

Chapter 2

Introduction to Journalism

Journalism

The profession of presenting information and opinion about an event or issue of general interest to the public in a systematic way by using mass media channels. The practice includes gathering (reporting), evaluating (editing/gatekeeping) and dissemination (publication/broadcasting) of news and opinion of mass interest. Also, the occupation of administering any news organization as a business. Academically, journalism refers to a course of study preparing students for careers in reporting, writing, and editing for newspapers and magazines.

Types of Journalism

There are three major types of journalism

- 1. Good Journalism:** The sober and serious form of journalism as it is meant for the educated and learned class of the society. Though the circulation of such press may comparatively be limited yet its influence and credibility is very significant in contrast to its contemporary yellow or even popular journalism. The language, style and subject matter are of high standard and serious nature.
- 2. Popular Journalism:** Popular journalism refers to the mass selling newspapers. Usually caters to the needs of majority of the readers by covering variety of subjects and topics of common interest.
- 3. Yellow Journalism:** Journalism that attracts readership through sensational and exaggerating headlines and stories with emotional and populist appeal. The term yellow journalism, originated in the late 1890s, (to be precise in 1898), came from a popular New York World comic series called 'Hogan's Alley', which featured a yellow-dressed character named the 'The Yellow Kid'.

Functions of Journalism

There are four major functions of journalism:

- 1. Information:** This function includes all reports, news and happenings concerning the daily life. It does cover all news regarding government politics, foreign affairs, weather, accident, business, labor, education. This function consists mostly of matter, which is given, in news broadcast on the radio and T.V. as well as in the news columns of the newspapers and magazines
- 2. Interpretation:** The need for interpreting and explaining the news in our day and age is readily manifold because their own fields of knowledge baffle even the specialists at times. In present days journalism sees to it that along with its announcement of a fact, event or theory, the reader or listener also gets explanation, background material interpretation and diagrams. These are all aimed at helping an individual to achieve a better understanding of the significance of what he reads or hears:
- 3. Guidance:** From the earliest days journalism has sought to influence mankind. Journalism endeavors to influence the minds of people through the printed words, cartoons and pictures as they appear in the newspapers, magazines, pamphlets and books and through the spoken words over the air. Also, journalism strives to influence its readers through its articles of opinion, its editorial, its cartoons, and its signed column etc. Journalism also plays its role to guide people about issues and events by collecting and evaluating complex data.

4. **Entertainment:** Side by side with its more serious roles of information, interpreter and molder of opinion, journalism lays increasing emphasis on its function as an entertainer. Under this function can be included all types of fiction like comic strips stories amusing aspects of everyday life etc. It also includes factual material sports news, theater reviews and hobby columns, which deal with leisure. The entertainment function of the press is very important. This function not only competes for space and time with either functions but it can also exert indirect influence and impart information incidentally

Journalist

A professional involved in the act of gathering and dissemination of information and opinion of general interest through mass media, generally refers to reporters and news or copy-editors (sub-editors). Depending on the context, the term journalist also includes various types of editors and visual journalists, such as photographers, graphic artists and page designers.