



KOSHYS

INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES

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INTRODUCTION TO JOURNALISM

Definitions of various authors.

1. **Mahatma Gandhi:** “The sole aim of journalism should be service. The newspaper is a great power, but just as an unchained torrent of water submerges whole countryside and devastates crops.

1. **Bond F. Fraser:** According to him “The term journalism embraces all the forms in which and through which the news and the comments on the news reach the public. All that happens in the world, if such happenings hold interest for the public and all the thought, action and ideas which these happenings stimulate become the basic material for the journalist.”

1. According to **Leslie Stephens**, “Journalism consists of writing for pay on matters of which you are ignorant.”

1. **Eric Hodgins** of Time Magazine defines it as, “Journalism is the conveying of information from here to there with accuracy, insight and dispatch and in such a manner that the truth is served and the rightness of things is made slowly, even if not immediately, more evident”.

1. According to **Websters** third International Dictionary Journalism define as “The collection and editing of material of current interest for presentation, publication or broadcast”.

Nature of journalism

Journalism is the timely reporting of events at the local, provincial, national and international levels. Reporting involves the gathering of information through interviewing and research, the results of which are turned into a fair and balanced story for publication or for television or radio broadcast.

Journalism is not just fact-finding media analysis opinion writing or commentary although all of those aspects can play a part at times. Journalism is that part of social activity which is concerned with the dissemination of news and views about the society.

Modern journalism feeds five areas of mass communication – (1) Newspapers and Periodicals, (2) Radio, (3) Television, (4) Films, (5) Advertising & Public Relations.

In modern societies, Journalism has become the media of mass education providing supplementary education to students at all stages and to the general masses – educated and uneducated. In modern times, the horizon of journalism has widened and it has transcended the limits of mere reporting of political and economic news.

Journalism has as its main activity the reporting of events stating who, what, where, why and how, and explaining the significance and effects of events or trends. Journalism exists in a number of media: newspapers, television, radio, magazines and, most recently, the World Wide Web through the internet.

Scope of Journalism

Journalism, in its wider sense, includes reporting and commentaries delivered on television and radio. Even news events and film documentaries come within the scope of journalism. The editors, and the reporters working for television, radio or film industry claim that when they deal with news and views, they too are as much covered by the term “the Press” as people belonging to the print media. What qualifies a person to be called a journalist is the nature of the function performed by him and not the media for which he is working.

Mass Communication is a very vast field and includes Television, Radio, Print Media, and Online websites as media. All the media houses are blooming at this time with information and job opportunities. After pursuing a course in mass communication, one can work for various newspapers, television channels, magazines, radio stations as well as films. Apart from this, one can also make a career in advertising agencies, PR companies and event management firms.

Skill Development in Journalism and Mass Communication

You need to show focus, persistence and interest in creative fields to do well in this profession. The various colleges well known for their Mass communication courses, such as Indian Institute of Mass Communication, Symbiosis Institute of Media & Communication (Pune), Jamia Millia Islamia University, etc train the students in such a way that the students learn good Communication Skills, develop smart Personality and become creative, dynamic, and enterprising during the course.

Jobs in Journalism and Mass Communication

The major principle on which the job market works is demand and supply. There are certain courses like engineering where the supply exceeds the demand, but in the booming field of social media, television, magazines, etc there is a huge demand of skilled and well trained professionals. The various job profiles in this sector include: TV Anchor, News Editor, Screen Writer, Senior Journalist, Junior Journalist and many more. The major recruiters include, Hindustan Times, Times Group, The Hindu, India Today Group, Outlook, Zee Network, Network 18, Star India, Balaji Telefilms Limited, etc.

Qualities of a Good Journalist

Integrity

To be a good journalist, you must possess a “solid ethical core” and integrity. Journalists must have their audience’s trust in order to succeed. Fairness, objectivity and honesty are three factors that need to be built into every story. It is a journalist’s duty to report accurate and reliable information to the public. If a journalist is ever put into a scenario where trust could be compromised, they should step aside. A good way to familiarize one’s self with the ethics of journalism is to read and follow the Society of Professional Journalist’s Code of Ethics.

Courage

A good journalist must also be courageous and bold. Part of the job is asking tough questions and digger deeper than comfortable when deemed necessary. Personal feelings must be put aside in order to unleash the truth. In most cases, journalists will

need to be out on the scene to get a full, unique story. This includes traveling to drastic and dangerous events to get details.

Communication Skills

Strong communication skills are a must for a journalist. These skills are used on a regular basis to interview sources and to write in-depth stories and reports. To be a journalist, a bachelor's degree in communication or journalism is necessary, along with some form of internship experience. A journalist must also possess skills in technical writing and source attribution, along with a high proficiency in English grammar.

Tech-Savviness

Technology and social media have become a huge part of journalism and reporting today; therefore, it is important that a journalist's possess technology skills. Journalists are expected to use social media as a tool to report in real time and to provide transparent coverage of an ongoing event. Journalists also need to know how to search the internet so that they can properly fact check and access any public records that are necessary for reporting a story. Social media also helps journalist connect with potential sources that could help build a story; therefore, knowing the ins and outs of each social media platform is necessary.

Analytical Mind

A good journalist should also have an analytical mind that allows them to base stories on fact instead of emotion. Critical thinking skills and sound judgment are crucial when it comes to reporting. Even when there are strict deadlines, a journalist should

hone these skills to report stories accurately and to verify that all information they have found is true.

If you believe you possess the above five qualities, then you definitely have what it takes to be a good journalist. What other qualities should a good journalist carry? Comment below to share your thoughts and opinions!

Ethics

A solid ethical core characterizes a good journalist. Fairness, objectivity and honesty matter when reporting everything from local referendums and proposed state tax increases to presidential elections. Professional journalists abhor fake news based on rumor, innuendo and unverifiable anonymous tips. Reporters should only share opinions in newspaper editorial pieces. They step aside if covering that story would be a conflict of interest, such as writing a feature article about a family member's new bistro.

Courage and Boldness

Good journalists push themselves to dig deeper and ask tough questions. They put personal feelings aside to boldly unearth the truth about newsworthy people, places and events. Courage is vital to investigating what is happening at the scene. They are not satisfied making phone calls from a comfortable desk in the newsroom when covering major happenings. For example, newspaper journalists may travel to the scene of dangerous floodwaters in their community and talk to volunteers who are helping sandbag a faltering dam.

Expert Communication Skills

Along with impeccable character, newspaper journalists must be skilled communicators to interview sources and write in-depth stories. Unlike radio, television or online journalists, they go far beyond sound bytes and superficial coverage of a situation. Newspaper journalists include background information and needed detail to give context to a more nuanced understanding of the issue by the reader. Typically, journalists have a bachelor's degree in communication or journalism and relevant undergraduate experience, such as writing for their college

newspaper. You must be highly proficient in English grammar, technical writing and proper attribution of sources to be a good newspaper journalist and not lose your job.

Knowledge of Technology

As part of their job, newspaper journalists follow and use social media appropriately to provide immediate and transparent coverage of happening events. They know how to use the internet to research stories and access public records when engaging in investigative journalism. Technology, such as Facebook and LinkedIn help them contact potential sources to request information or an interview. They also maximize use of technology to instantly inform the public about matters that may directly affect their health and safety, such as a food recall.

Investigative Skills

Good newspaper journalists have an analytical mind and base stories on evidence and facts, not emotion. They are astute observers and instinctively sense when there is much more to a story than what is being shared at a news conference, for example. Critical thinking skills are crucial when weighing conflicting accounts of an incident and assessing the credibility of sources. They exercise sound judgment when blogging or writing yet unverified information on the newspaper's website during a breaking story. Even when faced with looming deadlines, good newspaper journalists take time to get a balanced accounting of the subject.

Responsibilities of Journalists

Journalists educate the public about events and issues and how they affect their lives. They spend much of their time interviewing expert sources, searching public records and other sources for information, and sometimes visiting the scene where a crime or other newsworthy occurrence took place. After they've thoroughly researched the subject, they use what they uncovered to write an article or create a piece for radio, television or the internet.

Reporting Duties

Before journalists can write about a subject, they must first gather information. They usually conduct several interviews with people involved in or having knowledge of the subject. They may also go to the scene of an event, such as a crime or an accident, to interview witnesses or law enforcement officers and to

document what they see. In addition, they often search public records or other databases to find information and statistics to back up their stories. Researching a story is often similar to conducting an investigation, and journalists must sometimes ask difficult questions. They may have to invest a lot of time tracking down information and people relevant to the story.

Working With People

Even though a news article bears a single journalist's byline, the process requires significant collaboration. How good a journalist's story is often depends on how adept he is at communicating and working with others. For example, journalists take instruction from their editors regarding what angle to approach when writing a story, how long the story should be and whom to interview. They also need strong people and communication skills so they can persuade sources to talk to them. Journalists frequently approach people they don't know, whether when reporting from the scene or calling to request an interview. If they're uncomfortable around strangers, they'll make others uncomfortable as well, making it less likely that people will want to be interviewed.

Legal Responsibilities

In addition to serving the public interest, journalists must also follow the law, especially regarding the confidentiality and privacy of the people they interview or write about. For example, while journalists often tape record their interviews to ensure accuracy, federal and state laws generally make it illegal to record a conversation without the permission of the other party. In this case, journalists must tell their sources they're recording the interview before it begins. Journalists must also understand the laws regarding libel and invasion of privacy. If a journalist is careless when reporting criminal allegations against a person, for example, he could face a defamation lawsuit if the accusations are proved untrue.

Ethical Responsibilities

Some aspects of a journalist's job are not subject to any kind of law but are just as important. Journalists must strive to present an accurate, well-balanced explanation of the stories they cover. For example, they have an obligation to present all sides of an issue, and to conduct extensive research and talk to several sources knowledgeable about the subject. If they present only popular opinion, or if they conduct minimal research without fully exploring the subject, they don't give readers and viewers the information they need to understand the implications of

the event or issue. Journalists must also be honest with the people they interview, telling them before talking to them what the article is about and that they plan to quote them in the piece.

What Duties Do News News reporters are responsible for gathering and writing about the news as it happens. The advent of 24-hour news broadcasts and regularly updated digital editions of newspapers puts pressure on reporters covering national or international events to be first with the story or to find a new angle.

Local reporters don't face the same time pressures, particularly when they are working for weekly publications. However, they have to find stories that keep readers or viewers informed or entertained. Understanding the roles of a news reporter will help you decide if this career is right for you.

Challenge faced by journalist

The single biggest challenge facing journalism today is the public's lack of trust in it. This is not a new challenge, but it is persistent, and it has been getting worse. Gallup's most recent poll on trust in US media found only 28 percent of respondents believed news organizations supported democracy 'very well' or 'well'. By contrast, 43 percent of respondents believed news media supported democracy 'poorly' or 'very poorly' (Ritter and Jones, 2018).

Public trust in news media has waned for many reasons. The collapse of traditional, advertising-dominated business models have left news organizations as a whole with fewer resources to produce quality journalism (Rosenstiel and Mitchell, 2004). Audiences have reacted negatively to sensationalized coverage and 'clickbait' as news organizations try to entice people to click on stories online (Brants, 2013). A lack of trust in media has also been connected to declining trust in government and other institutions (Jones, 2004). Media are seen as being controlled by powerful people who want to push their personal agendas rather than serve the public (Newman and Fletcher, 2017).

Individual journalists are also seen as powerful people who push agendas that are not always in the public interest. This was clear in the recent book *Becoming the News* (Palmer, 2017), which focused on the experiences of ordinary people who became news subjects. The book noted a disconnect between the way ordinary people see journalists and the way journalists see themselves. The news subjects 'felt like David, to journalism's Goliath', in their interactions with journalists.

News subjects often felt like they were used by journalists to tell stories whose direction was out of their control. In journalists' minds, though, '*They* are David, facing down the powers-that-be in the name of the citizens' (p. 7). This disconnect reveals another reason for a lack of trust in media: journalists often do not recognize the power they wield over members of the public, and thus fail to treat them with sufficient care and respect.

Having the trust of one's audience is vital to journalism's core function of 'sense making' (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2014). Audiences depend upon journalists to help them make sense of current events by explaining them in context, such as by providing a history of events that led up to the latest news. The context journalists provide depends on a shared ideology or news judgment (Deuze, 2005). Journalists also consider who is in their imagined audience (Anderson, 2011) in order to determine what background information is relevant. Are their audiences primarily local, national, or international? Do they imagine their audience to be other journalists or 12-year-old girls (Darnton, 1975)?

Journalists know more about their audiences than they used to. Tools such as Google Analytics and Chartbeat allow journalists to see data about their audiences and which articles they read, like, and share most. However, having that information does not necessarily help journalists communicate with their audiences more effectively (Petre, 2015). Analytics provide a limited view of who audiences are. Journalists still remain 'out of touch with the lived reality' (Deuze, 2008: 857) of their audiences, viewing them mostly as abstractions (Heinonen, 2011). Although journalists recognize the importance of audiences to their work, they are often reluctant to involve them in editorial decisions (Tandoc, 2014).

Many newsrooms are hiring 'audience-oriented editors' (Ferrer-Conill and Tandoc, 2018) to mediate the relationship between journalists and their audiences. However, audience-oriented editors themselves may not communicate with audiences – at least, not directly. Rather, they are often the ones who manage and interpret the sea of analytics data, creating a vision of audience as algorithm (Anderson, 2011). Audience-oriented editors are thus different from ombudsmen or public editors, positions that are increasingly rare at news organizations (Barr,

2015). Unlike audience-oriented editors, ombudsmen and public editors interact frequently with audiences and act as their representatives when presenting their questions and concerns to news organizations.

News organizations may yet attempt to build relationships with audiences in other ways, such as via crowd sourcing or other so-called ‘engagement’ initiatives. Members of the ‘crowd’ may, for example, help journalists search for newsworthy nuggets among piles of records. Journalists may also crowd source photos from people who happen to be in locations where news is breaking. But such initiatives are usually valued by news organizations for their ability to save journalists time and labor – they are not designed as outreach, as a mechanism to build public trust. Indeed, crowd sourcing initiatives depend on people who already trust news organizations, at least to the extent that participants are willing to volunteer their time and labor to help.

What to do? My suggestion for building trust is modest, low-tech, and unoriginal: journalists should have more conversations with strangers. That is, once a week, every journalist should meet someone new. Go out for coffee, or ice cream, or whatever. It should be face-to-face, because in-person conversations are better for building trust (Nilsson and Mattes, 2015). Journalists should choose people who have never been sources or are likely to become sources due to their jobs, expertise, or social prominence. Journalists could, for instance, pick random people from their news organization’s list of subscribers. Even better, journalists should seek out news avoiders (Toff and Nielsen, 2018) – their trust in media is obviously so low that they have decided news is not worth their money or time. News avoiders are the ones with whom journalists truly need to ‘engage’.

These conversations with strangers should be informal and off-the-record – no notes or recordings allowed. Journalists should aim to talk as little as possible and not try to steer the conversations in self-serving directions. If their conversation partners want to talk about news, fine – but journalists should not see these conversations as means to stories, quotes, or sources. That means resisting the journalistic impulse to interject ‘that would be a great story!’ even when

conversation partners say something that truly would be. Journalists should instead focus on active listening (Charon, 2001) in order to build trust.

Afterward, journalists may do well to write memos for themselves in order to help remember what was discussed. But these should be for the journalist's eyes only – not for their bosses, or co-workers, or audiences. And who knows, maybe a story idea will emerge that the journalist could pursue – but some other day.

I expect journalists not to take my advice. As mentioned, it is modest. (Coffee once a week? How much of a difference could that make?) And yet, even this modest suggestion will seem impractical to many journalists. (Coffee once a week, with no promise of a story? Who has time for that?) And indeed, it may be impossible for many journalists to implement this idea without the support of their managers and organizations. It may in fact be an idea that should be implemented at the organizational level, similar to the way Google encourages its employees to spend 20 percent of their time on side projects.

My suggestion is also low-tech, which hurts the chances of news organizations adopting it. Journalists love technology, particularly when it appears to help them solve difficult problems – such as how to build, retain, and engage with audiences. Still, journalists also are aware of the limitations of the quantitative data they gain through audience analytics tools. And as professional interviewers, journalists recognize the potential of conversations to provide qualitative data that analytics tools do not capture.

The third strike against my suggestion: it is unoriginal. Journalism as a conversation was a central theme of the public journalism movement in the 1990s, especially in the writings of James Carey (e.g. Carey, 1987). And the concept is still discussed today in areas such as participatory journalism, community journalism, and reciprocal journalism. Conversation is also at the heart of current journalistic endeavors such as Hearken and Ground Source, platforms that help news organizations involve the public more deeply in story development.

And yet, more conversations need to take place. By taking the time to talk to strangers, journalists can show that they are actually trying to serve the public more than themselves.

