



e content

# Limitations of News Writing

**Prof. Mukul Srivastava**

Head

Department of Journalism & Mass Communication

University of Lucknow Lucknow (India)

[sri.mukul@gmail.com](mailto:sri.mukul@gmail.com)

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdkxo7fhISE8kzyKolTL8IQ>

<http://mukulmedia.blogspot.com/>

[www.mukulmedia.com](http://www.mukulmedia.com)

<http://www.lkouniv.ac.in/>

## Limitations of News Writing

9

sri.mukul@gmail.com, <http://mukherjee.org.com/>

There are certain limitations of news writing. Different journalists have different opinions regarding the issue. Although, the concept of free press has been adopted by most countries in the world, the fact of the matter is that news writing still has a number of constraints. The boundaries vary from country to country to country and change with times. Any particular news which is out of bounds from the point of view of Indian journalism may be well within the limits of American journalism. Following are the main limitations of news writing:



**i. Beliefs, perceptions, attitudes and idiosyncrasies of the publisher, the chief editor or the editor:** Journalists working as salaried employees for a news paper are dependent to a great extent on the points of view of the publisher, the chief editor or the editor because if these people decide that a certain news is not appropriate for the newspaper then that news can never get published. Therefore, policies formulated by these people govern the choice of news to be published or not to be published in a newspaper. These policies impose multitudinous restrictions upon news writing process and

limit its scope. That is, even a good news story may never see the light of the day as it is the prerogative of the management to allow or disallow the publication of any news.

**ii. Interest of Advertisers:** Interests of advertisers also affect news writing and put certain restrictions upon it. Any news which undermines interests of those advertisers which provide considerable revenue to a newspaper by giving it large number of advertisements, may never get published in that newspaper regardless of its quality or importance for the readers. This generally happens in case of smaller newspapers that are dependent upon big advertisers for their survival. But with excessive commercialization even well established and reputed publications sometimes cave in to pressure exerted by big advertisers.

**iii. Ethics, traditions and ideals of a Country:** Ethics, traditions and ideals prevalent in a country also limit the scope of news writing. Any news story which denigrates and damages the ethics, traditions and ideals of a country cannot be considered publishable. Every country has certain special traditions, ethics and value systems and disparaging or maligning them in any manner whatsoever will certainly not go down well with the citizens of that country. Therefore, reporters must be careful about facts mentioned above while writing news.



**iv. Specific news requirements of the target area:** Journalists must be aware of the news requirements of the audiences living in a particular target area. If audiences of a specific target area give more importance to crime news than educational news or news related to literature may not receive similar importance from the audiences living in that target area. Therefore, news requirements of the audiences residing in a particular target area must be kept in mind while writing news for newspapers published from that area.

**v. Legal Restrictions:** Legal restrictions also limit the process of news writing. If any news story is in contravention of constitutional or any other law of the land like, 'Defamation', 'Contempt of Court', 'Parliamentary Privileges', etc. then it cannot and must not be written; otherwise journalists writing such news stories may have to face wrath of the legal system of the country. Therefore, it becomes imperative for the reporters to carefully evaluate legal intricacies involved in a news story before writing the final copy so that they can avoid unnecessary litigation and consequent wastage of time and money.

**vi. Personal Prejudices and Yellow Journalism:** Personal prejudices of journalists should not get reflected in news writing. News should be as objective as possible otherwise the journalist may lose his/her credibility. Also, sanctity of personal lives of people should be maintained and sleazy and lurid news stories should be avoided.

**vii. Constraints of Time and Space:** Paucity of time and space also impose limitations upon the process of news writing. If journalists are rushed for time; then they will be forced to reduce the number as well as the quality of news stories. Also, if enough space is not available to accommodate all the news stories in the newspaper then also news will either have to be shortened or removed. Time and space are thus, among the prominent limiting factors in the process of news writing.

Limitations of news writing process sometimes act as guiding principles while at others they lead the journalists astray. Fact of the matter is





that journalists should never leave the path of probity. That is, they must always fight for the truth. Limitations of news writing may be disputable but it is a well known fact that there are numerous factors like obstinately irrational behaviour of the owner or interest of the advertisers that deprive news of its impact quotient and effectiveness.

[sri.mukul@gmail.com](mailto:sri.mukul@gmail.com), <http://mukulmedia.blogspot.com/>