television was much less than it is today. With the mushrooming of television channels in the present time, this 'wasteland' must have spread its area to a greater extent. Interestingly, even after five decades this speech has its own relevance and further it sets the agenda for all of us to discuss a major issue: does television function in the public interest?

The basic objective of television broadcast in India was to 'educate' the masses through 'entertainment'. But ironically, in due course of time, the 'education' aspect has taken a back seat and the 'entertainment' has completely overshadowed the basic motto of television in India driven by the prime objective of revenue generation.

11.2.1 Components of TV: Audio and Visual

As we discussed in the introduction, television is an audio-visual medium with dominance of visuals. This means it has two components – audio and visual. As far as audio is concerned, it supports and compliments the visuals. Many a times the audio plays very crucial role in television programmes. It helps in explaining the message, setting the mood of the scene and expressing the emotions of the characters. It is really very difficult to produce an effective television programme without the audio component. Different types of audio elements are used in television programmes, for example – voice-over, characters' voice, background music, ambience and various sound effects. Now we shall discuss the most important component of television, i.e., visuals. Visuals are the core component of television used to convey the message through this medium. The term visual encompasses various elements, like – recorded video, photographs, animations and graphics.

11.2.2 TV - Is It an Idiot Box?

Among thousands of technological inventions made so far, 'television' is still believed to be one of the greatest inventions of mankind. It gained popularity among millions of people from the day one when it was launched in the market. Interestingly, TV was considered a medium for the rich and elite in those times and may be so even today. The size of the TV screen and its thickness define how wealthy its owner is. Despite the threats posed by later day inventions and the revolution unleashed by technologies such as the new media forms like Internet, the TV has not lost its popularity. Actually, it has become an inseparable part of our household items and it would not be an exaggeration to tell that TV has begun to be treated more like a family member. No one would deny that if our TV goes off air for a while, we all become restless.

But as every coin has two sides, TV too has its other side. Despite all the good aspects of a TV, however, it is considered a passive medium. The TV was considered as not promoting the thinking process among the viewers and so it has never really earned a good reputation. And probably that is why, it was popularly known as an 'Idiot Box', something which makes you dumb. As one television viewer writes in his blog: "If you consider TV as your friend then it is betraying you, if you think TV as your brother then it will destroy your originality and your culture, if you think TV

as your son then it is just going to make you sick” (TV is not an Idiot Box, 2013).

We may not realize it nor accept it easily but it is true that a majority of us spend a significant part of lives in front of a TV. It has been rightly said, “if you read too much books you are called a good reader but if you watch too much TV you are not called good viewer”. So, it would be wise on our part to act smarter and not to get fooled by the TV- the IDIOT BOX. TV should not in anyway control you. While the TV may not be an Idiot Box, but it can make you an idiot if you do not use it smartly.

11.2.3 Is Television Part of Our Life?

After a long day at work and the resulting stress, you have to confess that most of you just switch on your television sets to relax and end up watching never-ending episodes of a particular serial or other programmes of your interest. Jane Root (1986), the first woman channel controller of the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) describes, “television is very effective towards insulating ourselves from other people and their demands. Interestingly, ‘it is time for bed’ can be easily ignored with the help of a television set”.

11.2.4 Television Mass: Are They Zombified?

You might have come across children taking their food in front of television at home like robots. At times, children freeze for minutes (not seconds) and keep staring at the TV set and it requires some adult members of the family to tell them that they have already finished their meal. This happens not only with children but also some adults who eat food while watching TV. One would be tempted to quote Jane Root (1986) in her book “Open the Box: About Television” who describes the classic images of the television viewer in a very creative way, “The family is sitting in front of the TV, staring blankly at a fuzzy, low-quality image. Their eyes are glazed, their limbs hanging laxly from unhealthy bodies. Junk food is pushed mechanically into slackly open mouths. There is no conversation: just the occasional grunt as programme becomes advertisement and then becomes programme again.” Such image of TV viewer has been projected in countless films, novels and comics.

11.2.5 Who is Watching Whom?

It would be very funny if someone asks you that whether you are watching the TV or the TV is watching you? Apparently, the hidden question is: Are you paying proper attention to the TV? While it may be true that we all do not sit like a zombie in front of TV, it would be interesting to know about Peter Collett’s experiments ‘watching people watching television’ as mentioned in the book, Open The Box: About Television by Jane Root. Peter Collett, a psychologist at Oxford University, conducted an experiment by placing a cabinet containing an ordinary television, a video camera, a microphone and a timing device in the living rooms of 20 different families for a week. The video recordings revealed that people were doing a whole range of things in front of the TV set. They were engaged in a variety of activities in front of the TV set - eating dinner, arguing with each other, listening to music, reading books, writing letters and vacuum-cleaning the carpet. According to Collett, “People spend hours on doing all kinds of things that have absolutely nothing to do with TV viewing while the set is on”. If this is so, then TV becomes a Radio and it further undermines the role of TV as a visual medium.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: 1) Use the space provided below for your answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this Unit.

1. What is television ? Define according to your understanding.

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2. Do you agree that television has become part of our life? Give reasons for your answer.

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3. What was Peter Collett’s experiment ‘watching people watching television’?

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11.3 STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF TELEVISION

In the earlier sections, we have discussed the different aspects of television as a medium. We shall now discuss about the strengths as well as the limitations of this medium.

11.3.1 How do We Watch Television ?

You may recall some incidents from your own experience when you might have been disturbed by the sound of your door bell while watching a ‘Live’ telecast of a 20-20 cricket final match. You may also perhaps recall a time when your daughter/sister requested you to solve a mathematical problem while you were seriously watching news. It is a fact that most of us struggle to concentrate to watch TV programmes of our choice as we get distracted and drawn away by numerous family activities and hence, most of us tend to adopt different strategies to watch television. Also it is quite common for viewers to exhibit an inconsistent pattern of TV watching. At times they may concentrate intensely on the TV programme while at another moment they may be treating the television sounds as a kind of background music. It is believed that as a form of electronic communication, television can be part of the fittings of a room. The ‘experience of television’ is very different from film. Unlike film, we buy everything coming on television once we pay for our subscription fee.

Raymond Williams, the academic who seriously analyzed on how we watch television gave another approach to television viewing as a ‘whole experience’. Williams (n.d.) says that it is significant we often say ‘we have been “watching television” rather than that we have watched “the news” or “a play” or “the football”.’ Further he says, “An evening spent with the television is like having read two plays,

three newspapers, three or four magazines on the same day that one has been to a variety show and a lecture and a football match.” In fact, it is felt that despite the items being different, the television experience has come in a unified manner.

While watching television one may rightfully believe that ‘Audience is the King’ as these days the audience sit in front of the TV with a remote in hand. In this ‘viewer controlled’ TV era findings show that viewers frequently surf back and forth between channels, avoiding disliked parts of programmes or the commercials. Therefore, it is obvious that unless television channels offer the experience you are looking for; you may turn it off, or move over, or shift your focus on something else while leaving the TV set on.

11.3.2 Strengths of Television

Every medium has its own strengths and weaknesses. Yet, it all depends on how the medium is used. The strengths of television should be understood with reference to its advantages over other medium. But the most important point is that the strengths of television need to be exploited by you as it cannot automatically add values to your effort.

However, we may highlight the following strengths of television as a medium:

- Television has advantages of both audio and visual components. The combination of both audio and visuals make it a powerful medium.
- TV has reach to a large section of the population.
- Television is still the cheapest medium of entertainment and infotainment.
- This medium has an immediacy factor. It can deliver the message to the masses immediately, a strength which makes this medium suitable for news and sports.
- Literacy is not required to use this medium hence it can be accessed and used by the masses.
- Television as a medium has been flexible changing itself with time. Earlier TV was a linear and appointment medium, but now all the DTH (Direct to home) platforms are providing pausing and recording facilities. Viewers can pause the programmes and resume watching after sometime or they can record programmes and watch them at the suitable time.
- In the era of new media, television has converged with online media so now ‘live’ TV is available on smartphones also.

11.3.3 Limitations of Television

Every medium has some limitations including television. Few limitations of television as a medium are the following:

- It is primarily a one-way communication medium.
- It requires electricity for access.
- Most of the television services are still linear which makes this medium an appointment medium. It means if you want to watch certain programme, you will have to switch your TV set on at a certain specific time. However, many DTH services are offering recording facilities too.
- Both production and transmission of programmes are comparatively costly.

- It is not portable. However, television programmes can be viewed on smartphones with the help of internet.
- Presenting in-depth information is little difficult through this medium. That is probably why after the television revolution, newspapers started focusing on detailed news reports and in-depth features.
- It is only visible within the allotted range/power of the transmitter or around the footprints of the satellite carrying the television signal.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: 1) Use the space provided below for your answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this Unit.

1. List five strengths of television as a medium.

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2. List five limitations of television as a medium .

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11.4 THE JOURNEY OF INDIAN TELEVISION

There was a time when Indian viewers had no option but to watch the state owned Doordarshan programmes which most media analysts consider to be dull, non-commercial in nature and oriented primarily towards education and socioeconomic development. Entertainment programmes were only a handful and you could count them on your fingertips. But then a big change came in the history of Indian Television when the serials like Hum Log (1984), and mythological dramas like Ramayan (1987-88) and Mahabharat (1988-89) were televised and millions of viewers stayed glued to their TV sets. The scenario changed further with the upgradation from Black & White to colour TV and delivery of TV programmes via cable network began in smaller towns along with the metros. This led to a sudden increase in the purchase of TV sets.

11.4.1 Doordarshan: Birth of Indian Television

Doordarshan (DD), the national television network of India began its first experimental broadcast on September 15, 1959 from its first station in New Delhi. By 1965, this experiment became a full-fledged service when DD started telecasting signals to reach TV sets within houses in and around New Delhi. By 1972, the DD services were extended to Bombay (Mumbai) and Amritsar and then on, to seven other cities by 1975. Till 1982, the transmission was mainly in Black & White.

The first turning point in the history of Indian Television was when Doordarshan introduced colour TV during the Asian Games held in New Delhi in 1982 and simultaneously started installing transmitters nationwide for terrestrial broadcasting. It is significant to note that during that period, no private enterprise was allowed to set up TV stations or to transmit TV signals.

The second turning point came in the early nineties when foreign channels like CNN, Star TV and domestic channels such as Zee TV and Sun TV started broadcast of satellite signals. That is how people of India got the opportunity to watch regional, national and international programmes simultaneously.

11.4.2 Television: Is it for Entertainment or Education?

Sarcastically, Groucho Marx, an American comedian and film and television star has said (Groucho Marx Quotes - The Quotations Page, n.d.) “I find television very educating. Every time somebody turns on the set, I go into the other room and read a book”. Should we blame TV for that? Should it be used only for education or only for entertainment or for both? Like you go to your class room in the morning for attending class or counseling sessions, in the break you go to canteen for refreshment or lunch and then come back to your respective class or working place and finally you go back home and retire for the day, in the same way with a remote in hand you go on to surf different channels of TV, select the channel based on your need. You may first go to some news channels for news or headlines then you may switch over to Discovery or National Geographic for enriching/educating yourself with new kind of knowledge which you may not find in any book or in your text book, in particular. After some time, you may like to see a movie or a Reality Show just to entertain yourself. One may convince you easily by this logic that it is you (or you may say your ‘need’) which decides whether TV should be used for entertainment or education or both.

11.4.3 Television (TV) to Educational Television (EDTV)

Television always had a great potential to become a medium of instruction and this potential had been explored and utilized in the field of education, especially in distance education. We may list various functions of television in delivering education through distance mode, like supporting and enhancing teaching, instructing, explaining, clarifying, motivating and encouraging, and presenting unreachable facts and events (Hizal, 1983). In 1993, a ten-day long first IGNOU (Indira Gandhi National Open University)-ISRO (Indian Space Research Organisation) teleconferencing experiment was done covering 525 participants. This experiment demonstrated the possibility of using one-way television with two-way audio wherein all students could view and interact with the teacher, and simultaneously the teacher could listen to all participating students through phone at remote sites. It became a major landmark in the extensive and continuous use of teleconferencing for distance education. The success of the experiment prompted the university to include teleconferencing as a regular component of the IGNOU student support system (Khan & Panda, n.d.).

The Open University (UK) which is considered as the pioneer in the field of distance education, had already demonstrated the instructional power of television. Parallel to UKOU, IGNOU was established by a Special Act of Parliament, IGNOU Act, 1985 to impart education through the mode of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) and adopted a multiple media approach for transacting the course materials through Print, Audio (Radio) and Video (TV).

11.4.4 Gyan Darshan: Educational Face of Indian Television

Being a developing country, from the very beginning of the TV network in India, Television was perceived as an efficient tool for imparting education to primary,

secondary and university level students. Hence, educational broadcasting in India is more than 40 years old and UNESCO has played an important role in promoting use of electronic media for education. “Educational broadcasting has suffered from a built-in contradiction: whether it should be used to enhance classroom education or be used to enrich the knowledge of the learners.”, a point raised by Binod C. Agrawal, a noted educationist, in 2005.

With the introduction of open and distance education, the educational broadcasting gained a greater momentum. The potential of electronic media, particularly television, was recognized because of the distance neutrality and simultaneous reach in covering large areas. The National Policy on Education (1986) gave due emphasis to educational broadcasting in India. At this juncture, we may highlight some major educational television projects undertaken in India for three decades (1960-1990). These projects are Secondary School Television Project (1961) (Agrawal, 2005), Delhi Agriculture Television (DATV) Project (Krishi Darshan) (1966), Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) (1975) (SITE, 1981), Indian National Satellite Project (INSAT) (1982) and UGC-Higher Education Television Project (1984).

Gyan Darshan

A 24-hour educational television channel, known as Gyan Darshan (GD) was launched on January 26, 2000 in India at IGNOU (Agrawal, 2005). It was considered to be a major milestone in the field of educational broadcasting in India as a joint venture of the Ministry of Human Resources Development and Information and Broadcasting, Prasar Bharati and IGNOU. Gyan Darshan, a fully digital exclusive Educational TV Channel, was a digital bouquet of 4 channels GD-1 (Prime Channel), GD-2 (Interactive Distance Education Channel), GD-3 (Ekalavya-Technology Education Channel) and GD-4 (Vyas-Higher Education Channel). Nevertheless, due to some financial, administrative and technical reasons, this bouquet of Gyan Darshan channels was off-air on June 4, 2014 and it was back on-air on October 4, 2017, after a gap of more than three years.

Activity 1

Make a list of TV programmes you have watched during the last week. Classify these programmes into different categories, like – news, education, sports, infotainment, entertainment, etc. Analyse this classification to understand the role of television in your life.

Check Your Progress 3

Note: 1) Use the space provided below for your answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this Unit.

1. Write a short note on Doordarshan.

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2. In your opinion, is television being used for education or entertainment? Give reasons for your answer.

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3. What is Gyan Darshan ?

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11.5 TELEVISION IN THE ERA OF NEW MEDIA

We all know that internet has touched and impacted each and every field of our life. Television is also not an exception. Due to its impact on television we can see the modified form of TV and its content now. Earlier television was the most popular platform for consumption of audio-visual content but now online platforms are giving a very tough competition to it. OTT (Over the top) platforms are emerging as popular internet based platforms for audio-visual content specially in urban areas. Faster and cheaper internet services and flexibility to access any OTT platform of the world are helping these internet based platforms to attract more and more viewers. A section of urban population is shifting from traditional television to OTT and the size of this section is increasing continuously. However, television is still the cheapest and most popular medium of entertainment.

Television and online media are not just competing with each other. The two are also mixing with each other. Convergence of all media is a fact of the Internet age. Television is now available on computers, laptops, tabs and mobile phones with the help of internet. Apps of television channels are available for download on smartphones. A large number of people are now watching their TV programs on computers, tabs or mobile phones. On the other hand, general television sets are now turning into smart TVs. Internet can also be used on Smart TVs in addition to general television programs. It is a mixture of TV and computer.

11.6 LET US SUM UP

Television is an audio-visual medium with a strong potential to influence the viewers. This medium uses visuals as the core element of its content and gets the benefits of audio to support and enhance the quality of its programmes. This medium is being used for various purposes, like - entertainment, news, sports, infotainment, education, etc. In the present era of internet, television is also changing. Now television channels are available on computers, tabs and smartphones with the help of internet. Traditional television sets are converting into smart TV. OTT platforms are challenging the dominance of television as the most popular source of audio-visual entertainment content. Television has been continuously changing with the changing technologies.

11.7 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

Conrad, P. (2016). Television: The medium and its manners. Routledge.

11.8 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: POSSIBLE ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

1. Try to define television as per your understanding.
2. Write your point of view on the matter.
3. Peter Collett, a psychologist at Oxford University, did an experiment placing a cabinet containing an ordinary television, a video camera, a microphone and a timing device in the living rooms of 20 different families for a week. The video recordings showed that people were doing all kind of house hold things in front of the TV set.

Check Your Progress 2

1. Five strengths of television are following:
 - i. Television has advantages of both audio and visual components. The combination of both audio and visual make it a powerful medium.
 - ii. TV has reach to a large section of population.
 - iii. Television is still the cheapest medium of entertainment and infotainment.
 - iv. This medium has the immediacy factor. It can deliver the message to the masses immediately. This strength makes this medium suitable for news and sports.
 - v. Literacy is not required to use this medium.
2. Five limitations of television are following:
 - i. It is primarily a one-way communication medium.
 - ii. It requires electricity for access.
 - iii. Both production and transmission of programmes are comparatively costly.
 - iv. Presenting in-depth information is little difficult for this medium. That is why after the television revolution, newspapers started focusing on detailed news reports and in-depth features.
 - v. It is only visible within the allotted range/power of the transmitter or around the footprints of the satellite carrying the television signal.

Check Your Progress 3

1. Try to add some more information on Doordarshan not covered in this Unit.
2. Present your point of view on the use of television for entertainment or education or both.
3. Gyan Darshan is an educational television channel.

UNIT 12 WRITING FOR TELEVISION NEWS

Structure

- 12.0 Introduction
- 12.1 Learning Outcomes
- 12.2 Television News Stories
 - 12.2.1 Chronology of Television News Content Creation
 - 12.2.2 Stages of Television News
- 12.3 Writing for Television News
 - 12.3.1 Basic Principles
 - 12.3.2 Fundamental Rules
 - 12.3.3 How to Write an Anchor-Package
 - 12.3.4 Writing News Feature and Documentary
- 12.4 Let Us Sum Up
- 12.5 Further Readings and References
- 12.6 Key Words
- 12.7 Check Your Progress: Possible Answers

12.0 INTRODUCTION

Television (TV) has become an integral part of our lives these days as most of us depend on it for our daily dose of entertainment, news and information. Besides that often TV programmes in general, and TV news, in particular tend to influence our views thus indicating its possible impact on the society at large. Hence, the responsibility of TV news programme makers increases manifold. TV news writing is a critical part of those programmes and in this Unit, we shall try to understand various aspects of it. TV news programmes generally include news bulletins, news features, documentaries based on news, interviews, panel discussions and so on. So, writing for TV generally means writing scripts for news bulletins, features and documentaries as other formats such as interviews and panel discussions are not required to be scripted.

12.1 LEARNING OUTCOMES

After reading through this Unit, you will be able to:

- describe the various stages of television news;
- discuss the basic principles of television news writing;
- describe the fundamental rules for writing a good television news script; and
- understand the writing for different formats of television news.

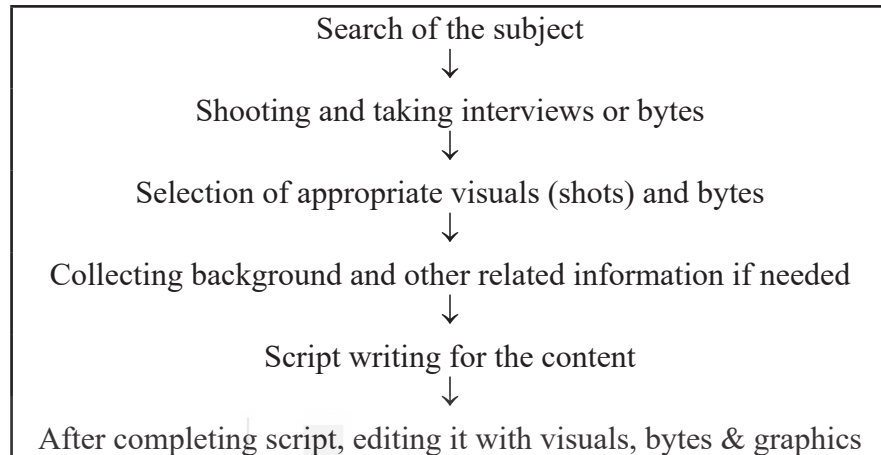
12.2 TELEVISION NEWS STORIES

Television channels broadcast news and current affairs related content in different programme formats. In this Unit, we shall focus mainly on the news stories. Before going directly to the writing part, it is necessary to discuss the basic steps of production of a television news story. We shall also discuss the journey of a TV

news story from its birth as breaking news to its matured stage of anchor-package. All these discussions will finally help us to improve our writing capabilities.

12.2.1 Chronology of Television News Content Creation

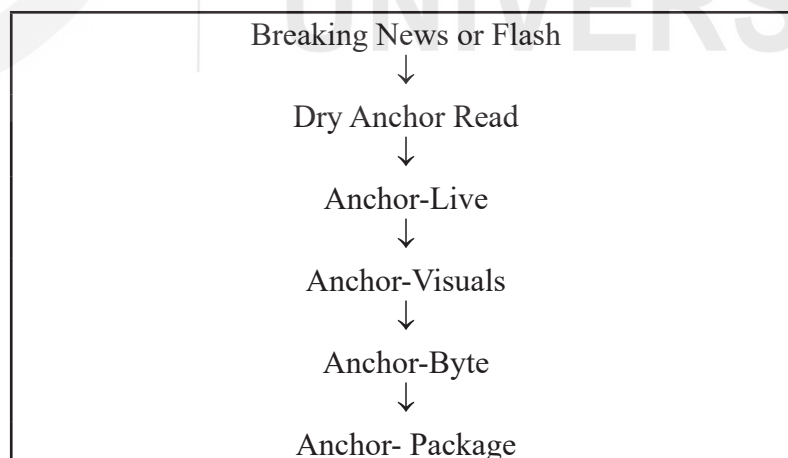
Television news content creation has a standard chronology. For writing an effective TV news script, you should understand it. The following chart shows this chronology:



This is the normal chronology which is followed to create news contents but in some cases the order may be changed. For example, in hardcore news segments, you get the raw information and may be asked to telecast the news as early as possible and therefore, you cannot plan your story according to the standard chronology.

12.2.2 Stages of Television News

There are various stages of a TV news and you should be aware of all of them. Writing is involved in almost all these stages at different levels. Many news pieces may not pass all the stages but unless you know all of them, you would not be able to decide which stage is fit for which news piece. Following are the stages of a TV news:



Obviously for each stage, the process of writing will be different. For becoming a good TV journalist, it is necessary for you to know about all of them. We are going to give you a brief information about these stages of a television news.

Breaking News or Flash: When you receive an information from your source which has news value for your audience, you decide to present it as soon as possible. At this stage, the news will be of one or two lines. The purpose of the breaking news is to make your viewers aware of the latest happenings immediately. If you get

some more information of the happening, you can break the news into small lines to present it.

Dry Anchor Read: Dry anchor read means that the anchor or news presenter reads the news only without any visuals. This normally happens in the case of breaking news situation. It can also be presented with graphics plates where the information is written on the screen.

Anchor-Live: If the news is in developing stage, the news bulletin producer may decide to take the live or telephonic interview of the reporter after anchor read. If visuals are available, they can be used along with 'live' or 'phone link' of the reporter.

Anchor-Visuals: When the news related visuals come into the newsroom, the anchor reads the news and the appropriate visuals are played over that. Here the purpose is to present the news in a concise manner.

Anchor-Byte: If there are some bytes relevant to the news item, it is also often attached with the anchor read. The bytes may be of the persons involved in the event or reaction of prominent personalities on that event.

Anchor-Package: The culmination of all the above stages is the package. In this, there are voice overs, appropriate visuals, relevant bytes and PTC. The package is supposed to present a full picture of the event.

So far as writing the news scripts of the above stages is concerned, the basic underlying principles remain the same. You must have read about the inverted pyramid style of news writing. Always remember to follow that. It is very important to understand the newsworthiness of the raw information before starting the writing. All news stories should have answers of the 5Ws & 1H. Each of these questions may have several parts which depend on the nature of the news. But you should not try to answer all these questions in the anchor read only. This will depend on the time which you are getting for that news. If you are making an anchor-package, you will have the liberty to answer all the 5Ws & 1H.

12.3 WRITING FOR TELEVISION NEWS

Writing depends on two major things: first, type of medium and second, nature of the content. Here, our medium is television and content is news. Television is an audio-visual medium which requires a certain type of writing suitable to the nature of this medium. In this section, we shall discuss the different principles and rules of television news writing.

12.3.1 Basic Principles

Writing for TV news is different from literary writing. In the case of literature, the writer has the liberty to use words to beautify the subject and concept, but in Writing for Television news you should make your selection of words as simple as possible. In the case of literature, the writer has the liberty to express his/her feelings and narrate the story accordingly, but in journalistic writing one has to be objective. It is believed that the target audience of TV news is the general people so a news writer, especially TV news writer, must not use the complex and difficult words.

If you see the nature of television as a medium, it is dynamic. The story is flowing continuously. Unlike print, for a TV news viewer, it is quite difficult to stop or go back to the previous content to understand that. The process of understanding should match the speed of content flow. So, simple language is must. A simple

principle is that no one should be in the need of a dictionary while consuming the TV news. Always remember the golden rule of news writing i.e. K.I.S.S. -Keep It Short and Simple. And you can keep your news writing short and simple by using the words used in daily conversation amongst us.

Always remember that the primary objective of news writing is to communicate the desired information in simple words so that it can be understood easily. At the same time, it should also be remembered that the news piece should answer the 5W & 1H (Who? What? When? Where? Why? and How?) in the order of their importance. It is not necessary to explain all the aspects of the news equally, but it is a normal practice to emphasise the 'What' aspect first and foremost. After that, according to the nature of the information, you can decide which other aspects (Who or Where or How, etc.) are needed to be explained.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: 1) Use the space provided below for your answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this Unit.

1. What is the golden rule of news writing?

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2. In the news writing which aspect gets the most prominence?

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12.3.2 Fundamental Rules

There are a few fundamental rules of writing which have been laid down to assist in creating effective content for TV news. We shall discuss them one by one:

Write for the eyes and ears of the viewers: Yes, you got it right. A TV news viewer must be hooked in the beginning of the story and therefore the script should be emphatic enough to garner his/her attention to the TV screen. You should read your script out loud after completing it. Because there are many words which sound alike but have different meanings and these may create confusion for the viewers. Once your script reaches your own ears, you can decide about the changes required in it and improve. For example, words such as 'Quiet' and 'Quite' or 'See' and 'Sea' can create confusion, if not properly supported by visuals. Therefore, it is better to avoid such words. Use short and punchy sentences and refrain from long and complicated sentences.

Write as much as possible in active voice: In a good TV news script, passive voice has no place as the passive voice writing jumbles up the normal sequence of subject, verb and object. Due to this, the viewer's brain has to work more than the normal to understand what is being said in the news. A basic thumb rule is to avoid the use of "by" in a sentence.

Example: The district magistrate has ordered to impose curfew in certain areas of the city. (Active voice)

In certain areas of the city, the curfew has been imposed by the order of the district magistrate. (Passive voice)

Naturally, the sentence said in the active voice uses less words as well as communicates the message easily. So, you should remember this rule that your news script should be 'Active'.

Use present tense as much as possible: TV news should sound like "now." Even the evening news bulletin needs to sound fresh because no one is interested to know about the old and stale news. The natural tendency is to write the news in past tense which should be avoided.

For example: "The Court declared XYZ firm bankrupt in a decision pronounced in the afternoon today. The court also suspended the payments of the jewellery firm according to the bankruptcy law."

But you can write the above sentences in the following manner as well:

"The court declares XYZ firm bankrupt. Today afternoon, the court suspended the payments and declared the jewellery firm bankrupt according to the law of the land."

In this example, you just start the news in present tense for the hook, then shifts to past tense. It is always good to put the sentence in present tense to give it extra punch but remember not to force the present tense into every sentence you write.

Stories should be people-centric: It is a smart idea to weave the stories around people as viewers tend to connect with such stories. If viewers sense that your stories do not directly affect them, they would not show much interest. For example, if any big infrastructure project gets the government approval, do not present it with simple facts and figures. It should be presented as a news item which is going to impact the lives of the people where the project will be based.

You can start your story with sentences like "Now you can cover the distance between Delhi and Agra in less than four hours. The State government has given its nod for a new expressway between these two cities."

By merely presenting the information in people-friendly way, you can evoke the viewers' interest in your story multiple times. Therefore, it is advised to all the news scriptwriters to study press releases and raw information carefully before writing the story.

P to G Style: There are mainly two styles of the news script which are followed all over the world. The first one is P to G i.e. particular to general. In this style, the script starts with a case study of any person who represents the larger community which is affected by the event being discussed. Normally the first voice over (VO) of the script talks about the case study and in further VO, the script tells us the details of the story. The purpose here is to make a connect with the viewers. As we have mentioned above that stories should be people-centric, this P to G style endorses this theory. Remember that wherever human emotions are involved in the news script, it has a greater chance to leave an impact on the viewers.

P-P-F Style: The second style of news script writing is P-P-F, i.e. Present-Past-Future. It implies that the initial VO of the story should talk about the main news (present), the middle VO should talk about the background of the news (past) and at the end the VO talks about possible impact of the news (future). This style of writing is considered to present the story with all the aspects of the news and hence, it is very popular. An example of such script is given in this Unit in later section.

Use action verbs in your story: In news writing, you cannot do much to the subject or object of your sentences, but you can use action verbs to make the story more interesting. These words give urgency to the story and thus create more interest among the viewers.

For example, use of “is, are, was, were, etc.” weakens the impact of the story. “Residents started shouting” sounds much better and impactful than “Residents are shouting.”

Be careful with facts and figures: We all know that mathematical numbers are hard to understand for many and especially when these are stuffed in a news story. So always think twice before using too many numbers in your script. Try to make your point clear with rounded or approximate numbers.

Consider this sentence, “The company’s profit was Rs.11,470,543, which fell to Rs.5,695,765 a year later.”

Now read this, “The company’s profit was about eleven and-a-half million rupees, which fell to about half of that the next year.”

Which one gives you the better understanding? The second one. Yes, in the second sentence, the viewer gets the point which you want to make and he or she need not to go through many digits. Similarly, if you present numbers as something simple and meaningful information for viewers, the news piece will have better connect. You can understand it with following example:

Sentence- 1: “The car company has raised rates up to 3 percent.”

Sentence – 2: “The car prices will be hiked up to thirty thousand.”

In the second sentence, numbers have been presented as simple and more meaningful information and thus it has added capacity to connect with the viewers.

Try to draw viewers’ attention towards screen: Your words should be catchy enough to get the attention of the passive viewers to the television screen. Sometimes, you can restrain yourself from giving too much details and just leave the viewers with a little suspense.

Consider this sentence, “The Khans of Bollywood - Shah Rukh and Salman met and hugged each other.”

Now read this, “What happens when King Khan and Bhai of Bollywood meet, let us watch.”

In the second sentence, you are forcing the viewers to watch the television screen as you are not telling them what the two celebrities did. The mention of these two celebrities is enough to grab the viewers’ attention. You can use this style in a soft news.

Present your story as something special: Do not forget that this is the era of competition and TV news channels are no exception. They have to compete with many other news channels which may show the same story which you are going to present. So, what will make your story more interesting? The ability to present your story as something different and superior. These days you must have heard the use of words “exclusive”, “never before”, “first time on television”. It is to show your promptness and dedication towards the viewers. But apart from this, you can structure your sentence in such a way that it shows your dedication and promptness.

Example: -

“When the education minister said there was no money for mid-day meals in the schools, we decided to dig for answers.” A sentence like this shows that you are serious about finding the truth.

“We are the only channel with exclusive visuals of the accident that took place at the highway.” By using such writing, you can build the perception of a prompt and fighter news channel amongst your viewers.

Take the story forward: “The End” caption works for the movies, not for the TV news stories. Remember that the end of your news script should encourage the audience to come back to your channel. They should have the interest to know what will happen next.

Example: -

Consider this sentence, “The union cabinet will take a call on the ‘one rank, one pension’ scheme in its next meeting.”

Now read this, “We will update you about the outcome of the next meeting of union cabinet on the ‘one rank, one pension’ scheme.”

While the first sentence leaves the viewers in suspense, the second generates curiosity as well as reinforces that your reporter will follow the story further. It is always good to promise to your viewers that you will return with updated information. It helps to build a sense of loyalty amongst TV news viewers.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: 1) Use the space provided below for your answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this Unit.

1. When it is said that your news script should be ‘active’, what does it mean?

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2. How can you make your script people-centric?

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3. What care should one take while using figures in a news script?

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4. Why is it advisable to write a script which takes the story forward?

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12.3.3 How to Write an Anchor-Package

The Anchor-package has two parts. The first part is the anchor-link or intro of the news. Here you inform your viewers about the main news and give the basic information. You should not infuse too much information in the intro because it may confuse the viewer. You should just include one or two key points in the sentence. Normally, the intro consists of two or three sentences. The second part is the body of the package. Here, the visuals and bytes are used and the complete story is presented for the viewers. There are some VOs (voice over) over which visuals are laid and bytes are inserted between two VOs to move the story forward. You should start with the best of the visuals you have, and your story should flow naturally. It is ideal to write TV news script according to visuals. An example of the script of anchor-package is given below:

(ANCHOR LINK)

The number of Indians getting EB-5 visas has jumped almost four-fold in the last 2 years. EB-5 visas promise foreigners a faster route to Permanent Residency in the United States of America. According to statistics issued by the US Department of State, at least 585 EB-5 visas were issued to Indians during the 12-month period ending September 2018. India is just behind China and Vietnam in getting the green card through this route.

PACKAGE

VO 1- United States of America or USA has been always a preferred living destination for rich Indians. That is why it is not surprising that in the last couple of years, the tendency to get the US citizenship by making investment there has surged. (GFX IN) According to the data released by US Department of State, 585 EB-5 visas were issued to the Indian citizens during the 12-month period ending September 2018. This number was mere 174 in the 12-month period ending September 2017. When compared with the same period ending September 2016, the number of 2018 is almost 4 times, as in 2016 the US Government has issued only 149 EB-5 visas to Indians. (GFX OUT) But what is the reason behind the renewed interest of rich Indians in getting US green card?

Byte- Rohit Pawar, MD, Bridge Overseas, Mumbai

(By September 2019, the applications for getting EB-5 visas can be increased to 1000. For the last 3 years, this number has seen only an upward growth and this trend is expected to grow further. The real estate community of the country has shown more interest in this as they want to take its benefit for securing the future of their children.)

VO 2- EB-5 visa promises a green card, if the applicant invests a minimum one-time stipulated amount of 5 lakh US dollars in certain specified areas. At the same time, the investment amount should be enough to provide fulltime employment to at least 10 persons there. This rule allows the person making investment to have green cards for two people. Wealthy Indians consider EB-5 visas a good and easy route to secure their future.

Byte- Mohit Pate, EB-5 Visa Applicant, Mumbai

(We can do business in USA as we are doing in India. But there we can get good higher education for our children as well as social security for us. We can spend our life comfortably there.)

VO 3- In USA, a total of 10,000 EB-5 visas can be issued to foreigners every year, but no country is allowed more than 7 percent of it. It means that no country will

be issued more than 700 EB-5 visas per year. The time taken to get the Permanent Residential status approval is normally 18 to 24 months. The number of Indian applicants currently rank behind China and Vietnam only. And it seems that the rich Indians are ready to wait for this period, or perhaps longer, for becoming green card holders. In Mumbai, XYZ (imaginary name of the reporter) reporting for ABC (imaginary name of the news channel).

In the above script, you can see that the scriptwriter has presented a trend amongst rich Indians to settle in America. This is written in explanatory nature. From the anchor links, it becomes clear that the content of the story will revolve around the increasing numbers of rich Indians who want to get green card. In the first VO, the numbers are given, and the instructions are also provided to insert and remove graphics (GFX) plate in the package. It helps the video editor to understand from where graphics plate will be inserted and where will it end. Similarly, the transcriptions of byte are also written in the script, so that the VO artist as well as the video editor of the package have full understanding of the story.

In the last VO, the reporter has signed off by mentioning his name. The idea is to register his presence at the place from where he has filed the report. It gives the viewers a feel that the information provided are genuine, original and first hand. Earlier, PTCs (piece to camera) were used to do the same thing but nowadays very few PTCs are being seen in news packages. If you know how to write anchor-package, you can write any script required for different stages of the news.

12.3.4 Writing News Feature and Documentary

Apart from script of a package, TV news writing also includes news features and documentaries. These are longer formats of news content and different in their approaches. You can consider them as the next levels of script writing (for the news content). We are going to discuss these formats briefly here.

News Feature: Writing for news feature is different from hard news scripts. Normally the feature writer has the liberty to show his/her writing skills and creativity. It is built around a news point and it contains those elements which can attract the viewers. As feature writing is more a show of skill, it does not follow any set pattern. Each feature writer can develop his/her own style. Moreover, the style may differ from subject to subject. But there are some points which should be kept in mind while writing the news feature scripts.

- i. Exploring the angles of the story:** Before writing, it is imperative to find out all the possible angles of the story. But at the same time, you can not include all the angles of the issue in a single story because it will become too long. So you will require to choose a couple of angles which you find more appropriate than others and around which you would like to narrate the story.
- ii. Proper research about the story:** You must research properly about the subject which is the basis of your script. Research may include talking to the people having expertise in the subject, sourcing as much information about it as possible and trying to find any previous feature story on the same subject by any other news organisation. This will help you to structure your script.
- iii. Writing script according to the mood of the story:** You should remember that being a feature story, it has not to be written necessarily in the inverted pyramid style. Here you are telling a story to the viewer and your goal is to give them a real feel of the subject. You must stick to the theme and mood of the story in your writing. There is no need to describe those things which are

not relevant to the story. You can add colour, drama and punch in the story but these should fit in your theme.

Documentary: Documentary is also a longer format. New York Film Academy defines documentary as something which is fascinating and which captures the brilliance of humanity when executed thoroughly. A documentary is a result of very hard work and it demands a lot of time, energy and resource to be mobilised. A good documentary is written skilfully, catches people’s attention and touches their feelings and communicates efficiently. A documentary is much more and much different than a news report but just like the news, your documentary should be able to connect with the viewers. New York Film Academy says, “Documentaries are real, with real people and dealing with real issues that are powerful and hit us at our core. Let your writing reflect those deep, moving messages and capture your audience emotionally.” Therefore, before writing documentary script, you should have a clear and precise idea of your subject. You must have the understanding of how the story will be delivered. In fact, before writing a documentary script, you must complete your research, collect the required data and shoot the interviews, etc. Once you have all the materials, you can filter the required ones and start writing the script of the documentary. You must remember that writing is an art and you need to practice regularly in order to improve your artistry. Also, every artist has his/her unique style and creativity, similarly, every news writer has his/her own style of expression. You should study the writing styles of others but try not to copy anyone but to develop your own style.

Check Your Progress 3

- Note:** 1) Use the space provided below for your answers.
2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this Unit.
1. What is the difference between writing for hard news and a news feature in television?

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12.4 LET US SUM UP

As television is one of the most popular and powerful media of mass communication, you need to be doubly sure before telecasting any news item. Every news item must follow the basic principle of answering 5Ws & 1H. Remember the KISS (Keep It Short and Simple) formula for script writing for TV news.

And, because of its audio-visual nature, in TV news writing, you need to focus not only on words but on visuals as well. It must be kept in mind that the words and visuals match as well as complement each other while presenting on screen. People-centric news scripts generate more interest amongst viewers. The aim of the script writer is to present the news in such a way that people feel connected and benefitted by that. Also, the story should move forward so that the viewers can develop a sense of loyalty towards the broadcaster. TV news writing also includes feature as well as documentary writing. The approach of writing these scripts may be different but the basics of script writing remain the same.

12.5 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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Broadcast & Online Journalism (MJM-023), IGNOU, Delhi

12.6 KEY WORDS

Byte : A short and relevant part of interview (on camera) of a person related to the news story. 'Byte' and 'Bite' are used interchangeably.

Voice Over : An audio which describes and explains the visuals.

Anchor Link : The content spoken by the news anchor.

GFX : GFX stands for graphics.

12.7 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: POSSIBLE ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

1. The golden rule of news writing is K.I.S.S. It stands for Keep it short and simple. It means that while writing news, the scriptwriter should use easy to understand words which are part of our daily conversations. The sentences should be short so that the target audience can understand them easily.
2. It is expected from any news item that it will answer the 5Ws & 1H i.e. (Who? What? Where? When? Why? and How?). But the most important aspect is 'What' and in most cases, the news answers the 'What' aspect first. It is because the viewers will be interested to know what happened before going into the details of any event.

Check Your Progress 2

1. The news script should be written in active voice sentences as much as possible. The sentences written in passive voice are longer and give unnecessary twist to the structure of the sentence which is not suitable for television.
2. To make the news script people-centric, it is necessary that the same should be presented with facts or information which are going to impact the lives of people. Mere presentation of press releases or raw information in a dry manner will not be attractive for viewers. Viewers will be interested to know whether the aired news has anything to do with their daily lives.
3. It is always advisable to refrain oneself from using too many mathematical figures in news scripts as they may take more time to be understood. So, if there is a need to use figures in a script, it should be made as simple as possible. Scriptwriter should try to connect those figures with some daily life activities so that the viewers can relate to them and their interest is retained.

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4. If a script takes the story forward, it shows that the channel is following the story and will update the viewers as and when the further information are made available. It helps to build a loyal viewer base for the channel.

Check Your Progress 3

1. In hard news script, the writer cannot take any liberty to beautify the script, but in a news feature the writer has the option to present the script in an attractive way. Feature writing does not necessarily follow the pattern set for the hard news. A feature is normally made on soft news or when the hard news needs to be presented along with different perspectives.



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UNIT 13 CONTENT PRODUCTION FOR TV NEWS CHANNELS

Structure

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- 13.1 Learning Outcomes
- 13.2 Production for Television
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13.0 INTRODUCTION

Content production for television can easily be described as the most important aspect of the television industry. Unless the quality of the produced content is good, you cannot expect your viewers to be glued to your TV channel. In order to leave an impact on the viewers, the television content must be interesting, informative, attractive and unique, and these qualities can be ensured at the production level. Therefore, it is quite essential to have a qualified and creative production team. We all know that TV channels carry a variety of content from entertainment to education, but in this Unit our discussion will be focused on the television content related to news and current affairs only.

13.1 LEARNING OUTCOMES

After going through this Unit, you should be able to:

- describe the basic principles of television content production;
- discuss the main stages of TV production;
- explain the production process of different news programmes; and
- describe the role of different people involved in the content production in a TV news channel.

13.2 PRODUCTION FOR TELEVISION

Television is an audio-visual medium that incorporates visual and audio elements. A number of activities are required for production of television content like - recording and creation of visual elements (videos, photographs and graphics), recording of the audio elements, script writing, audio-visual editing, etc. In this section, we shall discuss these activities.

13.2.1 Basic Principles

It is always said that content is king, whether it is about news or other genres. Unless you produce quality television content for your viewers, you cannot expect to succeed in the long run. So far as news content for television is concerned, they may be of various types and that again depends upon the nature of the news programmes. For example, a typical TV news channel produces news bulletins, debate-discussion shows, documentaries on current affairs, feature shows, interviews, etc. While the basic principles of television content creation always remain the same, you need to work with a different approach for different formats.

Every TV production, whether it is a news bulletin, debate-discussion or a documentary, must go through the three fundamental stages before its completion. These stages are:

1. Pre-production
2. Production
3. Post-production

Many a times, these stages may take very long (sometimes even weeks or months) to reach the desired level of completion. It also depends on the type, duration, complication and intricacy of the content that needs to be created. But, a daily news bulletin or talk show will have to be completed in a few hours or a single day by following these stages. However, a good and efficient production team will usually execute each of these three phases at least to some degree before finalising the product. For example, if you have to produce a live show, you require a lot of planning for the initial two phases but you do not have the liberty to go through the third phase. Though, the 'live' editing with the help of switchers may be considered as post-production stage but it goes on simultaneously along with production.

13.2.2 Three Stages of Television Production

The whole process of television production may be categorized mainly in three stages. These stages are the following:

- i) **Pre-production** : Pre-production covers all the activities conducted before the actual production. From conceptualization to all other preparations for actual production fall in this stage only. Even though some people consider Conceptualization or Formulation as a separate stage, it is generally considered to be a part of pre-production only. The process of pre-production actually starts with Conceptualization.

Conceptualization: As the name suggests, conceptualization involves most of the thinking work and is done on paper. In this stage, you start with generating ideas for your desired content. When you have certain ideas ready, you and your teammates discuss about the feasibility, effectiveness and workability of those ideas. The length of this process will depend on the format as well as

nature of the show. If you are working on a daily news bulletin, you just think about the selection of the news pieces according to their importance and their treatment in your bulletin. But if you are working on a talk show, you may require thinking about the relevant issues to be discussed, availability of the experts on the issue, the audience to be present in the studio, etc. If needed, you need to seek some additional information through internet research, old interviews or talking to some domain experts. Once your idea is finalized, you start working on it. During this phase only, you can also decide whether your content will be telecast 'live' or recorded. You can then proceed to the next step of content creation.

Pre-production also includes arrangement of the desired support staff who will be required during the content creation. These staff may include script writers, editors, studio directors, production assistants, camerapersons, audio operators, lighting directors, graphics designers, etc. It is clear from the above description that the number of persons involved in pre-production stage of a programme will vary according to the nature of the content.

If you have decided to telecast your programme 'live', you need to check the technical aspects well in advance. If you are going to create content which can be recorded and broadcast later, things will be in better control as you can make changes if things do not go as expected.

- ii) **Production :** The production stage can be called the real tangible work on the ground. It involves most of the crew members and can be exciting as well as exhausting. This stage sees your idea or concept converting into a product. Many creative activities i.e. video recording, audio recording, performance etc. are done in this phase only. As far as writing is concerned, in some cases, it is part of preproduction and in some cases it may be a part of production stage. Just take few examples, if we talk about fiction (film production, serials, etc.), script writing is part of pre-production. In production we execute the script, but in the case of documentary films, pre-shoot scripts are written again after shooting because documentary is recording of reality. During shoot (production) we may get many new ideas, facts and angles which need to be incorporated in the script. So here, final script writing becomes part of the production stage. The same thing is applicable to the news stories also. Scripts of news stories are written after recording of the footages and bytes, so here also writing may be considered as a part of production stage.

If the show is not going 'live', production stage of news programmes may be little relaxed. Various shots are recorded, reviewed and re-recorded according to the requirements of the programme. But in a 'live' show, there is no time for reviewing and re-recording. Your attempt should be to create the content as flawless as it can be. In the case of non-live shows, it is necessary to maintain a log of must have shots and sequences, and any other necessary information that will enable the video editors to locate and identify during post-production. Without this log, your precious hours will be wasted trying to find certain key information or the best shots of the show.

- iii) **Post-production Stage :** It is only in the post-production stage that the desired content takes the final shape. As this is the final stage, here the producer gets the opportunity to give the finishing touches to the content. It is also only here that you can expect to get the fruits of all the hard work and long hours put in by the crew. Usually, the non-live programmes take many hours of post-

production, but news stories can not take longer post-production due to the immediacy factor.

The main component of post-production is the editing which is done by video editors. Video editors have to follow the script of the show, but they have liberty to enhance the impact of the show. Therefore, many a times the decisions to select the best shots, to add filler sequences or change the sequence of certain shots are left to them. Sometimes, they need to insert some graphic elements which are created by graphic artists of the channel. These graphic elements may include animations, credits, or other computer-generated contents. Once all the requirements are completed and the editing is done, the programme becomes ready for telecast.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: Use the space provided below for your answers.

Compare your answers with those given at the end of this Unit.

1. What are the three phases of television production?
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2. How long does it take to complete all the three phases of production in the context of television news?
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13.3 PRODUCING NEWS PROGRAMMES

You must remember that production of news programmes is quite different from the other television genres. For TV news programmes, usually the team is fixed and that team remains available to gather and compile the required content. In most of the cases, the production schedule of a news program is not more than a single day. Therefore, the environment of TV news production is quite hurried and intense. ‘Live’ programmes need more care and quick action. Without careful planning and execution, it can go horribly wrong. Now we are going to understand the exact nature and ways of work in a TV news organisation for production of the content.

13.3.1 Producing a News Package

In previous units, you must have read about the news packages or news stories many times. A news package is a special way to present news to the audience. Normally a news package has a story, some characters and some facts. News reporters spend considerable time in researching stories, collecting visuals, interviewing characters, and then writing the scripts according to the gathered information. All news packages follow a basic structure which makes them easy to understand. These packages may be of various durations but usually packages run from 90 seconds to two minutes in length. In special cases, the duration may be longer as well.

In fact, news packages are considered to be the backbone of any news show. That is why making news package is one of the most important tasks of the reporters and other employees. When the assignment desk of the news channel assigns a particular news story to the reporter, the process of making a news package begins. The reporter needs to follow the news, collect the latest information, visuals (video or stills) and bytes (or interviews) of the concerned parties and then write a script describing the event or issue.

No doubt, TV reporting needs much more than its print counterpart. In order to file a story or report, a TV reporter has to go through a long process. While going for reporting, s/he accompanies a cameraperson. The cameraperson shoots the visuals and reactions of the concerned persons. The responsibility of the reporter is to help him/her in capturing the best visuals and ask the relevant questions to the concerned persons for the news story.

But the responsibility of the TV reporter does not end here. After going back to the office, s/he has to file the report according to the visuals and bytes collected by him/her. Many a times, the reporter may take the help of graphics department, if any information is required to be shown in the form of graphics. When the news report is completed, the producer checks the script filed by the reporter. When it is cleared by the producer, the reporter has to sit with video editors to edit the final story. Here the script has to be voicecovered by the reporter or voice-over artist. And then visuals, graphics and bytes are laid over the VO (voice-over) to give it a shape of edited package. The edited news stories or packages are then used by the producer for his or her bulletin or show.

The most important thing to note here is that a television reporter has to follow the visuals of the event. This is not required for a print reporter. Moreover, a TV reporter has to be quick as s/he has to deliver the news as soon as possible. The print reporters, however, enjoy the greater time and flexibility. As the newspaper will be printed at night and delivered to the doorstep of the consumer only the next morning, newspaper reporter can file his/her story with comparative ease. But the TV reporter has to be quick and on the rub as his/her organization needs to play that news story the same day itself. So, for being a successful TV reporter, pace and accuracy both are the prerequisites.

13.3.2 Producing a News Bulletin

In a typical TV news channel, the person who owns the responsibility of producing a programme is called the producer. The producer of a news bulletin has to produce his/her bulletin before its deadline. If the bulletin has to go 'live', s/he will have to prepare all the contents required for the news bulletin beforehand.

First of all, the producer decides the news stories which are to be included in the bulletin. After that, s/he decides the order of the news stories in the bulletin and prepares a run-order or rundown. In the rundown, it is mentioned before every news story that what will be its treatment and how much time is to be given. In fact, mere seeing a well-prepared run-order, you can visualise the look of the bulletin to be aired. That is why rundown is also called bulletin on paper.

Once the producer makes the rundown of a bulletin, s/he distributes the responsibility of producing the content among his/her associates and other teammates. S/he has to see whether any script is to be written, which news stories are already made in the system and which are to arrive later, what graphics elements are required,

etc. In a 'live' news bulletin, the producer has to make provisions for 'breaking news' scenario also, therefore, s/he needs to make rundown in such a way that the important and must have elements get enough time to be aired. This decision needs dynamism and quick thinking. A good producer always remains alert about the flow of news.

Once elements of the rundown are completed, the producer is ready to go live with the show. As the timing of any news bulletin is fixed, the producer needs to ensure that enough news materials are ready with him/her so that the duration of the bulletin does not fall short. When the bulletin is being rolled, the producer needs to prompt the anchor of the show regularly about the elements being added or dropped from the news show. Usually, the news anchor reads an introduction (or anchor link) 'live', then the pre-recorded story is shown. As the show is 'live', there is no scope for post-production, unless there is repeat telecast of the bulletin. If there are some errors which need to be fixed, it should be done before the repeat telecast of the same show.

Structure of a news bulletin: Generally news bulletins start with headlines. Most important story of the day is given priority and is given more time than the other news items. It depends on the discretion of the producer that how much time s/he wants to give to a particular news story. If s/he wants to present a news item in big way, s/he demands from the assignment team to arrange for some domain experts who can elaborate the importance and various aspects of the news. For example, an item of national or international interest is considered most important. Normally soft stories find place at the end of the bulletin.

13.3.3 Producing a News Feature or News Documentary

Features and news documentaries are longer formats. They need more visuals, more interviews, more information, more creativity and also more research. You must have watched documentaries on television news channels. These documentaries may be based on the political, social, cultural and other relevant issues. Documentaries need attractive presentation and fine scripting. Obviously, such programmes cannot be effective unless there is strong research back up before scripting. Such shows or programmes also need a lot of brainstorming, efforts and hard work to be executed in a perfect manner.

But in this era of fierce competition amongst various news channels, many a times such programmes lack serious and extensive research and hence they appear hollow and do not leave any impact on the viewers. As sound research is required in the cases of TV features and documentaries, usually there is a section dedicated to research in TV news channels. The staff of this section are primarily entrusted with the task of providing backgrounders on important issues, events or personalities. The staff of this section are also responsible for monitoring of various news channels. They also provide important news elements from newspapers, websites and other sources to the input and output teams.

Usually the research section provides backgrounders and other information to the producer and script writer. On the basis of this information, the producer and script writer give shape to the programme and prepare the script. During this process, many persons are interviewed who understand the relevant issue and possess the deep knowledge of the same. These persons are interviewed by reporters who form the input team. If you want to understand the production part of any programme in a simple manner, see the following:

Conceptualisation of the show (Producer)→Research (Research Section)→
Other important information or interviews (Reporters)→Script writing (Script
Writer)→Editing (Video Editor)

It is a normal practice for programmes based on any specific issue to be made within tight timelines in television news channels. For this, the required information is provided by the research section to the producers and script writers. Quite often it happens that the producers and script writers do not know much about the topic/issue and therefore, they prepare the content based on the provided research only. As a result, the prepared content may lack focus and sometimes contains factual mistakes as well.

Ideally, the producer should identify the domain experts and interview them according to the need of the programme. If it is not possible, then the reporters should be included in the programming team so that s/he is completely aware of the requirements of the feature or documentary to be produced.

You must remember that for producing a good news feature or documentary extensive research is necessary. Additionally, if the producer and script writer are themselves involved in the research, it is even better as it will enable them to produce a quality programme. But in the process of programme development, especially in Indian TV news channels, the deadlines are so stiff that generally the producer and script writer do not have enough time to get involved in research.

Another issue that may crop up while producing television news features or documentaries is that the production team may lack subject expert producer or script writer. In TV news channels, producers and script writers are supposed to be the proverbial ‘jack of all trades, master of none’. Such a label is, however, not considered a bad thing in today’s news world. In fact, if you are also one of them, it will help you to evolve as a good producer and script writer in TV news channels.

Activity 1
Watch a documentary on any television news channel and write down its strengths and weaknesses.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: 1) Use the space provided below for your answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this Unit.

1. What is called ‘bulletin on paper’ and why?

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2. What are the processes involved in the production of a television news documentary?

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13.4 IMPORTANT ELEMENTS OF TV NEWS PROGRAMMES

In this section, we shall discuss a few important elements of television news programmes. These elements play crucial role to make any television news programme effective and attractive.

13.4.1 Objectivity

While watching a programme, the viewers should not feel that the reporter is biased or the story is favouring any one side. The news story must appear to be neutral. Remember that the responsibility of a reporter is to present the facts of the news, not to justify any particular side or party of the news. For example, if a reporter has covered a crime event, s/he should not only cover the versions of the victim and accused, s/he must also try to cover the versions of the investigating agency and eyewitnesses, even though there may be a need for the reporter to invest more time and labour to collect all these information.

13.4.2 Visuals

Television is an audio-visual medium where visuals play very crucial role. The viewers are always on the look out for engaging and interesting stuff on the TV screen. So the news stories should have a 'pull factor', and that 'pull factor' can come from the visuals most of the time. Viewers watch visuals first on the screen and if they are eye-catching, there are higher chances that they may stop to view that channel. Hence, as a television reporter, you must be able to think visually. In many cases, visuals can tell the entire news story by themselves. Therefore, visuals should be a vital integral part of the production instead of an afterthought. You must have heard the proverb, "a picture is worth a thousand words." This is absolutely true because effective visuals can help in telling a story with more clarity and impact.

The term visuals should not be mistakenly identified with only videographed content. Graphics (maps, charts, diagrams, and illustrations), animations and still photographs can also be used as visuals. Most television news programmes use graphics to enhance their impact. The main point to note is that in television it is important to present information visually as much as possible. Viewers remember visual information longer than the spoken or written words. Without visuals, you lose the force of this powerful medium.

13.4.3 Audio

Television is an audio-visual medium. Although visuals are quite important for TV but a television news cannot be completed only with visuals. The audio plays an important role too. It is necessary for a TV reporter to write good voice-overs. That is why a reporter has to develop the skills of visual sense as well as the art of using words effectively. Often it is seen that while writing the script, the reporter finds it difficult to write to match the visuals. Therefore, you should try to start the practice of writing according to visuals from the very beginning.

13.4.4 Anchor

As explained earlier, there are various types of news shows and programmes and each one is presented in a different manner and prepared in a different style. But the most common type of news programme is the news bulletin which is produced and presented daily. In such news bulletins, the news anchors or news readers read the anchor links of the packages and those packages are played after that.

Sometimes there are news commentators invited as panellists who take the news of the day, relate it to events of the past as well as try to project some probable future scenarios while analyzing it. In such cases, the speaker may often put a great deal of his/her personality into the presentation, so such news programmes take a less formal shape. Being face of the news bulletin, it is the anchor's responsibility to present the bulletin in an attractive and eye-catching way. His or her delivery should be easy to understand as well as impactful and must catch the attention of the viewers. The anchor should be able to sense what will appeal to majority of the viewers. The anchor must not allow any news item to cause unnecessary alarm or anxiety among the viewers.

13.5 PRODUCTION TEAM

Many people contribute to the production of news content in a television news channel. These include persons involved in the assignment team who are responsible for finding potential news stories. In a news channel, the assignment editors assign specific stories to reporters to pursue. But as far as production is concerned, the role of the television producer is greater. S/he is a person who oversees all aspects of the television programme. Some producers take more of an executive role, in that they conceive new programmes and after approval from the superior authority, they hand it over to the show or bulletin producers. These show or bulletin producers are more involved with the day-to-day workings, participating in activities such as script writing, making rundown and producing bulletin and other news shows.

Apart from the producers, the role of various technical crew members cannot be ignored in a news channel set up. These persons work diligently and contribute to the smooth running of the news bulletin and other shows. Without their help, you cannot expect your work to be completed. They include the studio director, set designer, graphics artist, cameraperson, vision mixer, audio engineer, video editor and others.

Check Your Progress 3

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

1. What is the role of producer in a TV news channel?

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2. What are visuals in the context of television news channels ?

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13.6 LET US SUM UP

Content production for a television news channel is an exhausting task and it demands efforts of many people. Whatever is the format and structure of the news show, there is a need to plan all the shows in advance and prepare accordingly.

From conceptualisation to the execution, there are many stages of production which involve a lot of people from editorial and technical side to complete the job. So, basically a news bulletin or news documentary is product of a team work. Usually, in a television news channel, the role of producer becomes very important as s/he is the person who handles all major aspects of the content production.

13.7 FURTHER READINGS

Padgaonkar, L., & Singh, S. (Eds.). (2012). Making News, Breaking News. Westland.

Schroeder, A. (2009). Writing and producing television news: from newsroom to air. New York: Oxford University Press.

Zettl, H. (2011). Television production handbook. Cengage Learning.

13.8 KEY WORDS

News Package : A television news story which contains anchor link, voice-overs, bytes and PTC is called a news package.

Assignment : A department of television news channel responsible for content gathering. It is also called Input.

13.9 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: POSSIBLE ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

1. The three phases of the television production are: pre-production, production and post-production.
2. The time taken to complete all the three phases of the television production will depend on nature of the content. For example, a live news bulletin may take a few hours whereas a documentary may take weeks or months depending on the complexity of the subject and the budget allocated for it.

Check Your Progress 2

1. A well-made rundown or run-order is called 'bulletin on paper'. This is because of the reason that when you see the rundown, you get the feel of the show instantly. A good rundown neither falls short of duration nor exceeds it.
2. The processes involved in the production of a television news documentary can be described as follows:
 - a. Conceptualisation of the programme
 - b. Research
 - c. Shoot
 - d. Final script writing
 - e. Editing

Check Your Progress 3

1. The role of television producer is of larger importance. S/he is a person who oversees all aspects of a television programme. Some producers take more of an executive role, in that they conceive new programmes and after approval from the superior authority, they hand it over to the show or bulletin producers. These show or bulletin producers are more involved with the day-to-day workings, participating in activities such as script writing, making rundown and producing bulletin and other news shows.
2. The term visuals should not be mistaken by only videographed content. Graphics (maps, charts, diagrams, and illustrations), animations and still photographs can also be used as visuals.



UNIT 14 PRESENTATION TECHNIQUES FOR TV

Structure

- 14.0 Introduction
- 14.1 Learning Outcomes
- 14.2 Television News: Presentation Related Aspects
- 14.3 Television News Presenters: Essential Qualities
 - 14.3.1 Knowledge of Different Fields
 - 14.3.2 Ability of Multitasking
 - 14.3.3 Objectivity
 - 14.3.4 Command Over Language
 - 14.3.5 Dressing Sense
 - 14.3.6 Capability of Sight Reading
 - 14.3.7 Skills to Use Teleprompter
 - 14.3.8 Voice Modulation
 - 14.3.9 Acquaintance with Journalistic Ethics and Laws
- 14.4 Anchoring for Different Types of Programmes
 - 14.4.1 Common Formats of News and Role of the Anchor
 - 14.4.2 Presentation of Special Bulletins and Shows
 - 14.4.3 Presentation of Talk Shows, Panel Discussions and Debates
 - 14.4.4 Presentation of Interviews
 - 14.4.5 Presentation of Live and Multi-Anchor Shows
- 14.5 Writing Anchor Script
- 14.6 Challenges for a TV News Anchor
- 14.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 14.8 Further Readings
- 14.9 Key Words
- 14.10 Check Your Progress: Possible Answers

14.0 INTRODUCTION

News channels, by and large, revamp themselves from time to time in order to establish a stronger visual connect with their viewers. They understand the value of overall presentation as it gives the brand better recall value and credibility.

News presenters or anchors are an integral part of the overall packaging and presentation of a television news channel. They are the mediators between a channel and the viewers. Anchors try to maintain the continuity between different segments of a programme or a news bulletin. The news presenter's knowledge, look, personality and presentation style influence public perception about the news item. Hence, news channel anchors represent the channel and also function as conduit of credibility. Television anchoring is not just about reading the lines from a teleprompter. Here the most important factors are speech, knowledge, body language, voice modulation and command over spoken language. A good anchor is expected to strike a balance in all these territories while anchoring.

The task of presenting a programme is challenging one because anchors are expected to reinvent themselves as per the evolving media scenario and changing requirements of their channel and viewers. The anchor is responsible for not only providing information, but also to ensure that a programme or news bulletin is delivered in a credible and authentic manner. Today the ever-changing media landscape keeps the news channels on their toes while providing them with a plethora of options - to revamp, innovate and introduce new presentation techniques. This Unit discusses the different aspects of television news presentation.

14.1 LEARNING OUTCOMES

After going through this Unit, you will be able to:

- understand the importance of news presenters/anchors for television news channels;
- describe the qualities essentially required in a TV news presenter;
- improve your news anchoring skills for television;
- write a proper anchor script; and
- understand the challenges faced by a TV news anchor.

14.2 TELEVISION NEWS: PRESENTATION RELATED ASPECTS

There are two major content related components in any television news channel: selection of content and presentation of content. Selection of content deals with the subjects and issues selected for the broadcast while presentation decides how to present the chosen content. Presentation is a broader term and it encompasses many aspects like presentation style of news anchors and reporters, screen layout, programme formats, scripting, language, graphics, etc. But in this Unit, we shall focus only on news anchoring. The different aspects of news anchoring will be discussed in detail.

If you observe any television news channel carefully, you will find only two types of its employees visible on the screen. First, the news anchors and second, the reporters. In the previous Units, you have studied about the production process in a television news channel. So while you are aware that a large number of journalists and technical staff are involved in bringing various programmes to the viewers, it is important to note that except for news anchors and reporters, all others work behind the screen. Since the news anchors and reporters are visible to the viewers, they form the face of the channel. Now, if you further compare the two- the news anchors and reporters, you will find that the news anchors have a bigger share of the screen appearance. As mentioned earlier, in this Unit we shall limit the discussion to only the news anchoring. 'News Anchor' and 'News Presenter' both the terms are commonly used as synonyms and the same has been followed in this Unit too.

14.3 TELEVISION NEWS PRESENTERS: ESSENTIAL QUALITIES

Reading the news from a teleprompter and anchoring a news bulletin may sound easy, but it is more cumbersome than it seems. In last two decades, there has been tremendous change in the media scenario in India due to launching of dozens of

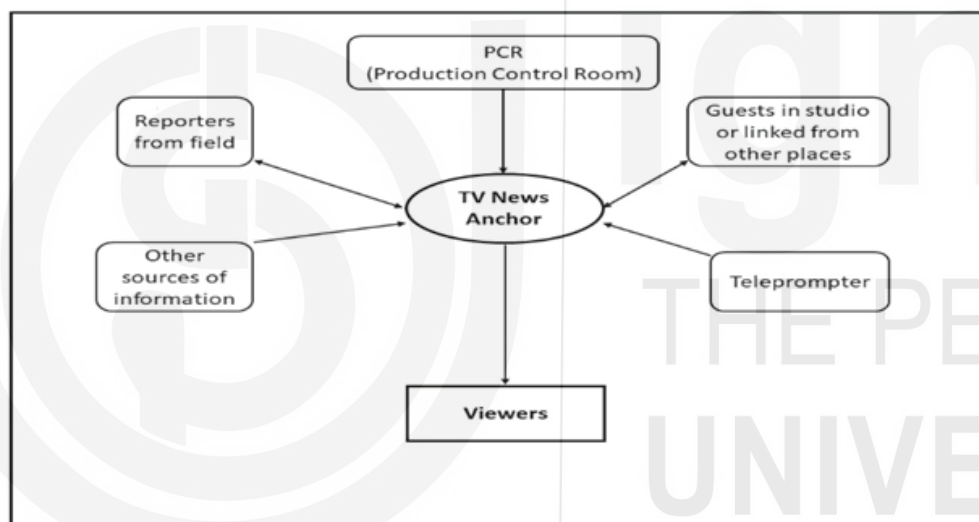
news channels in English, Hindi, Urdu and various other Indian languages. It has increased the competition and resulted in the requirement of skilled and innovative news presenters. A good anchor must possess the following qualities:

14.3.1 Knowledge of Different Fields

Knowledge of different fields is an essential requirement for a successful news anchor. A good understanding of different issues and the ability to organize and retain new information is the critical aspect of anchoring a news bulletin. A news anchor must have insight into current national and international issues. S/he should have sufficient knowledge of what s/he is sharing with the viewers. At times the producer of news bulletin may make some errors in the spellings or names. In such cases, if the anchor is ignorant of basic facts and figures, s/he will not be able to correct the information. An anchor must be well versed in current affairs, politics, geography, history, other related areas, and should have the ability to put all information in the required perspective for viewers.

14.3.2 Ability of Multitasking

An anchor must have the ability to multi task or handle multiple activities at the same time. You can understand the engagements of a News Presenter with the help of following image:



The ability to take and follow the producer's instructions via an earpiece while searching information from news websites and social media, listen to what other reporters are sharing and panellists are adding and monitor incoming video simultaneously is very important.

14.3.3 Objectivity

Ideally, a professional news anchor must take an unbiased or neutral stand on issues covered by the channel. S/he should be quite balanced and impartial in his/her approach towards them. An anchor should try to not come under any kind of pressure or influence that can limit his/her professional autonomy. Moreover, s/he should not allow even his/her personal feelings of hatred or liking for anyone/anything to be exhibited while anchoring.

14.3.4 Command over Language

A good command over language, proper pronunciation and neutralized accent are the basic pre-requisites to be an anchor. There are, however, different regional

accents associated with Hindi and English languages in India. If you want to be an anchor, then it is necessary for you to be linguistically neutral and versatile.

14.3.5 Dressing Sense

Television news anchors have to carefully choose the kind of dresses, accessories and jewellery that they wear on screen because they are expected to look decent and presentable while anchoring in front of the camera. The camera tends to pick up some colours and patterns better than others. Therefore, for both men and women, knowing what not to wear is just as important as knowing what to wear. This is because most often, if you wear anything distracting or flashy on TV, people will remember only that and not what you say.

You should also be careful about the colour of your outfit in front of the camera. Contrasting colour scheme and cool colours are considered more suitable. Anchors are generally advised to avoid bright white to the extent possible. Shirts in solid colours like blue, beige, and off-white are considered as best options though. And if you wear a bright white shirt or blouse in front of the camera, then you can balance it by wearing a dark jacket over it. You should avoid fabrics with complicated patterns, checks and close stripes. However, pastel shirts work well on television. Very shiny or glossy fabrics that reflect light into the camera, should also be avoided.

Anchors generally prefer to wear clothes of natural fabrics that can breathe easily under the warm studio lights. While one may also love wearing loose clothes, but wearing them on air can make it more difficult for the microphone to stay in place, and it is bothersome to constantly adjust it. On the other hand, anything too tight can look inappropriate. Anchors are also expected to avoid jewellery that sparkles, shines or dangles in the light or those that rattle such as multiple bracelets or long necklaces as they tend to causing distracting noise while brushing against the microphone. News anchors are expected to use accessories with subtle patterns. Male anchors are also expected to avoid neckties with tightly designed patterns and shiny fabrics as they are not suitable in front of the camera.

14.3.6 Capability of Sight Reading

Sight reading is when you do not have the time to read or rehearse the script. As an anchor, you must get used to sudden changes in the rundown and breaking news. This is not what most people feel comfortable with doing but anchors have to face this situation regularly. Sight reading is about two things only: confidence and the ability to pick up lines quickly. Sight reading tests the anchor's ability to grasp the script and his/her improvisation skills. It also tests how well an anchor performs under pressure. A good sight reader is able to communicate with fluency and clarity without any rehearsal. The following tips may help you in sight reading:

- Scan Ahead - take a few seconds to look through the text silently and judge the length of the sentences.
- Slow down- do not read too fast and use pauses. Look ahead and know what is coming without losing the moment of thought.
- Update yourself - there is a common misconception that it is impossible to prepare for a sight read. You can keep yourself updated about current affairs.
- Be adaptable- just learn to adapt to whatever new content is being added.

14.3.7 Skills to Use Teleprompter

The teleprompter plays an important role in reducing the stress associated with anchoring. The main advantage of using the teleprompter is that it allows you to look directly into the camera lens while reading the script. The script is reflected on a monitor and that monitor is placed directly in front of the camera lens. It allows an anchor to be comfortable in front of the camera. However, you have to keep the following things in mind while using a teleprompter:

- Speed of the text that is scrolling down is controlled by the teleprompter operator. So, you do not have to worry that you will run out of words. But nowadays, the teleprompter is operated by the news anchors in most of the news channels. Therefore, you should learn to maintain a proper speed of your text on teleprompter.
- You are advised to keep the current read words in the middle of the teleprompter screen.
- You should try to read the script at least once before the bulletin or show.
- You need to practice pacing with the teleprompter.
- Use conversational tone and talk to the camera as if you are talking to your viewers.
- Try to keep your body posture relaxed because if it is in a rigid position and only your eyes are moving to read the text, your viewers will come to know about it and it reduces your credibility. Do not slouch but be relaxed.
- You should set the font size according to your comfort. Remember that if the font is bigger, the number of words on the TP screen will be fewer and you will not be able to look at the whole /or a large part of the sentence.

14.3.8 Voice Modulation

Voice Modulation is done to change the different properties of your voice to make the presentation more effective. It is change in stress, pitch, loudness and an inflection of the voice which gives your voice mood, meaning and makes it sound more attractive. The most important responsibility of an anchor is to avoid monotonous pace in order to make every news story sound different. Pauses at right intervals and adding expression to every sentence prevent a monotone. Also, an anchor must change the tone of his/her voice before moving on to the next story.

Important Components of Voice Modulation: If you want to be a good television news anchor, you should practice modulating your voice to make your presentation more attractive and effective. The different components of voice modulation are given below, and you should take care of these components during voice modulation practices:

- **Pace:** Pace or speed of speaking or reading the news is an important factor that an anchor must take into consideration while anchoring. You must maintain the pace at which audience can understand you properly. If an anchor maintains a slow speed while anchoring, viewers may switch the channel out of boredom. If the speed is too fast, viewers may have a hard time understanding what the anchor is saying.
- **Pitch and depth of voice:** Pitch or frequency of human voice refers to the rate of vibration of our vocal folds. Higher rate of vibration means higher pitch and

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lower rate of vibration means lower pitch or deeper voice. Keep the pitch at a level that is comfortable for you.

- **Pause:** An anchor should give pauses at required intervals especially where there is punctuation. It is given for emphasis and to let the audience absorb your information.
- **Power:** An anchor has to create power in voice and make it more commanding by generating intensity in his/her voice. In order to make voice more intense, an anchor should not speak from mouth but from inside the abdomen.
- **Volume:** You should not strain your voice to the point of discomfort. Maintain your volume according to the comfort level.
- **Emphasis:** Put emphasis by focusing on the key words in order to bring out their desired meaning.

14.3.9 Acquaintance with Journalistic Ethics and Laws

An anchor is obliged to follow a code of journalistic ethics. Ethical responsibility demands that inaccurate information, information that endangers public safety, words that can create panic and traumatize the victims should be avoided. It also requires an anchor to be free from any sort of inclinations or associations that instigate him/her to compromise on honesty and thus eventually affecting reliability. Ethical challenges have been heightened by the 24 7 news scenario. News channels get considerably less time to verify or cross check the information. Hence, under the pressure to boast being the first channel to give particular breaking news to viewers, sometimes anchors are asked to go on air with unconfirmed information which may be misleading and inaccurate. Anchors must also be aware of the consequences and legal implications which may generate trouble for them as well as their channels.

After knowing the essential qualities of a television news anchor, you can practice in different ways to improve your capabilities. As a student, reading the news stories aloud from a newspaper can be the first step towards practicing. Aspiring anchors can practice by recording their voice on various applications available on phone. You should work on your reading style to make it more conversational.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: 1) Use the space provided below for your answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this Unit.

1. List any five essential qualities of a good television news anchor.

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2. What is voice modulation ?

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14.4 ANCHORING FOR DIFFERENT TYPES OF PROGRAMMES

Format and subject of the programme influence anchoring style. In this section, we shall discuss the suitable presentation styles in different types of television news programmes.

14.4.1 Common Formats of News and Role of the Anchor

Some of the common news story formats are as follows:

Live : It is when the reporter goes 'live' from the location and a camera is set up to show events as they are unfolding. Usually live news is done for more important stories. The news anchor raises questions about updates which are answered by the reporter.

Package : A news package is an audio-visual form of news that has voice overs, bytes, visuals and PTC. The news anchor reads an introduction and then a pre-recorded package is shown. Usually a package is made for the important stories but it can also be used in combination with a 'live' report.

Phono : It is usually used for a breaking news or some important update. It is a 'live' report filed in by reporter from scene of the story. Here, the anchor asks questions and reporter replies on phone.

Reader : Here, the news anchor reads a story 'on air' with no audio or video elements to support it. Generally, it is used for the less important stories or for 'breaking news' being reported at the last minute.

Anchor-Byte : In this format, the anchor reads the news and bytes of the concerned person/s are included.

Anchor-Visual : This format contains anchor link and visuals. Anchor reads the news and visuals of that story are played. Generally, this format is used for small stories. You can find this format commonly used in speed/fast news bulletins.

Anchor-Graphics : This is similar to Anchor-Visual but here graphics are used in place of video footages. When visuals are not available, this format is used. Here, the anchor reads the news and graphics are shown.

14.4.2 Presentation of Special Bulletins and Shows

Nowadays it is often observed that we have special news bulletins to cater to viewers with specific set of interests. The nature of the programme determines the conduct of its anchor. In the case of special bulletins, an anchor must possess proper knowledge about that specific field. The presentation style varies with the subject of the special bulletin. The list of some categories of special bulletin is as follows:

Sports: This category attracts different age groups of viewers. Knowledge, presence of mind and spontaneity are the most important criteria to become a successful sports anchor in India. For example- for a cricket lover, what matters is the way an anchor is able to steer arguments in the show and the input s/he gives to the show.

Crime: You would have come across crime shows or bulletins on television news channels. The show may be totally based on one crime or it may be presented like crime bulletin containing many crime stories. Sometimes crime shows recreate the incident with the help of actors and actresses. This type of show demands a different presentation style other than simple anchoring. Anchors are expected to create suspense and excitement.

Business: Some special bulletins or shows focus on news related to stock exchange, industries and other business-related fields. Anchors of these bulletins should have a sound understanding of dynamics of the share market, market economy and other associated areas.

Agriculture: This category focuses on the farmers and their major issues like seeds, livestock, pesticides, fertilizers, new agriculture techniques, weather etc. In these shows, anchors should have the capability to connect with farmers and rural folk so that they can communicate the desired messages to them effectively.

Fashion and showbiz: More and more people are becoming interested in the lives of film or TV artists, new fashion trends, new make-up related techniques, etc. So, the news channels have also begun to address these fashion and showbiz categories through special shows. Such shows require a different type of anchoring. Here, anchors must act as light hearted and humorous persons. They are also expected to don many fashionable and trendy dresses.

Educational and career-based shows: Some news channels have career and education-oriented shows where experts guide the students and job seekers.

Religious: A few news channels allocate separate time slots for religious shows especially during festival seasons. While presenting a religious show, the anchors should consciously use appropriate language and dresses.

Health: A few special shows or bulletins are based on health related information. They focus on different ailments, their treatments, misconceptions related to different diseases, precautionary measures, fitness issues, etc. At times, you can see the anchor of a Yoga show wearing yoga costumes and even performing yogasanas to attract the viewers' attention.

Apart from the above-mentioned categories, you may see some other special shows related to Science and Technology, Automobiles, Film reviews, Travel, etc. Finally, you should understand that the subject of the content decides the presentation style.

14.4.3 Presentation of Talk Shows, Panel Discussions and Debates

Many programmes such as talk shows, panel discussions and news debates require anchors to be fluent, eloquent and spontaneous speakers. For such programmes, while an anchor must have expansive vocabulary, research is also equally important. They must carry out research on the subject of the show beforehand as the anchor is expected to lead the debate or panel discussion. The anchor must have a good command over language. The anchors in talk shows, panel discussions and debates are required to have good observation power and presence of mind to observe and interpret the body language and responses of panellists and experts. Talking to oneself in front of the mirror and describing the points which have to be discussed during the show, can be helpful.

Such extempore programmes usually run for a fixed period of time and the anchor who is leading such a show must have a good sense of time as s/he needs to round up the discussion and draw a sensible conclusion within the stipulated time. The anchor is expected to strictly adhere to the directions given pertaining to the duration that has been set for each segment and commercial breaks. One of the main mistakes evident in the debates and discussions conducted by a novice anchor is the repetition of certain words again and again. Some anchors tend to use interjections at the start of their sentence because they are still thinking about the next sentence they will speak and have not formulated the ideas or questions that they want to ask.

Generally, talk shows, discussions and debates are never rehearsed before telecast. During such shows, an anchor has to make use of the good judgment in selection of questions. Before such shows, anchors are expected to sit down with the guest, experts or panellists, to make them comfortable and also ascertain their attitude towards different issues.

14.4.4 Presentation of Interviews

A news anchor should be able to think on his/her feet. While conducting an interview, knowledge and spontaneity play a very important role. Those who are really good at asking questions and interviewing, make it look like they are winging it, but it is the prior preparation that makes it look so smooth and easy. It takes a lot of preparation and persistence to conduct a good interview as an anchor. If you want to conduct a good interview for television news channels, keep the following things in your mind:

Make the interviewee comfortable: establishing a rapport /connection with the interviewee will put him/her at ease before the actual interview.

Do your homework: while heading towards a discussion with tough questions, a proper research into the issue can be of great help.

Listen carefully to the answers as it will help in asking follow up questions.

Try to stay away from close ended questions. For Example - if you are interviewing survivor of a natural disaster, you can ask open ended questions along these lines: what were you doing when it happened ? How did you save yourself ?

Be persistent: You have to dig for information by rephrasing the same question again and again until you get the answer.

Control your emotions: Some interviews may move you to tears or make you angry. But you should learn to hold yourself together and exhibit professionalism.

Closing comment: The best way to end an interview is to ask if the interviewee has anything else to add. A new angle may exist that no one else may have thought about.

14.4.5 Presentation of Live and Multi-Anchor Shows

During live shows, an anchor is expected to maintain a link and co-ordination between different participants of the show and the PCR. Live shows and bulletins are more deadline oriented and the anchors must to have a good sense of timing. You may find few shows with more than one anchor. If it is a dual anchor show, then both the anchors are expected to co-ordinate with each other and also with the panellists, experts or participants while receiving instructions from PCR via earpiece. Few channels experiment with more than two anchors also, for example - 'Panchnama' on ABP news. This show is presented by five anchors. Coordination and maintaining the natural flow of the show are main concerns in multi anchor shows.

14.5 WRITING ANCHOR SCRIPT

Once a rundown has been completed or sometimes even before that, the news bulletin producer can start writing anchor scripts of individual news stories. It is also known as anchor link or "The Readers". It is like intro of the report and

presented by anchor. You should not squeeze too much information into one or two sentences if it is an anchor link of a news package. If you are writing an anchor link, keep the following things in your mind:

You should keep sentences simple and short as it is easier to digest and share idea of the story by using simple and clear information. Difficult words should be written phonetically, and producers should ensure that they point them out in advance.

You should be careful with numbers. It is ideal to take big numbers and write them in words to make it easier for anchors to read them in a flow. For example, instead of “the government promises to generate 800000 employment opportunities in next five years,” the anchor script should be written, “the government promises to generate 8 lakh employment opportunities in next five years.”

You should avoid passive voice sentences and use conversational tone. Anchor script should be written in active voice and should appear as if the anchor is speaking to the viewers. Using conversational tone is very important to establish connect with the viewers. It should not appear as if the anchor is just reading from the teleprompter.

You should try to use compelling words in anchor links. The viewers should be hooked to watch the whole report or segment after hearing the anchor link.

Share main idea of the news report. Try to identify specific W questions that you should provide answers to in the readers/anchor links.

Try to introduce the name of the reporter while writing anchor link of a news report. If s/he is reporting live in an area, recognize that so and so is reporting live and specify name in the script as well if it is an exclusive report as the reporter deserves the credit.

14.6 CHALLENGES FOR A TV NEWS ANCHOR

The challenges faced by news anchors have increased because of the 24-hour news cycle. This news scenario leads to rushed stories, inaccurate reports, incomplete information and sometimes even misleading content. Hence, the anchors have to go straight on air with information that may not be accurate and which may make them more susceptible to action under libel laws. Some other challenges faced by news anchors on a day-to-day basis are as follows:

Learn to maintain composure under crisis: Anchors have to keep calm during a time of crisis. Sometimes the crisis may be due to a bad and horrible news story or at other times, it may involve some on-air technical problem.

Last minute changes: Anchors are always required to be ready for a complete change in rundown and script at a moment’s notice. If a breaking news story comes during the on-air bulletin, the producer may take the decision to make sudden changes in the rundown and insert it into news bulletin.

Long work hours: a news anchor cannot afford to have a regular 9 to 5 type of job. Plans have to be cancelled on a moment’s notice if suddenly a big breaking news comes along during a bulletin. Their working hours and timings are fixed as per the requirement of the news channel they are working for.

Public criticism: A television news anchor has to develop a thick skin to realize that you cannot please everybody. Some viewers may criticize the anchors for their

hair, dresses, style of speaking, having political bias, or being too aggressive. News anchors have to accept it as a part of their job.

Artificial Intelligence supported robot anchors: AI (Artificial Intelligence) supported robot news anchors have been experimented in few countries. Like many other fields, artificial intelligence may pose new challenges to the human news anchors. So, in future, anchors need to be more creative and continuous innovations will be required to keep human anchors relevant for the television news industry.

Activity - 1

Write down the script of Anchor Links of five news stories and record it with the help of a smartphone. Play the recording and analyse your performance.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: 1) Use the space provided below for your answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this Unit.

1. Write down five points which need to be kept in mind while anchoring the interview based shows.

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2. What are the important points one should keep in mind while writing script for anchors?

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14.7 LET US SUM UP

In this Unit, we have discussed various aspects of television news anchoring. It is hoped that this discussion will help aspiring anchors in understanding the dynamics of anchoring and will also help them to hone their anchoring skills. Television news anchoring demands a lot of hard work, sincerity, perseverance and knowledge. Knowledge about different fields and current affairs, command over language, ability of multitasking, knowledge of journalistic ethics and laws, voice modulation and skill to handle teleprompter are a few essential qualities required for a good television news presenter.

The format and content of the programme influence the style of anchoring. In this Unit, we also discussed the anchoring styles for different programme formats as well as for the special bulletins based on different subjects like sports, business, crime, etc. Writing for anchor scripts has also been discussed. A good anchor script helps in better anchoring.

14.8 FURTHER READINGS

Kalra, R.(2012), The ABC of News Anchoring, Noida, Pearson education India.
Reardon N. (2006), On Camera: how to report anchor and interview, London, Focal Press.

14.9 KEY WORDS

PCR : PCR stands for Production Control Room. It is also called SCR (Studio Control Room). It is a place in any television channel from where the live programmes are controlled. Generally, producer of the programme sits in PCR to monitor the whole show and to give instructions related to the programme. Anchors sitting in the studio are connected to the PCR. Generally PCR has video monitors, vision mixer, audio mixer, etc.

Teleprompter : Teleprompter is a display device which plays an important role in television news anchoring. The script is reflected on a monitor and that monitor is placed directly in front of the camera lens. It allows an anchor to be comfortable in front of the camera. The main advantage of using the teleprompter is that it allows you to look directly into the camera lens while reading the script.

News Package : A news package is an audio-visual form of news that generally has anchor link, voice-over, sound bites, visuals and PTC. Usually a package is produced for more important stories.

14.10 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: POSSIBLE ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

1. Knowledge of different fields, ability of multitasking, command over language, capability of Sight Reading and skill to use teleprompter
2. Voice Modulation is to change the different properties of your voice to make the presentation more effective. It is change in stress, pitch, loudness and an inflection of the voice which gives your voice mood meaning and makes it sound more attractive.

Check Your Progress 2

1. Five following points which need to be kept in mind while anchoring the interviews:
 - Be persistent
 - Pay attention to the answer s
 - Ask open-ended questions
 - Make the interviewee comfortable
 - Keep tabs on your own emotions
2. The following points should be kept in mind while writing the anchor's script:
 - Keep sentences short
 - Write big numbers in words
 - Use conversational language
 - Cover only the gist of the report
 - Try to introduce the name of the reporter