**INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING I**

To investigate means to probe into any matter, to dig out facts which are tried to be kept hidden.

Investigative journalism is a kind of journalism in which reporters deeply investigate a topic of interest, often involving crime, political corruption, or some other scandal.

***“There is no more important contribution that we can make to society than strong, publicly-spirited investigative journalism.”--------------------------*Tony Barman, Editor-in-chief CBC News**

**Black like Me**

In 1959, John Howard Griffin, a Caucasian (white person), changed the color of his skin and traveled in the U.S.'s Deep South as an African -American, got the first hand knowledge of the problems of negroes and later wrote a series of articles for Sepia magazine.

**Thalidomide Scandal**

**Thalidomide** is a sedative, hypnotic, and anti-inflammatory medication. It was sold from 1957 to 1961 inalmost fifty countries under at least forty names, including Distaval, Talimol, Nibrol, Sedimide, Quietoplex, Contergan, Neurosedyn, and Softenon. Thalidomide was chiefly sold and prescribed during the late 1950s and 1960s to pregnant women, as an antiemetic to combat morning sickness and as an aid to help them sleep. Unfortunately, inadequate tests were performed to assess the drug's safety, with catastrophic results for the children of women who had taken thalidomide during their pregnancies.

From 1956 to 1962, approximately 10,000 children were born with severe malformities because their mothers had taken thalidomide during pregnancy.

Unusual side effects had been reported by patients taking thalidomide in the UK, including peripheral neuropathy. Worse, pregnant women who had taken the drug were giving birth to babies with a condition called phocomelia – abnormally short limbs with toes sprouting from the hips and flipper-like arms. Other infants had eye and ear defects or malformed internal organs such as un-segmented small or large intestines. The company denied that thalidomide was responsible for any of these problems.

**Investigative Reporting Of the Medicine**

On November 18, 1961 the German paper *Welt am Sonntag* published a letter by German pediatrician Widukind Lenz. Lenz described more than 150 infants with malformations, and associated them with Thalidomide given to their mothers.

In December, *The Lancet* published a letter by William McBride, an Australian physician, who noted large numbers of birth defects in the children of women who had taken thalidomide. Other countries quickly pulled the drug from their stores and pharmacies. However, the pharmaceutical company continued to dispute the claims that Thalidomide was responsible for the defects, saying that their action was "merely a response to the sensationalism."

Finally, the 'Insight' team of *The Sunday Times* got into the affair of investigation and probed into many doctors, patients and the company’s pharmacists. They got the samples of the disputed medicine examined from the laboratories and proved that the responsible factor for the birth of deformed children is nothing else than Thalidomide.

The 'Insight' team of *The Sunday Times* achieved great renown in the 1960s for its exposure of public health scandals, most notably Thalidomide.

**Watergate Scandal**

The term "**Watergate**" refers to a series of events, spanning from 1972 to 1975, that got its name from burglaries of the headquarters of the Democratic National Committee in the Watergate Hotel Complex in Washington, D.C. Though then President Nixon had endured two years of mounting political embarrassments. In August 1974 the scandal brought with it the prospect of certain impeachment for Nixon, and he resigned only four days later on August 9. He is the only U.S. president to have resigned from the office.

**Background of the Scandal**

On June 17, 1972, Frank Wills, a security guard working at the office building of the Watergate complex of office space, residential buildings and a hotel, noticed a piece of tape on the door between the basement stairwell and the parking garage. It was holding the door unlocked, so Wills removed it, assuming the cleaning crew had put it there. Later, he returned and discovered that the tape had been replaced. Suspicious, Wills then contacted the D.C. police. By coincidence, an unmarked police car was the first to arrive on the scene, so the lookout didn't alarm the burglary team. There was also confusion within the team over who had taped what doors, so it couldn't be concluded that someone else had removed the tape.

After the police came, five men — Bernard Barker, Virgilio González, Eugenio Martínez, James W. McCord, Jr. and Frank Sturgis were discovered and arrested for breaking into the headquarters of the Democratic National Committee. The men supposedly had broken into the same office three weeks earlier as well, and had returned intending to fix wiretaps that were not working and, according to some, to photograph documents.

The need to break into the office for a second time was just the highlight of a number of mistakes made by the burglars.

Hunt had previously worked for the White House, while McCord was officially employed as Chief of Security at the Committee to Re-elect the President CRP. This quickly suggested that there was a link between the burglars and someone close to the President. However, Nixon's press secretary Ron Ziegler dismissed the affair as a "third-rate burglary". Though the burglary occurred at a sensitive time, with a looming presidential campaign, most Americans initially believed that no President with Nixon's advantage in the polls would be so foolhardy or unethical as to risk association with such an affair.

As a matter of fact the scandal was investigated and denuded by two investigative reporters Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein who worked for *The Washington Post* and finally their investigation led to the resignation of U.S. President Richard Nixon.

Woodward had an informer whose code name was **"Deep Throat".** The True identity of the informer was kept secret. The **Deep Throat** informed that ***White House Officials had hired 50 agents to sabotage*** ***the Democrats' chances of victory in the 1972 Election. The grand jury also secretly named Nixon as a co-conspirator.***

"Deep Throat" unmasked himself on May 31, 2005: he was actually W. Mark Felt, the No. 2 official at the FBI in the early 1970s. Later it was confirmed by Woodward as well.

**Qualities of a Good Investigative Reporter**

Besides those which are prerequisites for a person who aspires to be a journalist, the following qualities must also be an integral part of his/her personality:

1. Sharpness
2. Intelligence
3. Nosy
4. Inquisitiveness
5. Familiarity with the area of his investigation
6. Well versed in law
7. Tricky interviewer
8. Strong contacts

**INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING II**

**Planning & Producing an Investigative Report**

The planning of investigative report involves great deal of research and knowledge of the area or the topic the reporter intends to probe into. Have a well planned start and minimize the chances of failure to the maximum.

While planning an investigative report a reporter must go through the following step:

**1)** **Identification of the problem**

First of all the reporter must have the precise knowledge of the matter he intends to make a report about. There are certain problems or matters which demand interpretative report and there is no need of investigative report. It is the quality of the reporter that how he smells something suspicious that needs to be investigated into. He comes to know that there is something about the incident that some forces are trying to keep secret or the real facts of some matter are being kept concealed deliberately. The reporter tries to dig out the real facts and then these facts are put on air in the form of an investigative report. Hence, unless the reporter knows the actual problem, he will not be able to make his direction to his destination.

**2)** **Make An Initial List Of Potential Interviewees**

The next step after identifying the area of the reporting is to make a list of those people who are needed to be interviewed. These are the ones who are directly or indirectly involved in the issue.

**3)** **Interviews of affectees**

Investigative reporting is needed for such incidents in which due to some reason, people get affected. It can be because of any fraud, or because of accident owing to negligence of any person, or because of corruption, or because of nepotism. The expressions of those people who get injured or affected directly are very important to be recorded. The reason is that these are those people who have the right information about the happening of the incident.

1. **Interviews of probable affecters.**
2. **Opinion of experts.**
3. **Opinion of concerned authorities.**

**Example:**

**Problem:** People living in the near-by areas of tanneries are suffering from fatal diseases like hepatitis B &C.

**Point to ponder upon:**

The cases of the said disease are found in other areas as well or particularly the inhabitants near the tanneries are catching fatal diseases?

If the research proves that only those people are getting affected who are the near-by residents of the tanneries then the focal point of the research would be to search for the reasons. The reporter will try to find out the relation between the diseases and the tanneries.

It is a proven truth now that the chemicals in the wastes & discharges of the factories and tanneries when having not been disposed off the way they should be, diffuse into the soil and pollute the water beneath the earth. The same polluted water people draw out through hand pumps and use for drinking and other purposes. Even if the plants and crops are provided with the same contaminated water, their yield and growth also get affected and poisonous fruits and vegetables grow. This impure water is the heinous source of spreading deadly and highly hazardous diseases among human beings and animals if they constantly intake it.

* The investigative reporter will look into the ways and methods of disposing off the discharges.
* Chemical tests of underground water will be obtained.
* The affectees will be interviewed.
* The experts of the field will be contacted and their expert comments will be recorded.
* The owners’ point of view will be recorded.
* The opinion and the standpoint of the ministry of health will be recorded.
* The ministry of industry will be questioned.

**INTERVIEW**

Interview is an informal conversation with a person in which a reporter asks questions in order to dig out his/her opinions regarding a certain matter.

**Interrogation**

The process of asking somebody a lot of questions, especially in an aggressive way in order to get information is called interrogation.

**Interviewer**

The person who asks the questions in an interview is called interviewer.

**Interviewee**

The person who answers the questions in an interview is called interviewee.

**Purpose of the interview**

To get usable audio for news bulletin in order to make the item credible is the main objective of the interview.

**Types of interview**

* Hard news interview
* Informational interview
* Investigative interview
* Adversarial interview
* Interpretative interview
* Personal interview
* Emotional interview
* Entertainment interview
* Actuality interview
* Telephone or remote interview
* Vox pop & multiple interviews
* Grabbed interview

**Hard News Interview**

Hard news interview is conducted to illustrate a news item– to highlight facts and figure. 5 Ws & one H are covered in hard news interview, for instance:

* When actually the fire did break out?
* What was the cause of the fire?
* Is there any casualty?
* Which hospital the injured have been taken to?

**Informational Interview**

It is similar to the hard news interview. It extends to ordinary stories as well---about something that is happening or happened or about to happen. It provides the background of the event as well.

For instance in this kind of interview following type of questions are asked:

* How long did the fire brigade take to reach the spot?
* How long did the fire brigade take to put out the fire?
* What are company’s plans to avoid these kinds of mishaps?
* Will the company pay any compensation to the affected families?
* Was the company insured?

**Investigative Interview**

Investigative interview is carried out to get behind the facts– to dig out the actual reasons of the accident/ train collision/ air crash/ and the real factors or persons responsible for the accident are brought on surface.

Some example situations calling for investigative interviews are as under:

* Why the team showed poor performance in the match despite having been provided with the best facilities and trained by the best coach?
* Why the minister resigned from his office?
* Why is our film industry not getting up to its feet?
* Why didn’t the fire brigade reach the spot in time?
* Why the tank of the fire brigade ran short of water while putting out the fire?