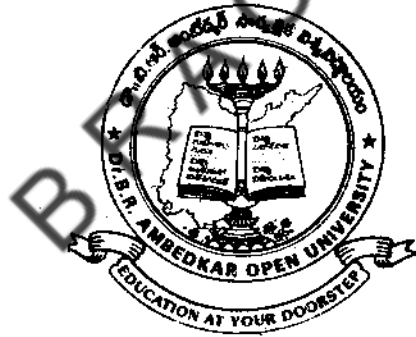


PR-1

Public Relations Public Relations Management Media

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Dr. B.R. AMBEDKAR OPEN UNIVERSITY

HYDERABAD

1994

BRAOU

PUBLIC RELATIONS MEDIA

Course II

- UNIT 1 Media Classification*
- UNIT 2 Newspapers*
- UNIT 3 Professional Organisations*

BRAOU



DR. B.R. AMBEDKAR OPEN UNIVERSITY
HYDERABAD
1994

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This text forms part of Open University Course.

The complete syllabus for the course appears at the end of the last instalment of the text of this Course.

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P R E F A C E

Public Relations as a profession has made rapid progress during the past two decades. The major public sector and private organisations today have recognised the importance of Public Relations, thereby creating new job opportunities for young men and women. Moreover, Public Relations as a management function is fast gaining recognition in our country. Further, there is a wide scope for Public Relations consultancy service. The number of new openings advertised in the mass media makes one optimistic about the growth of the profession. The next decade with its over all progress in agriculture, industry, commerce, and greater awareness among the masses owing to increased exposure to mass media will call for greater two-way communication and Public Relations than have hitherto been needed.

The social responsibility of a Public Relations practitioner is greater in a developing country like ours than in the developed countries. The professional will have a crucial role to play in the near future, whether it is that of fighting against untouchability, pollution, or campaigning for afforestation, small family, or for bringing in Computer technology.

The Post-Graduate Diploma Course in Public Relations offered by the Dr. B.R.A. Open University aims at training persons as Public Relations professionals. The course covers all aspects of Public Relations keeping in view our social, political, cultural and economic imperatives. It introduces the students to the basic principles and practice of Public Relations.

The Diploma course consists of the following five papers :

1. Principles of Communication and Public Relations
2. Public Relations Media
3. Public Relations Management
4. Editing and Production of Corporate Publications, and
5. Advertising.

In the paper, Public Relations Media, the student is taught about the characteristics, selective advantages, functioning of various media and their professional organisations. The importance of films, photographs, exhibitions, media relations and Government information agencies as Public Relations Media is discussed. The course tells the student how to use the different media for public relations, how to write for different media and how to organise media events.

In this text newspapers (Print medium), and Professional organisations are covered. The functioning and needs of different media and how to handle and meet their needs from the public relations angle is explained. A public relations practitioner who can anticipate the media requirements, and supply the required material including photographs will be much sought after, especially if the organisation is a public sector. The various media help the P.R. practitioner to give a good exposure to his organisation and maintain continuous communication with this publics. The proper understanding of Public Relations media is essential for maintaining good media relations. The most important point to remember in media relations is to maintain *Credibility*. *The student should remember without credibility, no public relations activity is possible.*

This text deals with the topics included in the syllabus for the Post-Graduate Diploma Course in Public Relations offered by the Dr. B.R.A. Open University. The syllabus, for the sake of convenience, is divided into units, each of which comprises a number of lessons. Each unit generally covers a specific area of the subject. The lessons are prepared by specialists in accordance with a format intended to enable the student to read and understand them without much difficulty. Each lesson begins with a statement of its objectives followed by synopsis and has at its end assignments, aimed at testing the student's comprehension of the subject matter.

The University hopes that this material would help the student to get acquainted with the basic principles of Public Relations Media.

Contents

UNIT - 1 :	<i>Media Classification</i>	
Lesson - 1 :	Media Classification	1
UNIT - 2 :	<i>Newspapers</i>	
Lesson - 2 :	Press – P.R. Medium	11
Lesson - 3 :	Writing for the Press	20
Lesson - 4 :	Features, Development Journalism and Success Stories,	33
Lesson - 5 :	Press Events – Press Conference	44
Lesson - 6 :	Press Tours	54
UNIT - 3 :	<i>Professional Organisations</i>	
Lesson - 7 :	Professional Organisations – Press	60
Lesson - 8 :	PR Professional Organisations –the Indian Scene	66

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UNIT - 1 : **MEDIA CLASSIFICATION**

Lesson - 1 : **Media Classification**

Objective

To discuss the relevance of media in the Public Relations process. In addition, mass media, their classification and functions are also enumerated.

Synopsis

1. Public Relations and Media.
2. Media Classification.
3. Introduction to Mass Media.
4. Functions of Mass Media.
5. Public Relations Media.

1. Public Relations and Media

"Public Relations is defined as the planned and persuasive two-way communication of ideas through various media from an organisation to its publics and from those of publics to the organisation in an effort to create and maintain better understanding between the two".

Among other things, the above definition highlights five basic elements of Public Relations.

- They are :
1. Organisation
 2. Ideas or information
 3. Media of communication
 4. Publics
 5. Better understanding

The main objective of the Public Relations process is to establish mutual understanding between an organisation and its publics. This understanding is possible only when appropriate messages or ideas are transmitted skillfully to the target groups of public. In transmitting such ideas or messages to the target audience, the Public Relations practitioner has to pass through the above five elements of the Public Relations process. Medium is one of the elements by which the (Public Relations) messages are conveyed to the target groups.

Medium : Medium is a vehicle of communication through which the Public Relations practitioner transmits information, ideas, etc., to the target group of publics. Radio is the best example of a medium. The Prime Minister's message to the nation on the eve of Independence Day is transmitted or conveyed to the public through All India Radio, among other media. (Medium is singular for media).

Media are also called "tools or weapons" in the practice of Public Relations. As we need various types of weapons to fight a war, different tools are required in the practice of Public Relations not only to communicate messages but also to veer the audience or target group towards an idea or product. In the modern world it is well-nigh impossible for any public relations practitioner to reach the target audience without the help of a medium. It is a must in Public Relations.

The medium we choose for any particular message will depend on a number of factors like :

- a) What is the content of the message?
- b) Who are your receivers?
- c) Where are they located?
- d) What is their educational and socio-economic background?
- e) Which medium can communicate your message effectively?

The relevance of media is linked to the message. Message and media are integral parts of Public Relations. In fact, they are inseparables.

Mc Luhan said "the medium is the message". This theory creates a controversy when we discuss the effects of media. The supporters of this argument say that the media like Radio, T.V. use the mode of the spoken word, pictures etc., and feel that the same word can mean both things. Here the media in which we are interested, (ways of sending messages—spoken word, written word) can quite easily get confused with the mass media like the Press, Radio, T.V. etc.,

Television or cinema by its very nature influences every aspect of human life. Irrespective of the contents of the message, they argue, that people watch T.V., for it commands their attention. In this case, more prominence is given to the medium than to the message. Of course, it is a matter of opinion. But the message or content is vital in the communication process. Thus the medium cannot be the message.

As stated earlier, medium and message are interlinked. It is impossible to imagine the utility of even a highly sophisticated medium in the absence of any message to communicate. It is similar to a cassette

recorder being rendered useless, if there are no cassettes to play. Not only that, the medium and the message are in turn invariably dependent on other factors such as the audience or receivers.

As part of their daily life the people use the media for knowledge, information and entertainment. They are exposed to different types of media everyday. Who does not read the daily newspaper? Are not people watching television? No matter what the contents of the programme, people are attracted by television because of its visual effect. Media undoubtedly help in informing, persuading, and influencing public opinion towards an organisation. The media therefore, have great relevance to public relations in creating positive feelings for the organisation on whose behalf they are used.

Development : As the weapons of war have advanced from the age of daggers, spears and swords to nuclear bombs and missiles, the media of communications have also advanced from the beat of the drum and person - to - person communication to instantaneous electronic media like the radio, television, telephoto and teletext. Thus there has been considerable advance in technology both in respect of the weapons of war and the tools of public relations.

Technological advancement in the media does not mean that we should forget the dagger in the war or the beat of the drum in public relations. Both still have relevance in the modern world. Just as the slogging foot soldier carries the traditional rifle with a bayonet on the war front, so does a District Public Relations Officer makes use of the village crier's beat of the drum in communicating information at the grass-root level even in this age of instant communication.

2. Media Classification

The Media are classified on the basis of their appeal to the human sensory organs. They are put into three categories.

1. Those which appeal to the eye.
2. Those which reach the ear.
3. Those which appeal to both the eye and the ear.

Visual Media : Media which are attracted by the sense of sight and the impressions received from the eye are called visual media. They include newspapers, magazines, photographs, pictures, cartoons, books. In all these media, vision is the instigator of thought. Messages are received here with the help of the eye.

Audio Media : In the second category are tools which influence the ear : radio, audio cassettes are the media which come under this category. People in this case receive messages through the ear.

Audio-Visual Media : The tools which appeal to both the visual and auditory senses (that is the eye and the ear) belong to the audio-visual category. Television and cinema are examples.

$$\text{E Y E + E A R = A U D I O - V I S U A L}$$

Media are Interrelated

Each medium has its own importance and utility in disseminating information to the people. It will be futile to separate the media into watertight compartments. They are all closely interrelated in their functions. Communication is the basic element that brings the different media under one umbrella.

The importance of different media is illustrated below :

1. When you tell someone something orally, only a part of the message is retained by him.
2. When you show him something in a visual, a bit more of it is retained.
3. If you show it to him and tell him about it, the message reaches home or is fully understood.

Audio-Visual communication, therefore, can be described as "telling and showing".

A Chinese proverb says

" If I hear	-(Audio)	- I forget
If I see it	-(Visual)	- I remember
If I do it	(Audience participation)	- I know".

However, we cannot say that a particular medium is superior to the others, because each one is important in its way. One medium may be more suitable for conveying a particular message to a particular type of audience than the others. Depending on the type and content of the message, we have to make a judicious selection. If a message has to be carried throughout the country or an awareness has to be created about a new product in the country, Radio is the best means for this purpose. In order to cover larger sections of the population with varied linguistic and cultural backgrounds, one medium may not be sufficient. A public relations practitioner has to utilise various media repeatedly. This is called a multi-media approach to public relations.

3. Introduction to Mass Media

When we discuss mass media, it is imperative to study the background of the communication process. Such a study enables us to have a complete picture of what is expected of us to meet the challenging tasks. It also helps us to have an analytical view of the problem. An idea of the advantages and disadvantages of a medium to be used, its merits and demerits in a given situation will form a proper base for us to proceed with confidence and conviction. We will be in a better position to anticipate the setbacks and make amends for the draw backs. We will be armed not only with the knowledge of what to do, but how to do it and when.

Communication methods may be grouped into three categories

1. Person-to-person communication.
2. Group communication and
3. Mass communication.

Oral Communication : The communication process has developed from direct communication between two individuals. This is person-to-person communication or face-to-face communication. When there were no means of modern communication, it was the only form of communication.

The great Emperor Ashoka, who ruled our country more than 2,000 years ago, was speaking to his people through his edicts inscribed on pillars and rocks all over the land and their impact was perhaps as great as that of all the contemporary print and electronic media. Pillars and rocks were used as media. Adi Shankara, the great communicator of our country who had lived over a thousand years ago, had walked through the length and breadth of our sprawling country several times before his death when he was in his thirties. He spoke to thousands of persons all over the land to spread his message. His medium was oral communication with selected individuals and also groups of people. India is perhaps the only country which has preserved the ancient tradition tracing back to 3000 years, of the error free transmission of the Vedas orally without any change. India's communicators had kept alive the tradition of oral transmission in a number of ways. Even now this method of communication is adopted in transmitting information to the people.

Man is a social being, this social nature makes man intermingle with his fellow beings. He lives in some form of group or the other. And he is always influenced by the group in which he lives. Thus group communication has developed roots among human beings.

Mass Communication

With the phenomenal increase in the population, people were compelled to develop culturally and spread themselves throughout the country. As the population increased and the mechanics of communication like radio, television and films were invented, the need for mass communication was more extensively experienced. It was a difficult task to convey a message intended for a large section of the population through the medium of person-to-person communication. In order to convey information and ideas to sizable and diversified groups spread throughout the country at the same time, communicators started using various mass media conveying messages through the mass media to mass audiences is described as "Mass Communication". The President's broadcast to the nation, on the eve of Republic Day over All India Radio is an example of mass communication. All India Radio is a mass medium. The mass media include newspapers, magazines, the radio, television and films. Two important factors make them mass media. The first is that their reach extends to vast heterogeneous masses of the population living in wide and extensive areas of a country. The means we employ to communicate messages to the masses are highly technological and scientific printing machines, electronic cameras, broadcasting, satellites etc. Yet another feature of the mass media is that they are based on the idea of mass production and mass distribution. Copies of newspapers are printed in millions for distribution to millions of people. Mass audience, high technology, mass production and vast coverage distinguish mass media from other minor media like inter-personal communication, hoardings, cinema slides etc.

4. Functions of Mass Media

The functions of the mass media are basically five fold.

1. Information : Dissemination of news
2. Interpretation : Giving an opinion - editorials, Comments.
3. Entertainment : Humorous skits, plays, music etc.
4. Education : Guiding the people.
5. Persuasion : Appealing to the people for a good cause.

An obvious example of the function of a mass medium is to either through a newspaper or radio, give information about day-to-day happenings. The editorial page of a newspaper reflects the views of the editor and other readers giving an interpretation to the news communicated. Editorials are the best examples of interpretation.

The comic strips in a journal or the musical programme on the radio is essentially a feature for entertainment. Mass media are also used for educational purposes. The Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) during 1975 was intended only for educating the masses. All mass media ultimately help in persuading people to accept a programme. In a developing country like India, the radio, television, the films, even the newspapers are being used for persuading people towards national objectives i.e. eradication of poverty, combating social evils like untouchability, dowry etc. The Mass media are being extensively used in a number of developing countries to promote the small family norm as a part of the family planning drive.

5. Public Relations Media

A public relations practitioner has to utilise a medium depending on the message and the receiver. Unlike the media of advertising, the Public Relations Media are varied and diversified. It is so because the public relations message has to cover more people with variegated backgrounds, while the target audience in advertising is limited. The range of Public Relations Media is therefore enormous.

The Public Relations Media may be grouped as follows :

- | | | |
|-----------------|---------------------------|--|
| I. Visual Media | a) PRESS : | Newspapers, Magazines. |
| | b) PHOTOGRAPHS : | Pictures, drawings, Cartoons, diagrams. |
| | c) PUBLICATIONS : | Books, folders, pamphlets, house journals, manuals, information bulletins, annual reports, direct mail, newsletters. |
| | d) BULLETIN BOARDS : | 3-dimensional models, exhibitions, hoardings displays, posters, bus panels, neon signs. |
| | e) BULLETIN BOARDS : | Open House. |
| II. Audio-Media | a) RADIO : | Audio-Cassettes. |
| | b) DIRECT COMMUNICATION : | Spoken word, talks, public meetings, conferences, Seminars, Symposia, annual meetings. |

- III. **Audio-Visual Media :** Television, Video Cassettes, Films, Documentaries, Newsreels, Film strips, Cinema slides.
- IV. **Traditional Media :** Folk songs, Folk dance, Folk music, Burrakatha, Harikatha, Jammukula Katha, Puppet shows.
- V. **Sponsorships :** Sports, Professional awards, public services, Chairs in Universities.

Author of the Lesson : Mr. C.V.Narasimha Reddi

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Suggested Reading

1. Mass Communication in India – Keval J. Kumar, Jaico Publishing House, Bombay, 1981.
2. Mass Communication and Journalism in India – Mehta, D.S., Allied Publishers
3. Mass Communication – Chatterjee, R. K., N.B.T.
4. Mass Media in India – Reference/Research Division
– Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, New Delhi.
5. Mass Media in India – Publication Division, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, New Delhi.

Assignments

- I. Answer the following in 30 lines.
 1. Define medium. How do you classify media into various categories? Give Examples.
 2. What is the relevance of media to Public Relations?
 3. What is Mass Communication?
Describe the functions of mass media.
- II. Answer the following in 10 lines.
 1. What are the functions of Mass Media?
 2. What is the importance of Medium to the Message?
 3. What are the different Public Relations Media?
Which medium is the most effective?

UNIT 2 : NEWSPAPERS

Unit Introduction

In this unit, Newspapers, we will be discussing how newspapers can be used as Public Relations medium. The newspapers provide a fertile medium for the PR practitioner to project the activities, image and to promote good relations of the organisation with different publics.

The PR practitioners can take full advantage of newspapers if he can understand the needs of the medium and successfully meet the requirements.

In the following lessons, we will be studying the various aspects of newspapers like the contents, functions, impact, what makes news, and how to write a press release. Similarly, we will be dealing with Feature writing, Success stories, and Development Journalism.

The other lessons outline the importance of the Press Events like Press Conference, Press Tours, etc. The Press Conference and Press Tours form an important part of media relations providing media coverage. Hence, the students should be well acquainted in organising and conducting press conferences which leaves a lasting impression on the media men about the organisation, its functioning, efficiency and its Chief Executive.

Lesson - 2 : **Press-PR Medium**

Objective

To describe the role of the Press as a tool of communication, classification of newspapers, their significance, functioning, and the impact of the Press is also discussed.

Synopsis

1. Newspapers (Press)
2. Classification of Newspapers.
3. Contents of a Newspaper.
4. The Newspaper Reader.
5. Journalism Profession.
6. Functions of Newspapers.
7. Limitations of Newspapers.
8. Impact of Newspapers.

Press is one of the most potent media of communication available to a PR practitioner in reaching the most influential and educated section of society. It includes daily newspapers, magazines and periodicals. They are important carriers of news and comments. In fact, the newspaper is the most important source of information about current affairs.

1. Newspapers (Press)

The newspaper has been defined as "an unbound, printed publication, issued at regular intervals, which presents information in words, often supplemented by pictures". Any printed, or cyclostyled periodical carrying news of public interest or comments on it is also a newspaper.

A journal is a daily record of happenings like a diary.

A newspaper issued at least four times a week is called a daily and one appearing at an interval of a week or more is known as a periodical.

2. Classification of Newspapers

Newspapers are classified into three categories based on their circulation.

- Big newspaper :** A paper with a circulation of more than 50,000 copies per publishing day.
- Medium news-paper :** A newspaper with a circulation between 15,001 and 50,000 copies per publishing day.
- Small news-paper :** A newspaper with a circulation up to 15,000 copies per publishing day.

3. Contents of a Newspaper

Let us consider the contents of a typical daily newspaper to examine its different constituents.

The newspaper starts with the masthead or the name of the paper on its front page usually at the top and ends with the imprint line on the last page giving the names of the publisher, printer, and the editor. Between these two important fixtures are the contents of the newspapers. They include :

1. News (local, regional, national and International).
2. Opinion page or Editorial page (Editorials, and other comments byline or signed articles by identified writers, letters to the editor).
3. Sports (Local, national and International).
4. Business, (Trade, Markets, Shares).
5. Weather report.
6. Film, radio and T.V. Programmes.
7. Advertisements (classified and display).
8. Pictures, cartoons, and comics.

The above breakup of items gives us a clear idea of the contents of the newspapers. Advertisements are spread out in the newspaper and take up a good portion of its space.

4. The Newspaper Reader

Newspaper reading is a habit. For a large number of literate persons it is as much a part of daily life as eating and sleeping. Their day starts with the newspaper. Notwithstanding the radio and TV 'explosion' as their popularity due to reasonable prices and wide availability is called - the importance of newspapers has not diminished. More and more people continue to read the newspaper every day.

Media Habits

The Department of Communication Research of the Indian Institute of Mass Communication, New Delhi undertook a study of media habits of the youth in Delhi in 1978. Out of 547 interviews conducted, 253 were rejected as incomplete. Thus only 294 interviews were considered for analysis. About 45% of the respondents subscribed to one newspaper. Another 17.7% subscribed to two and 6.1% to three newspapers. About 28% did not buy any newspapers. About 62% of the respondents were regular newspaper readers. Nearly 25% of the respondents read the newspaper only occasionally, once, or less than once a week.

About 33% of the respondents subscribed to one to four periodicals and 4.1% to five to seven different periodicals and magazines. About 41.5% did not buy any magazine.

National political news and sports news were the two main interests of the youth.

Reader

Newspaper readers are generally well educated and belong to a relatively higher income group compared to non-readers. A majority of them are influential decision makers. They are also opinion leaders whose views are respected by non-readers who are illiterates.

Newspaper readers are thus an elite audience. Elite or not, most newspaper readers are not equally interested in all the news published in a paper. Some of them are interested in advertisements, while others read political, economic or sports news.

Reading and understanding a newspaper requires a certain degree of intellectual ability and comprehension which the majority of the Indian masses, being illiterate or semi-literate do not possess.

It is estimated that not more than 17% of the people in India read newspapers. Out of them those who read the editorials, other comments, and interpretative articles are probably less than half. The others merely look at the headlines or read only what seems to them to be the most important and significant news of the day.

Young men mostly read sports news and film reviews. Traders and business minded persons confine themselves to the commercial news page which provides them with market quotations of shares, stocks and bullion prices.

Retired people with plenty of time on their hands, however, read the newspapers from the beginning to the end, the matrimonial advertisements included. Some readers have a genuine and sustained interest in national and international developments and avidly read editorials and special articles also.

The intelligentsia, though small, matters a great deal both to the rulers and the ruled. They are the national or state leaders, academicians, teachers and lawyers who speak up for the people and voice grievances at different levels. They also serve as a link between the Government and the people. The Government's policies and actions are conveyed to the people and the latter's views forcefully expressed, making the authorities aware of public feelings and reactions. Newspapers thus link the chain of action and reaction.

5. Journalism Profession

The profession dealing with writing for newspapers, magazines, Radio and TV is called journalism. It is the communication of information through (writing in) daily newspapers, periodicals, radio, and TV.

Roland E. Wolseley, a famous American Professor in Journalism describes "Journalism as the systematic and reliable dissemination of public information, public opinion, and public entertainment by modern mass media of communication". In other words, the term journalism embraces all the forms in and through which news and the comments on the news reach the public. Journalism does not mean merely writing for the newspapers. It also includes writing for the radio and television. The happenings in the world which are of public interest become the basic material for journalists.

Who is a journalist? A journalist is a person who writes for the media whether as his chief means of livelihood or as a part time occupation. Proof-readers, sub-editors, reporters, correspondents, editorial writers, and editors who work for newspapers, news agencies, and magazines are journalists, according to the Working Journalists Act.

A radio and TV Journalist communicates news by means of electronic devices instead of the print medium.

Importance

The press, as a purveyor of information and source of opinion formation assumes great importance in the modern world. It has been described as the "guardian angel of democracy". A free press is the sentinel of free society. Press, therefore, is called the 'Fourth Estate of the Realm'.

Napoleon Bonaparte said that "four hostile newspapers are more to be feared than a thousand bayonets". The American President Thomas Jefferson once wrote: "were it left to me to decide whether we should have a Government without newspapers or newspapers without government: I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter". The first Prime Minister of India Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru commenting on the importance of the press said "I would rather have a completely free press with all the dangers involved in wrong use of that freedom than suppressed or regulated press".

6. Functions of Newspapers/Press

The Press as medium of communication has four basic functions to perform. They are:

- | | |
|----------------|------------------|
| a) Information | b) Entertainment |
| c) Education | d) Influence |

In fact these are the broad functions of almost all media. Let us consider each function separately.

a) Information

It is the primary function of a newspaper to communicate ideas and information to its audience in the form of news items, editorials, interpretative stories, features etc. Many people look to the newspapers for news. The newspapers also dig up "Stories" concerning public welfare and or highlighting injustice done to the people. "Story" in newspaper parlance is a report not necessarily containing hard news.

b) Entertainment

Entertainment is yet another purpose of the newspaper. Newspapers and magazines provide information with a heavy dose of fun and games. They offer the readers comics and human interest features. Strip cartoons, crossword puzzles, movie reviews and the like also entertain the readers.

c) Education

Newspapers educate the public by giving background information on subjects of topical interest. Guidance is given to readers through articles on health, family, home management, gardening etc.

d) Influence

The power of the newspaper to change people's minds may be limited. However, the persuasive power of the newspaper is undeniable.

By conveying information on various topics, the newspaper enables the reader to form an opinion of his or her own, which leads to the formation, or change of opinions.

Describing the functions of a newspaper, Mahatma Gandhi once commented "one of the objects of a newspaper is to understand popular feelings and give expression to it, another is to arouse among the people certain desirable sentiments and the third is fearlessly to express popular defects".

In a democracy like ours the newspaper serves a twofold purpose - it informs the public as to what the government is doing and it tells the government how the people are reacting to its policies.

7. Limitations of Newspapers

1. **Short life** : Newspapers have short lives. The life of a daily newspaper is only one day.
2. **Readership** : Every section of the paper is really not read by all the readers. Those who read the sports page may not read the city news page and vice versa. While some readers are more interested in pictures and cartoons, others read financial or general news.
3. **Biased** . Some newspapers and magazines may be biased on account of vested interests. Sometimes inaccurate and incorrect news is also published. This affects the credibility of the medium as a whole.
4. **Ownership** : Concentration of ownership if it leads to monopoly may affect the freedom of the press.
5. **Sensationalisation** : Even trial issues are sometimes sensationalised by newspapers seeking cheap popularity.
6. The newspapers generally, publish reports of surface developments without going deeper into them.
7. Some newspapers are averse to publishing facts not in agreement with their editorial policy.
8. The press has an urban and middle class bias., because the circulation of most newspapers is confined to the towns and cities. The problems of the villagers living in about six lakh villages of the country are often ignored.

In a country like India with its mass illiteracy, the reach of the newspapers is limited. They cater only to the educated.

Relative Appeal

When compared with the electronic media, the newspapers, reach, as already stated, is very limited. People who are not literate cannot make use of the newspapers. The advantage of a newspaper is that one can read it at one's convenience. It can also be preserved as a permanent record for reference purposes. This is not possible in the case of electronic media unless one has cassettes and videotapes or access to computers and data banks. News conveyed over the electronic media is read faster and may not sink in. In a newspaper one can go through it more than once but not on the radio or TV. The newspaper reader has a choice. He gets the paper he wants, not something thrust on him. This is yet another difference between the newspaper and the radio in our country where the electronic media are a Government monopoly.

3. Impact of Newspapers

The newspapers in India played a very important role in the freedom struggle of the country. They have every reason to be proud of their role in creating and reinforcing opinion in support of independence. On many occasions it was perhaps the only means of expression of the country's aspirations. Many a national leader turned journalist. Among them can be listed, Bala Gangadhar Tilak, Mahatma Gandhi, Lala Lajpat Rai, Subhash Chandra Bose, and Tanguturi Prakasam. Before independence, journalism was thus a mission.

However, after independence the newspapers have a different role to play, particularly in promoting socio-economic development. Journalism has thus become a profession and the newspapers an industry.

Circulation

The number of newspapers published in 1981, according to the report of the Registrar of Newspapers was 19,144 with a total circulation of 5.11 crores. There were 1,264 daily newspapers and their circulation was 1.5 crores. Viewed against the background of India's 70 crore population this is very significant.

Two-Step Flow : Yet, the newspapers cannot be written off as tools of Public Relations and instruments of opinion formation. The educated citizen is highly influential and belongs to the category of opinion leaders. He constitutes the intelligentsia, the vocal section of the community which provides leadership. The views of this section cannot be ignored. The newspapers, therefore, influence public opinion both directly and indirectly.

A message that the public relations practitioner wants to convey to the illiterate people, can also be reached through the newspaper under the two-step flow of communication. In the beginning the message reaches the opinion leaders and through them percolates to the other section which is not literate. As a result there is an interaction between the literate and the illiterate. The power of the press does not lie solely in its capacity to persuade but also in its dissemination of information and its arousal of interest in isolation but is integrated with other interpersonal media which have a multiplier effect in spreading information. In this sense the newspaper is not only read but listened to also.

Awareness : The newspapers create awareness and build a healthy opinion on matters of public importance. If an idea or a product has to be promoted at the national level, the press can be the best medium. The influence of the newspapers is more than their circulation, as in other countries. The way in which the newspapers helped the freedom struggle is an eloquent proof of their impact.

Author of the Lesson : Mr. C.V. Narasimha Reddi

BRAOU

Suggested Reading

1. Indian Journalism - Dr. Nadig Krishna Murthy.
2. Press in India 1982 - 26th Annual Report of the Registrar of Newspaper for India.
3. Professional Journalism. - M.V. Kamath.

Assignments

I. Answer the following in 30 lines.

1. Describe the importance, characteristics and limitations of newspapers (Press).
2. How does the press in India influence the Public? Give examples.

II. Answer the following in 10 lines.

1. What are the functions of a Newspaper?
2. What are the contents of a Newspaper?
3. What are the limitations of a Newspaper?

III. Write short notes on the following (5 lines each.)

- a) Big newspapers.
- b) Impact of newspapers.

Lesson 3 - Writing for the Press

Objective

To describe the qualities of news, various forms of writing for the press and also give guidelines for writing press releases.

Synopsis

1. What is News?
2. Qualities of News
3. The News Report and its parts—the headline, the Lead, the body.
4. Essentials of writing a Press Release.

News is the major ingredient of a newspaper. Reports of events, announcements, comments on the news and topics of public interest constitute the contents of a newspaper.

1. What is News?

There are different versions of the origin of the word "news". Simply stated, it is something new. The plural of anything new is news. It is also said that whatever comes from North, South, West and East is news.

News has been defined in several ways :

- 1) News is "a timely report of anything of interest to humanity", and the best news is that which interests most of the readers.
- 2) News is "the honest unbiased and complete account of events of interest and concern to the public."
- 3) News is "a report of anything new that interests people", the more people are interested in it, the greater the news value.
- 4) An American Professor of Journalism described news as "history in hurry".
- 5) News is the "report of a recent or current event or information in a newspaper or periodical".

In the final analysis, news may be defined as an account of a factual incident or idea that will interest a large number of readers. News, like fish, must be fresh. Freshness, abnormality, unexpectedness, oddity and proximity of an event add greatly to the value of news. The content of the news item and whether its appeal is general or limited to identified sections of the community like industrialists, farmers, sportsmen also determine the value of news.

2. News Values (Qualities of News)

1. Timeliness

News must be timely, because it will be of interest to the public only when it is fresh. For example, the report of a train accident must be published in time soon after its occurrence. Stale news is no news. Timely presentation of events is important.

There is another dimension to timeliness. If the monsoon does not break in time, if a train is delayed by many hours, if a popular leader arrives at a meeting hours behind schedule and still the people wait to hear him, if elections are not held on schedule and are either preponed, or postponed, if the All-India Industrial Exhibition which has been opening on January 1 every year in Hyderabad for the last 40 years is not held or cancelled altogether, they make news. In these cases timely occurrence does not make news, *the opposite does*.

2. Interest

A report which interests only a few people is not worth publishing. It must be of interest to a large number of readers. Interest can be of several kinds. 'When a dog bites a man that is a not news'. 'When a man bites a dog, that is news'. Oddity creates interest. Human emotions are another determinant.

3. Proximity

Readers evince more interest in events close to their surrounding and of relevance to their avocation or way of life. Thus farmers are interested in news about agriculture and businessmen in commercial information. A murder, robbery, visit of a dignitary or any other occurrence in the readers' vicinity interests them.

Place plays a determining factor for judging news. What happens in Andhra Pradesh may not be news to one living in West Bengal. What interests a village reader most is boring for the urban reader. A T.V. viewer in a city switches off the set when events relating to agriculture are presented but to a villager it is important. If the Prince of Wales weds or if the Queen of England delivers a child or the Princess sports a new fashion style, it is news in England, but such things don't make much news in India. This is because of its proximity.

4. Importance

Importance is closely related to timeliness and proximity. It is generally asked whether the news presented is important or significant. For example the news about the assassination of Indira Gandhi was of world wide importance.

Various Forms of Writing

If we look at any newspaper, we find different types of news reports.

They are : reporting of events, features, or byline articles, interviews, human interest stories, obituary, book reviews, the sports column, the business column, letters to the editor, the editorial page, etc., These are written in different forms. Each requires a different style of writing and presentation. The P.R. practitioner should be conversant with the various forms of news writing. More important is the "nose for news" or ability to spot what is of news value and to present it effectively.

3. The News Report and its Parts.

Let us examine the news report. News of events, announcements, reports of speeches etc., are sent to the newspaper for publication. If a new train is being introduced or a public sector undertaking achieves a record production, it becomes news. The PR manager of the railways or the public sector undertaking, as the case may be, will send the news in the form of a report to newspapers. Most of the press releases issued by the P.R. practitioners come under this category.

The main purpose of a news report is to communicate information of an event to the people through the medium of the press.

Construction of the "story" is an important element in the presentation of a news report. Any news report can be divided into three main parts for the purpose of construction. They are : (1) the headline (2) the lead or the first paragraph (3) the body or the remainder story.

The Headline

Every news story requires a headline. The headline is an indicator to the reader. Its primary function is to attract the attention of readers and tell them instantly what the story is. It should be crisp, newsy and straight to the point. The headline stands out in bold type. It makes us stop and read the story. When Mrs. Indira Gandhi was assassinated, the newspapers gave banner headlines like:

'INDIRA GUNNED DOWN'
'INDIRA GANDHI SHOT DEAD'
'INDIRA GANDHI ASSASSINATED'

Though headline writing is the job of the newspaper (sub-editors) editorial staff, the PR practitioner also can give a headline to the news story which enables the editors to assess its news value.

The first paragraph or the Lead is the opening of a news report in which the essence of the story is introduced and also summed up. All the important ingredients of the story are contained in the lead. In fact, it gives a gist of the whole story. A newsman or a PR practitioner should endeavour to put his best in writing the Lead to attract the attention of the reader.

Many readers do not have the time to read a newspaper in detail so they are content with the headlines to find out what interests them; most. On seeing the headline and the opening paragraph the reader makes up his mind whether to pursue it or give it up.

Here is a news story :

BANK MANAGER SHOT DEAD (Headline)

Aurangabad, Jan. 12 (Dateline)

The Manager of the State Bank of Hyderabad branch at Chikalthana was shot dead and another employee seriously injured during an attempted robbery here this afternoon.

This is an example of a Lead. The above paragraph tells the reader that the manager of the bank was shot dead at Aurangabad. There may be other details, but they follow. The most important aspect is that two persons were killed during a bank robbery and that one of them was the Manager of the bank ; where it occurred and when are also important.

The Five Ws

According to a convention, the Lead in any news story generally, must answer five questions. These questions are otherwise called the **Five 'Ws'**. They are :

- 1) Who ?
- 2) What ?
- 3) When ?
- 4) Where ?
- 5) Why and How ?

The lead in a murder story must tell who is murdered? If the accused is caught and identified it also constitutes the "who" element. When it happened? Where it happened? and why or How it happened? Sometimes 'How' takes the place of 'Why'.

Here is an example of a lead.

New Delhi, Dec. 31

A 40-member new-look Council of Ministers headed by Mr. Rajiv Gandhi was sworn in at the chandeliered Ashoka Hall of Rashtrapati Bhavan this evening.

The above opening paragraph gives a plain summary of the fact that a new Union Ministry headed by Mr. Rajiv Gandhi was sworn in and also answers the five basic questions.

Other details come afterwards.

Who? - The Rajiv Gandhi Cabinet

What? - Sworn in

Where? - Ashoka Hall of Rastrapathi Bhavan-New Delhi

When? - On December 31, 1984

Why? - A new cabinet was sworn in as the Eighth Lok Sabha was duly constituted by the Election Commission. Sometimes Why is implicit.

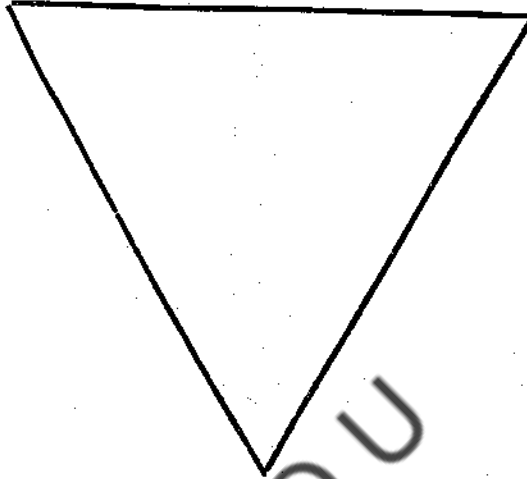
Types of Leads

There are several types of leads in news stories. The digest lead summarises all the principal facts very clearly. The direct appeal lead gives the appeal of the person. The quotation lead starts with a quotation of the speaker.

The body or the Remainder story

From the Headline and the Lead, the reader goes to the remainder of the story—the body. While the quintessence of the story is covered in the Lead, the body gives other details depending on their importance. The body follows the lead. The body is divided into several paragraphs. Each paragraph tells one aspect of the story. The reporter selects the most important fact of the story for the lead. Then the next most important incident or detail is mentioned and so on in a descending order of importance. The PR practitioner will need plenty of practice in selecting paragraphs and arranging them in the order of reader interest.

Graphically, the news story takes the shape of an Inverted Pyramid. *Information is arranged in the descending order of importance.* The reporter gives maximum space and prominence to the most important elements of the story, while the next-most important aspect of the story gets less prominence and space. So on down to the end.



Inverted Pyramid

The main objective of using the Inverted Pyramid pattern is to give the news in all the essentials at a glance. As a result, the reader not only gets the essence of the report in the very beginning but does not have to read it through till the end for being posted with the news. If the reader is not much interested, he can stop reading after the first four paragraphs .

The advantages of using the Inverted Pyramid form are :

1. It catches the reader's interest.
2. It tells the reader what the story is about.
3. It facilitates the editor to get the gist of the story in a hurry.
4. It helps the editor to leave out less important paragraphs if pressure on space demands it.

4. Writing a Press Release

Press release is one of the important weapons in the armoury of the PR manager. The PR practitioner communicates to the public about the programmes of his or her organisation through it. It may be an industry, a company, a government department, an enterprise, a university or a research institution. It is the PR Manager's job to project a proper and positive image of the organisation before the public.

Purpose : The purpose of the press release may be to convey what the management intends to say about organisation's achievements, problems, profits, or losses, invention production, or assessment and so on. It may also be intended to correct a wrong impression, to deny a report, or to clarify or to react to a happening.

"Nose for News" : The PR practitioner has to be abreast of the developments in the organisation, keep in touch with the different departments and in consultation with the concerned persons prepare the press releases. The PR practitioner has to develop a 'nose for news' and decide which development will be of interest to the newspaper reader.

Thousands and lakhs of words pour into a newspaper office every day from a variety of sources. The press release of the PR Manager is ONE OF THEM. In the circumstances, only such press releases which have news value and are qualitatively superior will catch the attention of the editor. The readers are the masters of newspaper and the editor strive to serve them to their satisfaction. The news should be of interest to the reader to merit publication.

Guidelines

Here are some guidelines for the PR practitioner in writing a press release.

If the press release is about a speech.

1. Do not report it without actually attending the meeting.
2. Take elaborate notes of the speech and follow its sequence carefully. The readers will be interested in what a speaker has actually said. It is, therefore, necessary to give a few "quotes".
3. While taking notes of the speech, do not miss the spirit or fail to smell the atmosphere. Selective notings and thorough understanding are more useful than mechanical note taking. The Human Interest part should also be covered.
4. One should take special care to note down the speaker's summation. The summary will be more useful in writing the story.

Basic Principles

In respect of other kinds of press releases, here are key principles for the PR practitioner to follow.

Headline : Each press release should have a good attractive headline.

The Lead : If the lead is good and has news value, it is bound to be read by the editor, but if it is badly constructed or too long or involved, the editor may not have patience to go through it, even if the press release is on an important development. So start with a lead that is loaded with news and nothing but news.

Good Copy : It is neither desirable nor possible to give any formula for preparing a good, newsworthy copy. However, a checklist will help.

Checklist

1. Does the press release convey anything new out of the ordinary?
2. Is it likely to be of interest to a majority of the readers?
3. Is it going to benefit the readers?
4. If it is the viewpoint of a person, is it important enough?
5. Does the press release contain the basic news elements?

Small is Beautiful

Don't make lengthy paras or lengthy sentences. Short sentence are desirable, especially for a language newspaper. If you use a number of complex sentences or make a display of your command of idioms and phrases, they might either miss your central theme or the reader may not be able to understand what you really want to convey. So also figurative language. It is fine if you use it sparingly. If you over do it, you run the risk of burying the news content. *Good copy should therefore be short, sharp and convey the message straight.* One should not overlook the space constraint in newspapers.

Sub-Heads: If the press release has four or five points, let them be conveyed in four or five paras so that the editor can select an appropriate lead without having to go through the entire press release. Provocating sub-headings in the sense of reflecting the contents and compelling the editor to go through the matter will help.

Language : The language and presentation of a press release should conform to the requirements of a newspaper. Technical matters should always be re-written in a popular, simple style without, of course sacrificing accuracy.

The news should be professionally presented, that is without taking too much space or time to convey it. Newspaper space is highly valuable and they will not waste it on verbosity.

The best way to learn to write for the press release is to read the newspapers and follow how stories are written and presented. The PR practitioner should compare his press releases with the published ones. Above all, practice will make a perfect PR practitioner.

Figures : Figures up to ten are written in words and 11 onwards they are given in figures. Dates are an exception. This is because single digits are lost in the text and two and more digit figures occupy more space when written in words. The reader is put off if he comes across a sentence saying two thousand four hundred and eighty seven in words in the midst of a sentence.

Opinion : Do not give your opinion in a news report. The press release should be to the point and factual. This is to say, the PR practitioner should not put his own views in a story. He should merely report what happened. Opinions are given by the editors through their editorials based on the news supplied.

Accuracy : The particulars mentioned in a press release should be accurate. A reliable copy has always a chance to get into the Press. Inaccuracy in a press release not only results in loss of faith and credibility of the source but also reduces the chances of its acceptance in future. For example, the outlay of a public sector fertilizer undertaking was given to the press once as Rs. 94 crores and after sometime as Rs. 117 crores. This gives scope for doubt and the credibility of the source is lost. When in doubt about anything, it is better to omit rather than allow an inaccurate statement to creep in. *Facts and figures should always be checked with the concerned department before a press release is written.*

Source : Each story must be sourced. *Source makes the news dependable.* For example, if a policy decision is announced by a minister or chairman of a company, it should be *attributed* accordingly. It enhances the value of the story by revealing the authority from whom it has emanated. Crediting the story to a source also gives the PR practitioner a certain degree of protection.

Approval : The PR practitioner who issues a press release without the approval of the proper authority may sometimes himself land in trouble. To be sure about the authenticity of the report, the PR practitioner should always obtain the prior approval of the concerned authority.

Dateline : Every report must have a dateline. The dateline indicates the place from which the report originates and the date of its release. For example, "Hyderabad, August 15". This should be at the top of the report.

Identification Symbol or Masthead : The press release format must have an identifying symbol, emblem or masthead of the organisation highlighting it is a press release of the particular organisation and is issued with its approval. It also catches attention of the editor. For example, the Municipal Corporation of Hyderabad issues its press notes with a distinctive logo "Press Release" with its insignia at the top.

Review : Having written the report, the PR practitioner must review it for further improvement and corrections, if any. The copy should always be tested from the standpoint of acknowledged norms before it is released for publication.

Dictionary : The PR practitioner should invariably keep a good dictionary to avoid spelling and usage mistakes. *When in doubt, consult the dictionary.*

Photographs : A press release is often accompanied by an appropriate photograph. This enhances the value of the news item. Different photographs of the same event can be sent to different newspapers.

Good Appearance : Like the quality of writing, appearance of a press release is also important. It must give good impression to the editor. For good appearance, one must take the following steps:

1. Paper

The paper used for press release should normally be white and of good quality.

2. Spacing

It should be neatly and clearly typed with double spacing on one side of the paper. This enables the editor to make corrections in the text, if required. Sufficient space should also be left at the top of the first page of the release to give room to the editorial staff to write instructions for the printers. Copy written on both sides of the paper causes difficulty in editing. *Never send a press release typed on both sides.* This reflects on the professionalism of a PR Manager.

3. Margin

A wide margin should be given in the copy.

4. Distribution

The distribution of press release is yet another important matter. If it is meant for publication in the next day's paper, one has to see that the release reaches the newspaper office well in time. Success does not depend on merely writing a good story. One has to see to its prompt despatch to newspapers well before the deadline for printing.

Maximum publicity can be ensured if the press release is issued on a lean day. Saturday is normally a bad day to release PR stories, because the Sunday Papers have more than the normal quota of advertisements and news. Papers also carry features and other material for weekend reading. As a result, news space is limited in Sunday papers. Sunday, on the other hand, is a lean day because most offices are closed on that day and official news, Parliament and Assembly proceedings etc., are not there to report. So the newspapers are not pressed for space on a Sunday (i.e. the issue which appears on Monday).

If a news item is issued late in the day, it is likely to be cut because pressure on newspaper space grows as the day advances. Unless there are exceptionally good reasons, the PR practitioner should plan to send press releases by 1 p.m. so that even the day editions can carry the story.

News items need not necessarily be sent directly to the editors of newspapers, if their correspondents are stationed at the place of origin of the story. For example, a news item from Hyderabad intended for the "The Hindustan Times" of New Delhi need not be sent direct to New Delhi. It will be suffice if it is sent to its correspondent in Hyderabad. *The press releases should be sent simultaneously to all (local) newspapers, correspondents, of out-station publications (stationed at the place) and the news agencies including Radio and Television.* The PR Practitioner should maintain a mailing list of all press correspondents, news agencies and editors, along with their telephone numbers.

It is interesting to recall here an incident early in the life of a P.R.O. in a district. The P.R.O. covered the speech of a minister who announced a policy decision. He drafted the press release with extra care, being new to the post. He gave it to the peon for despatching the release by post because only District Public Relations Officers had the authority in those days to send press telegrams. It did not appear in any newspaper. The minister who was anxious to see his policy statement in the press asked the Head of the Department, who in turn took the P.R.O. to task. The P.R.O. replied that it had been despatched. He also got another copy of the release posted and it was carried by the newspapers.

What happened to the first press release? On enquiry, it was found that the peon failed to post it due to 'oversight'.

Moral

The PR practitioner must personally ensure that the press releases are promptly despatched. A telephone call to a newspaper whether they have received the press note is justified.

5. Embargo

If a story is to be published on a particular date, "embargo" should be used. Embargo is a caution in writing at the top of the page saying *not to be published/broadcast before the given date*. This line gives the conditions for the use of the press release. When such a condition is not mentioned, it means the release is for immediate use. The embargo should appear on the left side at the top prominently.

6. 'End' Mark

If the release is of more than one page, the word 'more' or continued in the next page should be put at the bottom of every page.

Similarly, on the last page "End" mark should be put to indicate the end of the story. These lines help the editor.

7. Stapling

The press release should not be sent to the newspapers loose. The pages should be stapled together so that they are not lost in the mass of papers, which reach a newspaper office.

Author of the Lesson : Mr. V. Hanumantha Rao

Suggested Reading

1. **Public Relations : A Scientific Approach** By Baldeo Sahai, Standing Conference of Public Enterprises, New Delhi.
2. **The Journalist's Handbook** By M.V. Kamath, Vikas Publishing House

Assignments

I. Answer the following in 30 lines each.

1. What is news? Describe its qualities with examples that determine the value of news.
2. What is the role of Lead in a news report? Discuss its importance.
3. What are the factors a PR practitioner should keep in mind while preparing a Press Release? Explain the guidelines.
4. Write a press release of 200 words on the inauguration of a Rs. 100 crore fertilizer plant. Highlight the importance of chemical fertilizers for increased agricultural production.

Lesson : 4 **Features, Development Journalism and Success Stories.**

Objective

In this lesson, the writing and release of features are dealt with.

Synopsis

1. Introduction
2. Article vs Feature
3. Necessity of a Feature
4. Purpose of Features
5. How to Write Features ?
6. Contents of a Feature
7. Central Theme of a Feature
8. Exclusive Features
9. Development Journalism
10. Writing Success Stories

1. Introduction

Newspapers publish feature articles alongside the editorials; periodicals publish long accounts of various developments or about individuals. A news item in a newspaper tells in a nutshell about a happening, an event, a development, etc.

A feature tells more about that development or event; it outlines, elaborates, portrays, expands, dives deep and provides the background of the event in detail to enable the reader to understand and event in its perspective or context. It also provides the backward and forward linkages to the event. To put it differently see a landscape through a pinhole and one will get to know the outline and the contours of the object; but view the same landscape with the naked eye and one gets a total view, the panoramic picture of the landscape in its entire setting.

2. Article Versus Feature

The essential difference between an article and a feature was explained by an author thus: if the article is like a many-roomed mansion with several storeys, the feature is a neat, little, beautiful one-room cottage. A feature is neither spot news nor a full-length article. To write about begging in India is an article, but to write about a beggar

in a town is a feature. In the words of another author, a feature can be defined as "a story, which is creative, sometimes subjective and designed primarily to entertain and inform the readers about an event, a situation or an aspect of life."

What all happened between two dates—the date on which the Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Mr. N.T.Rama Rao was removed and the date on which when he was reinstated can be said in three paragraphs and it is news; it can be said in three columns and it is a feature. Bharat Heavy Electricals, Ramachandrapuram, has produced and delivered its first oil rig to a customer and it is news; but to give the whole background in which BHEL, which was only concerned with manufacture of power equipment, came to take up manufacture of oil rigs, its securing of the technology, its indigenous content, the saving of foreign exchange, the competence of the organisation to handle the job, future plans—all these can be explained only in a feature.

3. Necessity of a Feature

A feature is necessary to 1) convey a viewpoint 2) portray the picture of an institution 3) ventilate a new idea 4) provide the back-drop of a development 5) survey contemporary development in any field of human activity 6) evaluate a personality or phenomenon 7) portray a development in its life-size and 8) say things in detail which cannot be said in a news item.

Government departments, industries, research institutions, political parties, financial institutions want to publicise their activities, talk about their achievements and outline their future plans.

If they are organisations or institutions financed from the public exchequer, they have a responsibility to report to the public. The State Road Transport Corporation, the State Electricity Board, to mention only a couple of them, are organisations which are totally funded by the Government. They owe it to the people to explain their activities and answer the criticism levelled against them. They want to acquaint the public with their expansion and diversification plans. The corporate image of such organisations can be conveyed only through a feature.

Financial institutions like banks, and corporations go to the people with their annual reports, tell them about the assistance they gave, industries supported, activities helped, profit or loss made, etc. Assistance given by such institutions leads to multiple benefits to the economy and contributes to increased production, setting up new industries, generating surpluses, promoting exports and, therefore, earning foreign exchange.

Private industries are essentially answerable to themselves; still, they have a thousands of shareholders who invest in the industries; of late, they are being asked to shoulder social responsibilities, since a large part of the investment in the private sector enterprises comes from public financial institutions. Hence, they too have the need to reach the public through the media.

4. Purpose of Features

The purpose of a feature is four-fold :

1. to disseminate information ;
2. to interpret a development or phenomena ;
3. to educate the reader about the institution; and
4. to enlist the readers sympathy, support and participation, as the case may be.

1. Dissemination of information : A new scheme is launched or a new research institution inaugurated or a new policy formulated and announced. The people at large are to be told about it. The public relations practitioners have to use the Newspaper, Radio and TV as a medium to disseminate information.

The Government of India launched the National Rural Employment Scheme. What is the genesis of the Scheme? What factors prompted the Government to launch it? The contours of the scheme in a nutshell, the sections of society for which the scheme is intended, the areas in which it is operative, the details of the scheme on the economy and society, the employment targets—all these can be explained only in a feature.

2. Interpreting a development or phenomenon : Development is a continuous process : it is a response to a changing situation or the result of introduction of a new element into the situation. Development may be gradual or sudden. Such a development may have an impact on the environment as well as on the life of the people in the area of its occurrence or may even bring about a structural change. This phenomena needs to be explained and it can be done through a feature.

A drug industry is set up in a village or small town. The very location of it transforms the sleepy village into a bustling township vibrating and pulsating with activity. Then, the Government allows the factory to diversify or expand. The consequent construction activity makes the area a virtual beehive of pollution. The area grows commercially, which has a definite impact on the economy and the people by way

of more employment, better living standards, larger demand for public services like schools and generally more revenue to the exchequer. The factory management can rightly take pride for having acted as a catalyst for this development and change. An informative feature simply written can record the developmental transformation.

3. Educate the reader : There is an information explosion round the world and the average citizen is not able to cope with new information being made available to him or her. Refresher courses are organised to update the knowledge of persons working in different fields of activity, but the gap persists. The media can play a role to bridge the gap. Even otherwise, there are many things about which the citizen has to be educated.

For instance, there is an out-break of an infectious disease and the people have to be told about do's and don'ts in connection with it. The media can be a vehicle for it, or there is widespread adulteration of foodstuffs; how to expose and fight it. The consumers have to be protected from the tendency of some traders to shortweigh commodities. Care has to be taken in handling electric gadgets or even liquid fuel gas cylinder. The housewives have to be put wise to the matter. There are innumerable instances in which the citizens require to be educated or their knowledge refreshed and enlarged.

4. Enlist Support and participation : Development of the country and uplift of the people cannot be the exclusive responsibility of Government. It requires enthusiastic participation by the people. A newspaper feature can promote such participation.

Banks and industrial companies are adopting villages to augment their development. The schemes launched for the purpose require participation by the people to be successful. An institution to help orphans or physically disabled children requires public support. Municipal Committee launches a drive for cleanliness which needs to be "sold" to the citizens. A company floats a public issue to mobilise funds. At the time of communal riots, the authorities appeal for peace and caution the public against spreading alarmist rumours. The feature is an effective means of communication in all such cases.

Types of Features

Features can broadly be divided into four categories : 1) news features 2) current features 3) historical features and 4) review features.

1) The starting of Open University is news. It is a new development not only for the State but for the whole country. The reader has to be

told about it. A new irrigation project like the Telugu Ganga has been conceived and announced. The what, why, when, where and how of it has to be stated. This type of feature is called a news feature.

2) The political crisis in Andhra Pradesh in August-September 1984 raised several issues of Constitutional importance like the role of the Governor, the method of determination of legislative majority etc. They were closely debated but only for a time; they have only contemporary importance and interest. They are current features.

3) The 150th anniversary of entry of Indians into Maritius, the celebration of Independence Day on August 15, and the Jallianwala Bagh massacre are examples of matters of historical interest.

4) The celebration of the Andhra Pradesh State Formation Day is an occasion for review of the achievements of the Government. The Official Language Commission's activities can be reviewed in a feature. They fall in the category of review articles.

5. How to Write a Feature ?

The editorial staff of a newspaper office may rewrite a news item but not a feature. The writing, presentation and style therefore, have to be such that the script can go to the press with minor modifications, if any. As such, care has to be taken in making it presentable and meaty. It is an opportunity for a talented and skilled writer to use his creativity to make the feature interesting and readable.

The typing has to be neat and double-spaced with a wide margin. Sub-headings may be given. If it is a cyclostyled copy, avoid sending illegible and smudged copies; do not use a faded carbon paper if type copies are to be sent. The feature has better chances of being published in a regional newspaper, if it is sent in the language of the region. Generally speaking, 1000 to 1500 words is the ideal size for a feature, that is, five to seven foolscap pages typed in double-space. Too many erasures or corrections should be avoided. The pages should be stapled together; loose sheets annoy the editor. If the publication of the feature is very important for the organisation, the public relations practitioner may call the editor on the telephone or even a personal visit may yield better results. Enclose photos, where necessary.

6. Contents of a Feature

Writing a feature involves

1. Selection of the subject

2. Collection of material
3. Planning the structure and
4. Choosing a suitable headline or title.

1. It goes without saying that a feature has to be about a particular subject. The choice depends on the institution's activity at a given moment and its need to project one or the other activity. For instance, an institution or department related to agriculture has several facets like soil, seeds, mechanisation, supply of inputs like pesticides and fertilisers price, marketing or water supply to choose from. In a drought situation, a feature article that goes out should relate to the supply of seeds, particularly of a variety that can sprout quickly and highlight the need for inputs; obviously, it cannot be a feature on soil or mechanisation.

2. **Collection of Material :** Just as a painter needs drawing paper, a drawing board, brush or brushes and paints; facts, figures and background material are required to write a feature. A war cannot be fought without armoury. Any statement made or conclusions reached in a feature have to be backed by acts to carry conviction to the reader. Take the drought situation again. Facts that have to be taken into consideration are the difference in intensity of drought, soils, crops and input requirements in different districts. There are different authorities that have to be contacted like the Agriculture Department, the Seeds Development Organization, Drought Relief Authority, fertiliser distribution agency, the financial institutions that give credit, the private or public sector companies that supply inputs, etc. The material to be collected should answer the following points:

The details of the contingency plan drawn up by the department, the position of seeds supply, their availability or non-availability and plans to secure them from other States, if any, the total credit requirement and the arrangements made with co-operative and public sector banks to provide the same, the distribution mechanism to despatch the inputs to different districts, any decision to organise special releases of water, the quantities of different inputs, the tilling and other agricultural practices to be followed, the doses of each input to be applied etc.

3. **Planning :** A person starts off his meal with rice, chapati or bread and vegetable, followed by rasam or sambar, and finally by buttermilk. Salt, water and second helpings are kept in readiness in case of necessity. There is a plan in this arrangement; similarly, there has to be a plan in writing. The facts collected have to be presented in a sequence so that each para deals with one fact, and one development is linked with the next one. There should be good reasoning, cogent

argument, well-packed with facts. Back to the drought again, it has to start with a statement on the damage to crops, the extent of damage, whether the crop can be partly saved or whether it is beyond redemption. The next para has naturally to deal with the contingency of tilling and sowing operations. So, write about the seeds to be used in the given situation, in a given soil in a district and identify the sources or authorities where they can be picked up. Tell the farmers about the precautions to be taken in the extraordinary situation. The following paras can deal with information about the arrangements made by the authorities for supply of other inputs like fertilisers, pesticides, credit and water releases. Mention the authorities to be contacted if any problem has to be referred to or advice sought. The above arrangement of matter makes it imperative on the part of the farmer to read the whole article to understand what he has to do to make the best of a drought situation.

4. **Headline :** A headline to a feature is like the face of a beautiful woman. A headline first says what the feature is about; second, it attracts the reader's attention and rouses his curiosity. If he is attracted, the reader then starts reading the article. Therefore the headline and the first couple of paras are very important. For instance a feature about the developments in the state of Andhra Pradesh around August-September 1984 can carry a bland headline : "Unrest in Andhra Pradesh" or "32 days that shook Andhra Pradesh". The choice is obvious.

7. Central Theme of a Feature

A feature has a central theme; the main point the public relations practitioner wants to drive home to the reader. Do not stray away from this central point; if there is need to digress, come back to the theme again. Every para in the feature has to be directly or indirectly related to the central point. This can be done in two ways : 1) straightaway state what is to be said in the first para itself and then provide the background in the following paras; or, 2) start with a general statement, develop the theme and come to the central point somewhere in the middle and then go on to state what it means to society and to the country.

For instance, the production of an oil rig by Bharat Heavy Electricals, Ramachandrapuram. One way to do a feature on the subject is to start with a statement about need for oil in a developing country like India, the dependence on imports of oil, the consequent outgo of precious foreign exchange and therefore the need to conserve these reserves by exploiting the country's own resources. Then, go on to narrate the efforts to drill wells in different parts of the country which has brought to the fore the necessity to have more and more rigs to drill. This involves

the import of rigs which again means spending foreign exchange and dependency. Therefore, the need arises to manufacture rigs in India itself. It is here that BHEL's choice to secure the technology to produce rigs and manufacture the first batch of them can be stressed. Here, go over to the future plans to manufacture rigs of higher capacities which can drill deeper or rigs to meet different needs in different areas, the production plans, etc.

Alternatively, start with the announcement that BHEL has for the first time in the country produced the first ever rig for oil drilling and thereby, it will be saving foreign exchange worth so many lakhs of rupees. For this purpose, it had to enter into a collaboration agreement to acquire the technology, with a view to become self-sufficient later. Then, provide the background to be followed by future plans.

There is no hard and fast rule about starting a feature. The important point is to catch the interest of the reader and hold it till the end.

8. Exclusive Features

An exclusive feature is one which is for a particular newspaper or periodical and not for simultaneous use by others.

The need for an exclusive feature may arise when a newspaper or periodical publishing a special issue, asks for it or when Doordarshan or All India Radio invites the head of an institution to speak. An institution itself may want to raise an issue for debate and request a special magazine to publish it or the representative of an institution may be asked to participate in a seminar or symposium and present a paper about the institution's activities in general.

If the feature is to be published in the name of the head of the institution, the public relations practitioner has to assume that role while writing it. He has to keep in mind the average reader, listener or viewer as the case may be, while writing it. Secondly, the capacity to comprehend varies from those who read English articles and those who understand Indian languages. This also has to be borne in mind. If the feature is for a technical journal, the technical aspect has to be accented within a framework. If it is for a special number, the relevance of the occasion, be it a national day or the anniversary of the founding of an institution or a conference, has to be brought out. Here again readers of publications from non-metropolitan centres require to be told about the institution in greater detail than their counterparts in the (cities).

9. Development Journalism

India is a developing country, though more developed than most others in the category. Development in visible terms means much more than laying the infrastructure for economic growth. It boils down to adequate food, shelter and clothing to the people, mitigation of economic and social disparities. In a situation like ours, the media should reflect the development effort in different spheres. Hence the expression Development Journalism. It is a comparatively new concept in the Indian context, but should not be confused with propaganda for ministers, bureaucrats and the establishment.

Its purpose is 1) to communicate the news of development activities to keep the people informed about them 2) to inspire people to participate in development programmes 3) to provide for readers in one part of a vast country like ours with possible models of development work from other areas generally to stimulate interest in development.

Also communication is an input in the development process because the people have to be kept informed about different development programmes and welfare measures and their right and responsibilities vis-à-vis them. Further, development spells change, social, economic and other, which is news. It has to be transmitted, exchanged, assimilated and analysed. The public relations practitioner has to perform the role of communicator.

Certain development schemes depend on people's participation for their implementation. Sinking a bore well or opening a school has no meaning unless the intended beneficiaries cooperate and take advantage of the facility. In some cases, participation by the people in the shape of capital or voluntary labour may be more explicitly sought by the authorities. These are the opportunities for the public relations practitioners to seize, build opinion in favour of the project and motivate the people. The Radio, Television and Newspapers are the instruments for the purpose.

10. Success Stories

Success stories are excellent features' material because they sell the idea easily. A success story may be defined as a report, both descriptive and analytical, of a task accomplished or a carried out. A farmer adopts modern methods of raising crops and increasing productivity. Communicate his success, after interviewing him and finding out about what he did and why he was prompted to break new ground in

farming. Nothing succeeds like success. Example catches on and takes the form of a movement. One comes across any number of such cases in almost every town and village. Banks and other financial institutions provide credit for artisans-tanners, potters, weavers and the like to improve their trades. They are even paid stipends during the period of training in the techniques which are within their reach. As a result the artisans are able to improve their productivity and increase their incomes. The products are qualitatively better, look better and fetch a better price. Then the banks give them loans to set up their production units and also help them market the goods. It is an almost revolutionary transformation in the lives of working people. Schemes like 'Antyodaya' in Rajasthan and the rural employment programme in Orissa fall in this category.

The public relations practitioner has to use his skill in bringing such less known facts to the notice of people through features.

To sum up, the writer has to (i) collect facts by interviewing the beneficiaries (ii) secure information from the authorities (iii) quantify the change in terms of numbers of the products and the monetary gain (iv) compare the levels of living before and after, and (v) induce the ripple effects of the change. The write-up should liberally quote the beneficiaries in their own language for greater impact and credibility.

Author of the Lesson - Mr. V. Hanumantha Rao

Suggested Reading

1. Mass Communication and Journalism in India By D.S. Mehta
2. Handbook of Public Relations in India By D.S. Mehta
3. Features with Flair By Brain Nicholas, (Vikas)
4. Journalism in Modern India edited By Roland E. Wolseley (Asia Publishing House, Bombay)
5. Professional Journalism By M.V. Kamath, (Vikas)

Assignments

I. Answer the following in 30 lines.

1. How does an article differ from a feature ?
2. Define the purpose of a feature.
3. What are the different types of features and briefly explain them.
4. What are the essential precautions to be taken while despatching a feature to a publication ?
5. How do you go about weaving a feature around a central theme?

II. Answer the following in 10 lines.

1. What are the characteristics of a success story ?
2. What is the need for an exclusive feature?

III. Exercise

1. Write a Feature on any One of following in 500 words.

- a) The changes TV brought about in your house (life-style) / town.
- b) Water shortage in your locality/town.
- c) Write a review feature on the Tenth anniversary of your cultural association/club/college/school/company.
- d) Adult education centre in your locality.

Lesson : 5 **Press Events - Press Conference**

Objective

To explain the importance of Press Conference and other press events such as the press briefing, Press reception, Meet-the-Press etc., in promoting press relations.

Synopsis

1. What is a Press Conference ?
2. Organising a Press Conference.
3. Model Press Conference
4. Hints for the Chief Spokesman
5. Press briefing, Press reception, Informal get-together, Meet-the-Press.

As a person in the middle, between the management and the media,, the PR manager is expected to organise press meets. Such events also provide PR opportunities for media exposure to the activities of the organisation.

We shall discuss in this chapter the organisation of press events like :

1. Press conference
2. Press briefing
3. Press reception
4. Informal Press get-together and
5. Meet-the-Press.

Each event has to be planned and organised very carefully to yield results. Organising a press event calls for methodical and meticulous planning.

1. Press Conference

The following extracts from a news item titled 'A peculiar Press Conference' which appeared in 'The Hindu' from one of its correspondents shows how a press event is not to be organised.

"Pressmen bustling into the officer's room found him busy, excited and also nervous. He was telephoning to somebody saying: 'The pressmen are here and I don't know what to say because I am only

dealing with such-and-such subject. Why don't you also come round and help'. He then turned to us and said : 'I know all of you are very much excited just as I am' and a reporter said the officer was obviously more excited but he ignored the remark.

'Now Gentlemen', said the officer, 'What you want to know, tell me'. A reporter asked him how much a particular project was going to cost. 'I know you will ask such a question, but wait a minute' he said, dialling somebody. 'I say, here are a group of pressmen in my room regarding that project you know and they are asking me how much it will cost... It is in that book on my table? You know I did not have time to read that book because it was rather suddenly arranged and in which part of the book is it? ... on the first page? Well you are right. It is, indeed, here. Thanks'. He hung up and told us the cost, and the pressmen were afraid to ask him more questions lest he started dialling again. And so a reporter asked him, "please tell us about that portion of the project you are directly concerned with", and here again the officer was not sure of his ground, and to a 'supplementary' he produced a 10-foot long blueprint and asked somebody to count the figures there'. And so went the press conference".

This, indeed, is a peculiar press conference which speaks of an amateurish way of handling it and reflects badly on the efficiency of the PR Department which did not prepare its spokesman for the press conference. The PR manager who is in charge of arranging a press conference must know all about them.

What is a Press Conference? It is a get-together... of pressmen where a senior official of the host establishment divulges news or announces important decisions. It can also be called to place on record the organisation's point of view on an important matter concerning it. There are also informal press gatherings, often convened at short notice. The idea is that journalists do not have to chase a report individually but are collectively provided with information. The reporters' questions are answered and doubts cleared at such conferences.

Collective Interview

In short, it is a collective interview given to newsmen by a very important person. The press conference can be called at short notice if the situation demands it. In other words, there should be "hard news to give" like a major oil find or announcement of a major policy decision.

The term press conference should not be confused with the more elaborate press reception and press briefing, although some people mistakenly use them as interchangeable terms.

The press conference is an important source of news. The chief spokesman and the press correspondents have a face-to-face dialogue. *Unlike a press release, which is one-way communication, a press conference is a two-way process.*

News can be disseminated through a press release also. A press conference is not necessary if news can be conveyed by a press note. The personality of the spokesman also matters. The personality of an astronaut, a popular political leader or a film star adds to what they say. But there may be subjects which need amplification. After the spokesman has said whatever is to be given out, the correspondents are free to ask questions for eliciting information on any point. The 'Question and Answer' session forms an important part of the press conference.

Media reporters are very busy people. *They should therefore be invited to the press conference only when there is some hard news worth their while.* If the PR manager can manage with a press release, he should not invite reporters to a press conference. The PR manager should think twice before organising a press conference. If reporters feel they have been unnecessarily called for a press conference, they will be annoyed. Call a press conference only if it is of real service to the media and would yield them something more than what they would get otherwise.

2. Organising a Press Conference

Here are some tips for organising a successful press conference.

1. The Purpose

The purpose of the press conference should be clearly understood and defined. That will help the chief spokesman to keep the theme in mind in his preliminary remarks and in eliciting questions. If the purpose of a press conference is to highlight the burden of taxation on the industry, the spokesman should be the Finance Director or Chairman of the company and all the data should be marshalled and supplied to the reporters. Most important of all, the press conference enables the reporters to attribute the news and comments personally to the spokesman.

2. Venue

The press conference should be organised at an easily accessible and decent location like a Conference Hall of the organisation, a hotel or at Press Club if there is one. *The convenience of the pressmen must be the first consideration rather than the glamour of the place.* The

venue should have good conference facilities ranging from catering to audio-visual presentation. In case, the venue is distant or remote, two-way transport should be provided to the invitees.

3. The Day and Time

One must always keep in mind the requirements of the newspapers in fixing the date and time of the press conference. Sometimes VIPs ask the PR Departments to organise press conferences late in the evening. Unless, there is a spot news announcement, press conferences so near the deadline for the newspapers are not advisable. Most newspapers stop taking non-spot news after midnight.

The day and time of the press conference should, therefore, suit the requirement of the newspapers. Either the VIP should know the requirement of the press or the PR manager should explain it to the VIP.

Try to avoid clashing your press conference with some other major event or press function. Before fixing up the date, you should verify whether there is any other important function on that day and too close to yours in terms of timing. It is advisable to arrange a press conference in the forenoon at about 11-30 a.m. followed by a lunch or at 3-00 p.m.

4. Invitation

All press correspondents concerned with the subject should be invited. A list of accredited correspondents can be obtained either from the State Information and Public Relations Department or the Press Information Bureau of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India. Under no circumstances should a press correspondent be excluded. There should not be any discrimination in inviting the press. The Radio and the Television correspondents and the accredited photographers may also be invited. The invitation should clearly state the subject of the press conference, the name of the chief spokesman, the venue, the date and time. If the spokesman is relatively known to the press in your area or if he is an expert in the field his bio-data should be supplied in advance. This helps the reporters to come prepared.

5. Background Material

During an interview for the post of a PR Manager, the candidate was asked to name the most important aspect of organising a press conference. In the opinion of the panel of interviewers the preparation of background material for the spokesman was considered as the most important. This is useful both to the organisation and the

pressmen. It will serve as an un-official press release also. It provokes informed questions because not all reporters are equally knowledgeable on many subjects.

6. Duration

One Chief Minister who was very methodical at his press conferences answered questions to the point and completed the event within 30 minutes. Another Chief Minister would linger on even after the purpose of the conference was over, inviting the reporters to ask 'anything more'. It unnecessarily led to extraneous subjects being raised. The duration of a press conference should normally be 30 minutes, unless the subject and the personality of the spokesman warrant more time. But in no case should it exceed an hour. Marathon sessions miss the focus and extraneous subjects come up.

7. Press kit

A press kit containing background information, photographs, a writing pad, a pen or pencil and publications of the organisation, if any, may be given to the pressmen at the conference.

The material may include :

- A background article on the concerned subject.
- Printed material of relevance to the subject.
- Pictures
- A news release, if it can be prepared.

8. Telephone Facility

Some reporters, especially those working with wire services, may like to telephone the spot news given out at the press conference. So there should be telephone facility for the purpose.

9. Refreshments

Arrange refreshments for the invitees. This will enable the pressmen to come closer to the chief spokesmen through an informal talk.

Follow-up

Clippings of press reports of the conference appended by a brief note describing the response from the press-how it has been featured and at what length it should be submitted to the chief spokesman.

Copies of the press clippings may also be circulated among other top officials. The total newspaper space obtained for projection of the organisation may be calculated and shown in the note.

The success of the press conference depends to a large extent on the chief spokesman. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's press conferences were so well conducted that they attracted the attention of the world press.

3. Model Press Conference

Here is an excerpt from "The Hindu" report of a press conference by Mrs. Indira Gandhi. It was published with the headline.

P.M. CONDUCTS PRESS CONFERENCE WITH APLOMB

New Delhi, July 10,

The Prime Minister today gave full liberty to pressmen to raise questions at her press conference.

Mrs. Gandhi, who appeared in a good mood, sat alone on the dais. A number of people from the Prime Minister's office occupied a row of chairs placed behind the Prime Minister's seat.

The Information and Broadcasting Minister, Mr. Vasant Sathe occupied a chair along with officials in the front row.

Several times the gathering burst into laughter as the Prime Minister failed to place a correspondent because of the bright television camera lights.

A number of correspondents and officials had to keep standing as the conference hall was packed to capacity.

Mrs. Gandhi herself translated the very first question asked in Hind for the benefit of foreign correspondents after inquiring from official if there were facilities for simultaneous translation.

After a little while, another question came up in Hindi, she looked at the reporter and said "Are bhai sab Angrezi mein kyon nahin karte, nahin tho, ye do bar karna pedega" (Why don't you put the question in English. Otherwise, I will have to answer it in Hindi as well as in English).

Equal Opportunity

Throughout the press conference, Mrs. Gandhi ensured that all those who wanted to ask questions got at least one opportunity. In

some cases she permitted two questions from the same reporter. When she disallowed a reporter from asking a second question, he remarked that Mr. Sathe was provoking him to ask a question.

She shot back : "You are trying to create problems between us (Mr. Sathe and herself) even in this press conference".

A persistent reporter wanted to put an important question before the press conference concluded. Mrs. Gandhi acceded and announced: "Now we are coming to the important question. Silence everybody" (laughter).

To make amends, Mrs. Gandhi asked a woman reporter if she would like to ask her a second question lest she be described as prejudiced. Addressing the woman correspondent, she asked : "Would you like to put your question or have you forgotten it?"

Walk-out by photographers

Newspaper photographers walked out of the conference following a tiff between them and the Principal Information Officer. The photographers alleged that they were denied vantage position allowed in the past to have a close view of the Prime Minister.

Mr. Vasant Sathe met the photographers and said he was sorry about what had happened and asked them to come in. But by then all the seats had been filled and they had no place to sit.

According to the PIB, the photographers were told that the seats were only reserved for correspondents. They could take their place in the aisle or in the pit and take pictures. The PIB's stand was that only correspondents need seats while cameramen did not have to be seated while taking pictures.

They left the hall a few minutes before the press conference began. Only official photographers, those of the Press Information Bureau and Doordarshan, were present.

4. Hints for the Chief Spokesman

The foregoing should serve as a model for PR managers in arranging press conferences.

Here are a few more suggestions,

1. The pressmen should be free to raise any point and ask any relevant question. The chief spokesman, while sticking to the theme of the press conference, should be prepared to answer

the questions with confidence. A bit of humour will come in handy as it covers up inadequacies, if any, in the answers. Home work for the chief spokesman is essential.

2. The chief spokesman should always have his top executives at hand to help him in answering questions.
3. The PR manager should also brief the chief spokesman on the likely questions to be asked and help him in preparing for the press conference.
4. Listening patiently will help the chief spokesman to understand the questions in their proper perspective.
5. If television and radio, correspondents want separate interviews, necessary facilities should be made available to them. Their requirements will be different from those of newspaper correspondents.
6. The success of a press conference depends upon good attendance, intelligent questions and lively proceedings.
7. When a PR Manager once suggested to the General Manager of a fertilizer company that a press conference be organised, the General Manager advised him to cultivate the pressmen first. Personal rapport with the reporters will go a long way in the successful conduct of press conferences.

'Off-the-Record'

It was once the convention that statements made 'off the record'. In a press conference or at a press briefing were not to be published. Now-a-days, however, such statements are published in one form or the other. It is, therefore, not advisable for the chief spokesman to say anything 'off-the-record'.

5. Press Briefing

Selected correspondents are invited for press briefings. It is arranged to explain the background to a happening or to a news item, not necessarily for publication with or without attribution. Whom to invite for press briefings should be left to the discretion of the organiser or the PR practitioner. The subject matter specialists can be taken into confidence and provided with background material.

Some newspapers have several accredited correspondents. Only those specialising in the subject concerned may be invited for press

briefings. Political reporters are taken into confidence by ministers and briefed on important topics.

Press Reception

Receptions are for entertaining press reporters. The occasion can be used for giving out a news item too. A short documentary on the organisation will add to the entertainment value of the press reception which is more an organised social event than a press conference. It may also include an audio-visual presentation of the product. Both entertainment and information are blended in the press reception.

Informal press get-together

Another means of futhering press relations is through an informal get-together of pressmen. Generally, managements tend to approach the press only when they have something to publicise. That is not good public relations. It should be the endeavour of the management to meet the editors and the pressmen individually or in groups from time to time to keep them interested and to maintain friendly relations with them. The purpose of an informal press get-together is to develop and strengthen such a relationship. Press get-togethers are organised over lunch, dinner or tea. Since they are not business-type meetings, no news is disseminated at the time. It is only to enable the management and the press to understand each other and come closer. The main advantage of this type of get-togethers is to create person-to-person rapport between the chief executive and the pressmen. The rapport established in such meetings will be of immense use to the PR manager in times of crisis.

Meet-the-press

The 'Meet-the-Press' format of press relations is conducted by the journalists themselves. The professional organisation of journalists invites a VIP to meet them and talk to them about his organisation or institution. Political party leaders are invited for such meetings before the elections. It is a common practice with the Press Club of Hyderabad to invite the Chief Minister Designate and elicit his views on his future programmes. There is no fixed subject for such meetings and no background material is given. The VIP expresses his views on a variety of subjects either *suo moto* or answers questions.

PR managers should be aware of this format. If necessary, efforts should be made to make use of this forum in consultation with the organisations of journalists.

Author of the Lesson : C.V. Narasimha Reddi

Suggested Reading

1. Handbook of Public Relations in India By D. S. Mehta, Allied Publishers
2. Mass Communication in India By Keval J. Kumar, Jaico Publishers
3. Public Relations By Herbert Lloyd
4. Professional Journalism By M. V. Kamath, Vikas Publishing Company
5. Public Relations : A Scientific Approach By Baldeo Sahai

Assignments**I. Answer the following in 30 lines**

1. What is a Press Conference ? When do you organise it ? Indicate the steps a PR Manager is expected to take in organising a Press Conference.
2. What are the key points to be kept in view while addressing a Press Conference.

II. Write short notes in 10 lines on

- a) Press Kit
- b) Press briefing
- c) Press reception
- d) Meet-the-Press

Lesson - 6 : Press Tours

Objective

To explain the mechanics of press tours for getting coverage for organisation.

Synopsis

1. Press Tours
2. Types of Press Tours
3. How to organise Press Tours ?
4. Follow-up.

1. Press Tours

From the Press Conference, we go to a conducted press tour. In a press conference, the chief spokesman of the host organisation briefs journalists on a particular subject or subjects. Both in the case of a press release and a press conference, the journalists have to depend entirely on what the Chief Spokesman tells them whereas a conducted press tour provides an opportunity to the journalists to *see for themselves* and report their personal impressions.

A press tour may be defined as an organised visit of select press correspondents to a project for on-the-spot study and reporting.

There may also be conducted tours of journalists to factories, institutions, places of natural and other disasters. A Press tour simply is taking a group of reporters to a location of news interest.

Let us study the visit of a press party. A severe cyclone ravaged the coastal districts of Andhra Pradesh in May 1969. About 1000 persons were reported to have died and the total loss was of the order of over Rs. 100 crores. The State Government issued a number of press releases and arranged press conferences highlighting the devastation caused by the cyclone and the relief measures taken up. The Chief Minister, at a press conference, gave his assessment of the loss of life and property.

Nevertheless, it was felt necessary to conduct a tour of newsmen to the cyclone affected areas. Accordingly, journalists representing various newspapers published from outside the State including a representative of

All India Radio from New Delhi were taken round the affected areas in Krishna and Guntur districts from May 29 to June 3, 1969. During this trip, the journalists not only saw for themselves the havoc, but also met and talked to a cross section of the people including officials and affected villagers. That gave them scope for personal assessment of the wrath of nature. Detailed reports were published in leading newspapers about the cyclone havoc and the need for immediate relief.

Similarly, a press party was taken to the Nagarjunasagar Project the world's tallest masonry dam on the occasion of its completion and release of water.

A Practical Lesson

Here is an interesting story of a press tour. Once an organisation sponsored a press tour from Hyderabad to a hydro-electric project. All the arrangements were made by the project authorities for the visit of the journalists. The PR manager accompanied the press party but in a separate vehicle. The journalists were travelling in one vehicle, while the PR manager was in another. Both the vehicles started at the same time. The vehicle in which the PR manager was travelling reached the project site at midnight. But the other vehicle was nowhere to be seen. A search party discovered that the vehicle had taken a wrong direction and reached a different place. The journalists were put to great inconvenience in the process.

The matter was raised in the State Legislative Assembly and it was alleged that the press vehicle was lost in a jungle where the journalists faced difficulties while the PR manager comfortably reached the destination. The minister's explanation that it was an error of the driver of the vehicle and that the PR Manager had been suitably cautioned did not satisfy the journalists. They did not also consider mere admonition of the PR manager a sufficient punishment.

As the Minister's version did not tally with their own experiences especially with regard to the conduct of PR manager, the pressmen walked out of the press gallery of the Assembly. However, the pressmen were assured that the facts would be re-examined.

From this story one can learn a practical lesson with regard to organising press tours. Had the PR manager travelled in the same vehicle and shared the difficulties of the journalists, they would have appreciated his action even if they missed the destination. In this case the PR manager travelled in a separate vehicle, leaving the pressmen in the lurch.

Organising a press tour is not an easy job. A press tour should be undertaken only when there is something worth-while to show. It is the duty of the PR manager to make out a comprehensive case to the management for conducting a press tour. The case should include: the

object of the visit the likely result in terms of press coverage, the date of the visit, the mode of transport, the arrangements for lodging and boarding, the number of pressmen to be invited and an estimate of the expenditure. When the scheme is approved, arrangements should accordingly be made. Maximum care should be taken to make the journey comfortable for the pressmen. Having invited them, it will be the moral responsibility of the organisation to see that they are provided with all facilities and information.

2. Types of Press Tours

Press tours can be of different types depending on the nature of the occasion and the need. They are :

1. Function-oriented press tours.
2. Exclusive or sponsored press tours.
3. Individual press tours.

1. Function-oriented Press Tours

If it is a big occasion like the inauguration of a plant or a project by a VVIP, the press tour should include all correspondents. One correspondent for each newspaper and news agency plus radio, television and photographers should be taken. The number can be as much as 40.

Press Enclosure

There should be a separate Press Enclosure at the function for the correspondents to have a good view and listen to the speaker. It should be clearly designated as meant only for the press and non-journalists should not be allowed into it. Care should be taken to arrange proper seating.

2. Exclusive or Sponsored Press Tour

If the organisation wants to take correspondents to a particular project, say the Srisailem hydro-electrical project in Andhra Pradesh, it is left to the discretion of the organisation to take all correspondents or a selected few.

The State Information and Public Relations Department was once taking a large number of correspondents, say 30 to 40, on press tours to state projects. Now the correspondents are split into batches of five or six. Five to six such tours are conducted. In 1984, batches of five journalists were taken to various projects. These press tours were found to be more effective and useful than big-size tours. They covered irrigation projects, hydro-electric projects, tribal development areas, industrial growth centres, etc.

3) Individual Press Tours

The third category is the press tour conducted on an individual basis. If a press correspondent likes to see a particular project, such a tour is organised. All facilities, from transport to hospitality should be provided for such a tour by the host organisation. Alternatively, the organisation also can take the initiative and sponsor visits by individual journalists.

Industrial and other organisations spend large sums of money on advertisements highlighting their multifaceted programmes. A single page advertisement in a major national newspaper will cost between Rs. 50,000 and Rs. 60,000. If a journalist from that paper is sponsored by the organisation to undertake a tour of its projects, the cost may be very much less but the editorial impact can be equally great if not more.

It is not the idea that advertisements are not useful but editorial coverage is also necessary. The two are not mutually exclusive.

3. How to Organise Press Tours ?

For the success of a press tour, a detailed programme should be chalked out covering minute-to-minute time table of the tour. A copy of the programme as finalised should be given to the press correspondents before the tour. This helps both the organisation and journalists in the orderly conduct of tour.

Rehearsals

At the project site, too, the programme should go with clock work precision based on the time table already prepared. It is also advisable to have a rehearsal of the tour, which will go a longway in making the tour flawlessly purposeful.

Press Material

The necessary background material covering all aspects of the project and photographs should be prepared by the PR manager. This should be given to the newsmen when they arrive at the project site. The pressmen generally base their reports on the material and on what they see and gather from talking to the management.

Either the PR manager or his representative should accompany the party. On arrival, the pressmen should be welcomed by the chief executive of the project. At the end of the press tour, a meeting may

also be arranged with the chief executive, so that the pressmen can get their doubts, if any, cleared by discussion. In fact, this meeting sums up the press tour.

Telephone Facility

If the press tour is to be organised to cover the visit of a VIP to a far-off place, care should be taken to keep the trunk telephones in order with the help of the Post and Telegraphs Department so that the reporters can file their reports to their respective newspapers. The purpose of the tour being the reporting of the VIP's visit without facilities for transmission of the reports, it will be meaningless. This requires advance planning and coordination with the Posts and Telegraphs Department. A sufficient number of typewriters should also be provided for the use of the reporters.

4. Follow-up

The PR manager's job does not end with the departure of the press party from the project. He has to await the results of the press tour by watching the coverage in the newspapers.

When the story is published, the PR manager should organise collection of press clippings from various newspapers. Based on the press clippings collected, a brief note should be prepared explaining the total space obtained in the various newspapers, and the way in which the subject was treated by the newsmen. This note along with the press clippings should be circulated to the top management. It is very difficult for the top management to go through all the newspapers. It is therefore, essential that the forwarding note should give the highlights of the coverage to enable the Chief Executive to know the impact of the coverage in brief. One can assess the results of the tour from the coverage. Needless to say however, that such an assessment is not based on the way in which the facts are reported and the observations made by the correspondents.

Ultimately "thank you" letters should go from the PR manager or the chief executive to all press correspondents who visited the project. Additional information asked for by correspondents should be promptly supplied.

Other guidelines such as the date, invitation, press kit, purpose, etc. suggested in the case of press conferences may also be followed for the conducted press tour. The hints given for press conference are equally valid for press tours.

Author of the Lesson : Mr. C.V. Narasimha Reddi

Suggested Reading

1. Public Relations : A Scientific Approach By Baldeo Sahai.
2. Handbook of Public Relations in India By D.S. Mehta.
3. Practical Public Relations By Sam Black.
4. Effective Public Relations By Cutlip and Centre.
5. Public Relations for Management By Frank Jenkins.

Assignments

- I. Answer the following in 30 lines.
 1. What do you understand by a conducted press tour ? Discuss.
 2. Explain the various types of press tours. Explain the importance of each one.
 3. In organising a press tour what goals should the organisation strive for? List out the guidelines that are to be followed by a PR manager in organising a press tour.
- II. Answer the following in 10 lines.
 1. Individual press tour.
 2. Follow-up of a press tour.

UNIT 3 : PROFESSIONAL ORGANISATIONS

Lesson - 7 : Professional Organisations (Press)

Objective

To explain the role of professional organisations in the growth of journalism and public relations. How a professional body promotes the maintenance of high standards in skills and competence by its members is highlighted in this lesson.

Synopsis

1. Characteristics of a profession
2. Newspapers organisation.

Every profession is judged by three important characteristics. They are : (1) Professional education and training (2) Professional literature, and (3) Professional organisation. In fact, these are the three pillars which constitute a tripod on which the profession stands to serve the society. Each pillar has its own role to play in the growth of profession.

1. Characteristics of a Profession

What is a profession? A profession is high level knowledge and technology applied for the benefit of society at large. A professional has been described as "self-selected, self-disciplined individual who holds himself out to the public as special skill derived from education and training and who is prepared to exercise that skill primarily in the interest of others".

Public relations and journalism are two distinct professions supported by their respective corpora of knowledge. However, PR persons and journalists are the twins of the same mother—communication—in the field of disseminating public information.

A professional organisation is a body of professionals constituted for the purpose of providing a forum for exchange of ideas and experience for enriching the knowledge of its members. The

professional body also coordinates the activities of various chapters within the country and outside. It protects the rights of its members and encourages them to perform their duties based on a code of ethics or a set of guidelines. The professional body has great significance in the maintenance of standards of skills and competence.

2. Newspaper Organisations

It is more than 200 years since the first newspaper 'Bengal Gazette' established by James Augustus Hicky appeared in Calcutta on January 29, 1780. Since then, the press has been growing and there are now over 19,000 newspapers in India. The press in our country has passed through strain and stress to reach the present stage of development. Censorship and other kinds of curbs have been imposed from time to time. It has been so from the time of the East India Company, Augustus Hicky is hailed as the father of Indian journalism. Raja Ram Mohan Roy who pioneered the launching of newspapers in Indian languages fought against restrictions on the press. Later, newspapers began to play a vital role in the country's freedom struggle. Mahatma Gandhi and others fought for the freedom of the press. To institutionalise the struggle for press freedom, professional organisations were established by journalists. Similarly, PR practitioners started their own professional body.

It is necessary for a PR manager to have a clear understanding of the functioning of both kinds of professional organisations. He should maintain rapport with them so that they will be helpful to him professionally.

Among the important professional organisations in the newspaper field are :

1. THE INDIAN AND EASTERN NEWSPAPER SOCIETY (IENS), IENS Building, Rafi Marg, New Delhi-110 001.

The Indian and Eastern Newspaper Society was established in February, 1939 as a professional body of the newspapers of India, Burma and Ceylon to promote the common interests of member newspapers.

Its main objectives are :

1. To promote co-operation in all matters affecting the common business interests of its members;
2. To promote and safeguard members' business interests in producing their publication;

3. To hold periodical conferences of its members to discuss and determine action on issues of any business interest;
4. To accord accreditation to advertising agencies based on which the advertising agencies get credit facilities from newspapers for the advertisements released.

The membership is open to all newspapers. There are over 400 members.

It publishes an annual IENS Year Book.

2. THE ALL INDIA NEWSPAPERS EDITORS' CONFERENCE (AINEC), 36-37 Northand Complex, Ramakrishnan Asram marg, New Delhi-110 001.

The All India Newspapers Editors' Conference was established in 1940. This was born when pre-censorship was imposed on news relating to Mahatma Gandhi's movement against Indian participation in the 1939-45 Second World War.

The All India Newspapers Editors' Conference is generally described as "a voluntary organisation of editors of all India newspapers and periodicals". Its main objectives are to preserve the high traditions and standards of journalism, to serve and safeguard their common interest and to secure facilities and privileges of the press in discharging its responsibilities.

The membership of this body is open to any newspaper or periodical published in India.

The AINEC was the first professional organisation in India to take up the question of working conditions of journalists. It also takes keen interest in maintaining professional standards among the newspapers.

**3. THE INDIAN FEDERATION OF WORKING JOURNALISTS (IFWJ)
Flat No. 29, Shanker Market, Connaught circus,
New Delhi-110 001.**

The Indian Federation of Working Journalists is a trade union organisation of working journalists in India. It has been recognised by the representative organisation of the working journalists for the constitution of wage boards. The prime objective of this body is to defend the rights and interests of working journalists and to promote their professional status. This organisation came into being as following a convention of journalists held in Delhi on

October 28 and 29, 1960 under the Chairmanship of Mr.M.Chalapathi Rau who was then Editor of the National Herald. The IFWJ publishes a monthly journal "The Working Journalist".

4. NATIONAL UNION OF JOURNALISTS (INDIA)

7, Janthar Manthar Road, New Delhi-110 001.

The National Union of Journalists (India), founded in 1972 is a federation of the working journalists' unions. This body is also devoted to improving the working conditions of journalists and to enrich their professional standards.

5. THE PRESS GUILD OF INDIA

Guild Hall, The Majestic, Bombay -39.

The Press Guild of India was established in 1954 as a social and cultural organisation of journalists to provide a meeting ground for all those engaged in or associated with journalism. The Press Guild runs a club, a library and a reading room and brings out the 'Guild Annual'. Apart from providing a Platform for the exchange of information, the organisation has striven to serve many public causes. Maintenance of high standards of performance and practice in the profession and promotion of close fellowship on the widest basis possible in the newspaper world is the objective of the Guild.

6. PRESS CLUB

The working journalists also run Press Clubs in different towns and cities. They are meant to promote social intercourse among journalists and non-journalists. The Press Club of Hyderabad is located in Deshodharaka Bhavan, Basheerbagh, Hyderabad.

7. THE PRESS INSTITUTE OF INDIA

**Sapru House Annexe, Barakhamba Road,
New Delhi-110 001.**

The Press Institute of India is a professional body of Indian newspapers and journalists established in 1963. It holds professional workshops and seminars for editorial and managerial personnel at all levels and organises selection of Indian published books relating to the mass media, it brings out a bi-monthly journal 'Vidura' the only one of its kind devoted to the media in India (students can subscribe to it).

The Press Institute of India edits and produces a feature news service "Depth News India" and also 'Data India,' a weekly reference service. Newspapers, periodicals and house journals are eligible to become its members.

8. THE AUDIT BUREAU OF CIRCULATIONS LIMITED (ABC)

Wakefield House, 4th Floor-Ballard Estate,
Bombay-400 038.

The Audit Bureau of Circulations which was founded in 1948 is a "non-profit" organisation with publishers, advertisers and advertising agencies as its members. Its main objective is to lay down a standard method for assessing the circulation figures of newspapers and periodicals. The Bureau gets the circulation claims of publication checked by Chartered Accountants. It also issues certificates of circulation to member-publishers.

The net paid circulation is the number of copies distributed after payment out of the total number of copies printed. File copies, voucher copies, unsold returns, promotion and other free copies, all copies sold to agents at discounts in excess of 40 per cent and all copies sold to subscribers at less than the stated price are not included in the net paid circulation.

The ABC has the right at any time to send an auditor from its panel of auditors to recheck circulation of publications which are members of ABC. The ABC has the right at any time to amend or withdraw its certificate.

Both the publisher and the advertiser are benefited by the ABC. The certificate of circulation provides the potential advertiser of the reach of the newspaper. The advertiser thus knows what he is buying. There is no scope for guess work in purchasing space in a newspaper. The advertising agency gets from the ABC certificate dependable data on the basis of which it can organise the advertising campaigns of its clients, keeping in view the latter's requirements also. The general public benefits through a recognition by advertisers of the value of individual publications.

Author of the Lesson. Mr. C.V. Narasimha Reddi

Suggested Reading

1. **Mass Communication and Journalism in India** By D.S. Mehta, Allied Publishers.
2. **Mass Communication in India** By Keval J. Kumar, Jaico Publishers.
3. **Handbook of Public Relations in India** By D.S. Mehta, Allied Publishers

Assignments

1. Answer the following in 30 lines each.
 1. Define Profession. What are its important characteristics ?
 2. Discuss the need for professional organisations in journalism. Explain briefly the composition and function of any four professional bodies devoted to the cause of journalists.
- 11 Write short notes on the following in 10 lines.
 - a) VIDURA
 - b) IENS
 - c) AINEC
 - d) IFWJ
 - e) ABC
 - f) Press Institute of India

Lesson - 8 : **PR Professional Organisations -the Indian Scene**

Objective

To explain the importance of professional bodies of Public Relations in the growth of professionalism.

Synopsis

1. PR beginnings in India
2. PR in free India
3. Public Relations Society of India (PRSI)
4. Professional Ethics
5. International Public Relations Association (IPRA)
6. Growth and Achievements.

1. PR Beginnings in India

The first newspaper 'The Bengal Gazette' started by James Augustus Hicky in 1780 gave birth to the Journalistic profession in India. Public relations made its beginning during the First World War in 1914 as an effort to disseminate war information to the Press. The Government of India had then set up a Central Publicity Board with Stanley Reed, editor of the Times of India, Bombay as its Chairman for the purpose of war publicity. After the war the functions of the board were taken over by the Central Bureau of Information set up in 1921. The Bureau was renamed the Directorate of Public Information in 1923 and became the Directorate of Information and Broadcasting in 1931. Thus it was the 1914-19 war which gave birth to public relations in the form of publicity in India.

After the Second World War broke out in 1939, the Bureau of Public Information and All India Radio were placed under the Directorate of Information and Broadcasting. The war effort was the main concern of this department which was also handling censorship of the Press. Some time later the defence publicity was taken away from the purview of the Bureau. A new organisation called the Directorate of Inter-Services Public Relations was established to undertake war propaganda exclusively.

The Bureau of Public Information is now called the Press Information Bureau.

Public Relations in India thus began as an instrument of Government publicity.

Promoting Tourism

One of the earliest efforts of PR on commercial lines was by the Indian Railways. As a measure to promote passenger traffic, the GIP Railway carried a publicity campaign in England, through the mass media and with the help of pamphlets to attract tourists to India. Within India, the Publicity Bureau of the Railways introduced a travelling cinema which showed films, at fairs, festivals and other gatherings. The Railway Board set up a publicity bureau in London and New York to undertake extensive advertising in newspapers and organise exhibitions.

After the Second World War, PR in India became an organised activity. Its need was felt both by the Government and private sector. The Department of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, undertook publicity campaigns for price control, foodgrain rationing etc.. This Department comprised a number of sections like the war effort, exhibition unit, the films division and the Central Bureau of Public Information.

Later, private industrial companies like the Tatas established PR divisions of their own. They conducted institutional campaigns through the press to win public support for their activities.

2. PR in Free India

In 1947, a Central Ministry called the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting was created. Like journalism, public relations also turned a new leaf in its history in the post-Independence period. This may be termed as the third stage in Indian PR history. The need for regular communication between the Government and the people was felt and was sought to be met. The Industrial houses also realised the importance of such communication with the public. This has whetted the appetite of the public for information. Accountability to the public came to be recognised, and led to the growth of PR. The launching of Five Year Plans was another reason for the expansion of the PR machinery in the country.

New Phase

The Government and the private sector accepted public relations as a management function to create mutual understanding between them and their 'Publics'. Thus developed a new phase of public relations in India.

If we judge 'Public Relations' by the three key characteristics of a profession, namely professional education and training, professional literature, and professional organisation, public relations in India as a profession lags behind others like law, medicine, journalism etc. However, public relations saw the fourth stage of evolution towards professionalism in 1958 when a professional organisation called the 'Public Relations Society of India' was formed in Bombay. This is the beginning of professional approach to public relations.

3. Public Relations Society of India (PRSI)

The Public Relations Society of India (PRSI) was established as a national association of PR practitioners in 1958 to promote the profession and to formulate and interpret to the public the objectives and potentialities of public relations as an integral function of management.

Objects

The objects of the Society are :

- a) To promote the recognition of public relations as a profession;
- b) To formulate, promote and interpret to the public the objectives, potentialities and functions of public relations practitioners;
- c) To promote and seek to maintain high professional standards among public relations practitioners;
- d) To exchange ideas, experiences and information among public relations practitioners;
- e) To offer study and research of public relations;
- f) To grant or sponsor fellowships and awards in recognised institutions of learning for the study and research of public relations;
- g) To issue a professional journal or bulletin or to publish pamphlets, books, surveys and other publications to disseminate information concerning public relations;
- h) To undertake any other activity to further the interest of the profession and the objects of the organisation in any manner;
- i) To develop and foster relations with other bodies or authorities;
- j) To establish libraries and reading rooms and educational centres for the study of public relations;

The society functioned as an informal body till 1966, when it was registered under the Indian Societies Act, with headquarters in Bombay. The father-figure of PR practitioners in India, Mr. Farook S. Mulla was the founder President of PRSI from 1966 to 1969.

Towards Professionalism

Earlier, in 1965, another professional body, the Public Relations Circle was found in Calcutta. It was the first association of PR practitioners in Eastern India. At the first All India PR Conference in 1968, members of the Public Relations Circle, unanimously decided to disband the regional body to strengthen the national association. The Calcutta chapter of the PRSI was established in the following year.

In 1971, PR professionals in Hyderabad founded the Public Relations Society of Hyderabad, which also became a regional chapter of PRSI in 1973. As many as 11 regional chapters are now functioning in Delhi, Chandigarh, Bombay, Ahmedabad, Baroda, Calcutta, Hyderabad, Madras, Visakhapatnam, Bangalore, and Cochin.

The management of the Public Relations Society of India is vested in a National Council consisting of representatives of all the regional chapters. The members are drawn from public relations practitioners and those generally interested in PR from all over the country. They include PR persons of Central and State Governments and the various Government under-takings like the Railways, the Posts and Telegraphs, the nationalised banks, the local bodies, public sector enterprises, service and welfare organisations, universities and others who are practising public relations in some form or the other. Both private and public sectors are represented on the PRSI.

The Society is recognised as the national PR organisation by the International Public Relations Association (IPRA).

Regional Chapters

The Regional Chapters of the Society regularly organises seminars, lectures, and discussions on various aspects of public relations. In order to promote professional training, the chapters run, with the collaboration of universities and colleges, courses on PR for students of advertising, mass communication and journalism. They also hold from time to time, residential and non-residential training courses for PR practitioners, management personnel and those who wish to take up PR as a profession. This is done in collaboration with various management associations and Government institutes. The society has conducted a two-year Research Fellowship on public relations at the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad.

The Society also publishes a journal 'PRSI NEWS' which aims to keep PR practitioners abreast of the developments in Public Relations in India and abroad.

All India Public Relations Conferences

Since 1968, the society has been holding three-day national conferences on a topical theme. This is done once in two years. The first All India PR Conference was held in New Delhi in April 1968. One of the highlights of this conference was the adoption of the 'CODE OF ATHENS' an internationally accepted code of ethics for PR practitioners, presented by Dr. Albert Oeckl, the then President, IPRA.

Subsequently, All India PR Conferences were held at :

- MADRAS : February 1970
THEME : Role of PR in Management
- CALCUTTA : March 1972
THEME : PR and the Changing Social Environment
- BOMBAY : January 1974
THEME : Towards a More Responsible Citizenship
- COCHIN : January 1978
THEME : Public Relations in the Eighties
- CALCUTTA : 1980
THEME : New Dimensions in PR
- BOMBAY : 1982 - 9th PR World Congress
THEME : The Inter-dependent World
- BANGALORE : February 1984
THEME : The Dynamics of Developmental Communication - PR Perspectives.

9th PR World Congress

The 9th Public Relations World Congress with the theme 'Interdependent World' sponsored by the International Public Relations Association (IPRA) was held in Bombay in January, 1982. It was organised by the Public Relations Society of India. The very fact that such an international conference was hosted by the national association is an eloquent proof that Public Relations as a profession has come of age in India.

It is for the first time that a PR World Congress was held in a developing Country. About 1000 delegates including a large contingent from overseas had converged on Bombay on that occasion. There was interaction with them not only on the problems and

prospects of public relations and communications but also on related subjects like energy, ecology, education etc.

The biennial national conference held under the auspices of the National Council of the PRSI and organised by the respective regional chapters; have also greatly benefited PR professionals and other management executives.

A past president of PRSI, Mr. Sanat Lahiri of Calcutta was elected president of the world body in 1979. This was a signal honour not only for Mr. Lahiri personally, but also for the PR movement in India.

4. Professional Ethics

Every profession has a conduct of ethics to enable its practitioners to perform their functions conscientiously. It also enables members of the profession to strive for better mutual understanding and co-operation among themselves. It lays down "Do's" and "Dont's," for PR practitioners. It facilitates the professional body to enforce discipline among its members. The code is acknowledged and accepted not only by the profession but also by the public who are protected by it.

Code of Athens

Excerpts of the International Code of Ethics for public relations or Code of Athens as it is called are given below :

"Considering that all the member countries of the United Nation Organisation have agreed to abide by its chapter which reaffirms its faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and that having regard to the very nature of their profession, Public Relations practitioners in these countries should undertake to ascertain and observe the principles set out in this chapter"

Considering that apart from 'rights' human beings have not only physical or material needs but also intellectual, moral and social needs, and that their rights are of real benefits to them only in so far as their needs are essentially met.

And lastly, considering that the use of techniques enabling them to come simultaneously into contact with millions of people gives public relations practitioners a power that has to be restrained by the observance of a strict moral code.

On all these grounds, the Public Relations Society of India hereby declares that it accepts as its moral character the principles of the

following Code of Ethics, and that if, in the light of evidence submitted to the society, a member of this society should be found to have infringed this code in the course of his professional duties, he will be deemed to be guilty of serious misconduct calling for an appropriate penalty.

Accordingly, each member of this Society shall endeavour :

1. To contribute to the achievements of the moral and cultural conditions enabling human beings to reach their full stature and enjoy the indivisible rights to which they are entitled under the 'Universal Declaration of Human Rights'.

2. To establish communication patterns, channels which by fostering the free flow of essential information, will make each member of the group feel that he is being kept informed, and also give him an awareness of his own personal involvement and responsibility and of his solidarity with other members.

3. To conduct himself always and in all circumstances in such a manner as to deserve and secure the confidence of those with whom he comes into contact.

4. To bear in mind that because of relationship between his profession and the public, his conduct even in private will have an impact on the way in which the profession as a whole is appraised.

A PR Practitioner shall undertake

5. To observe, in the course of his professional duties the moral principles and rules of 'Universal Declaration of Human Rights'.

6. To pay due regard to and uphold human dignity and to recognise the right of each individual to judge for himself.

7. To establish the moral, psychological and intellectual conditions for dialogue in its true sense, and to recognise the right of the parties involved to state their case and express their views.

8. To act in all circumstances in such a manner as to take account to the respective interests of the parties involved; both the interests of the organisation which he serves and the interests of the public concerned.

9. To carry out his undertakings and commitments which shall always be so worded as to avoid mis-understandings and to show loyalty and integrity in all circumstances so as to keep the confidence

of his clients or employers, past or present, and of all the public that are affected by his actions.

He or She shall refrain from

10. Subordinating truth to other requirements.
11. Circulating information which is not based on established and ascertainable facts.
12. Taking part in any venture or undertaking which is unethical or dishonest or capable of impairing human dignity and integrity.
13. Using any manipulative methods or techniques designed to create subconscious motivations which the individual cannot control of his own free will and so cannot be held accountable for the action taken on them.

5. International Public Relations Association (IPRA)

The International Public Relations Association (IPRA) *founded* in 1955 is a professional and fraternal organisation spanning the world of with active members in 60 countries contributing collectively and individually to the growth and professionalism of public relations practice in its function of improving human relations and understanding.

Improved communications and extension of mutual understanding, can do much to reduce strife, conflicts and discord in everyday life and to encourage the various groups in any community to find a common approach to the complex political, social and economic problems facing their people. Public Relations professionals have therefore a vital role to play in society.

The importance of this role justifies the need for the highest possible standards of ethics, practice and performance. IPRA, a world wide professional organisation, seeks to be a catalyst in the continuing development of these standards.

The Association founded in 1955, has achieved recognition of its standing in world public relations affairs in many high unofficial and official quarters. All members are elected in their personal capacity as practitioners who can subscribe to the aims and objectives of the Association. With over 650 members in 60 different countries, IPRA now comprises an international network of sources of professional competence, experience and aid which can be tapped by all its members.

Through its regular meetings and publications, a platform is provided for furthering knowledge and understanding of different professional techniques and styles. These media also offer opportunities for exchange of personal views and experiences and discussion on problems of mutual interest.

6. Growth and Achievements

In 1961, IPRA adopted its formal 'Code of Conduct' as the required practice of guidelines for all its members, to which they must attest on joining. The Code has been taken as a model by several national PR associations.

Four years later the Association adopted the 'Code of Athens' an international code of ethics for public relations, as its normal charter. The code is based upon the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. This code has been presented to many Heads of State.

An important event in the history of the Association was its formal recognition by the United Nations in 1964 and acceptance on a consultative basis to its Economic and Social Council.

There are now IPRA Liaison Officers in contact with the United Nations in New York and Geneva, the United Nations Environment Programme in Nairobi, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok and the ASEAN Committee.

World PR Congress

A World PR Congress is sponsored by the Association every third year. The theme is designed to present current theory and research on topical, international problems which bear upon the work of all practitioners. The first world PR Congress was held in Brussels in 1958.

Nine World Congresses have been sponsored so far by IPRA, each in a different country - Belgium, Italy, Canada, Brazil, Israel, Switzerland, USA, Britain, and India. And the tenth World PR Congress is being held in the Netherlands in June 1985.

Membership Requirements

The criterion for membership ensures that the high standing of the Association is maintained. It is open only to persons of known public relations competence who wish by participation in IPRA affairs to bring an international dimension to their work and who have practised public relations at a senior level for at least five years.

Service to Members

The Annual Register of Members gives information about members and provides the means of contact and consultation with colleagues elsewhere in the world.

The IPRA Newsletter, published four times a year, gives Association News, information about IPRA members, IPRA national groups' regional and national PR Associations and professional reports and case histories.

Occasional reports on professional developments of international significance are based upon research by the Committee of IPRA and contribute to deeper understanding and continuing progress in public relations.

A professional journal 'IPRA REVIEW' which is published twice a year, contains discussions, in depth on the theory and practice of public relations and related fields.

The Address of IPRA is : 49, Welling Street, Covent Garden LONDON WC 2.

Author of the Lesson : Mr. C.V. Narasimha Reddi

Assignments**I. Answer the following in 30 lines each.**

1. In what way do Professional bodies contribute to Professionalism? Discuss it with regard to PR.
2. Discuss briefly the growth of PR professional bodies in India.
3. What way does PRSI help its members to develop and maintain professionalism. What are its aims ?
4. What is the need for professional ethics in PR ? What are the salient features of Code of Athens ?

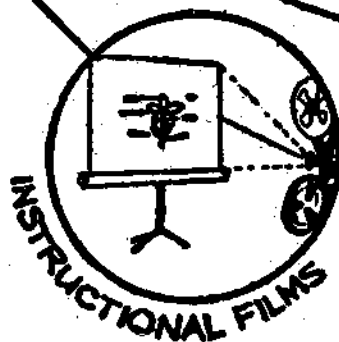
II. Write short notes in 10 lines each.

1. PRSI
2. IPRA
3. Code of Athens

BRAOU

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