



e content

Problems of News Writing

Prof. Mukul Srivastava

Head

Department of Journalism & Mass Communication

University of Lucknow Lucknow (India)

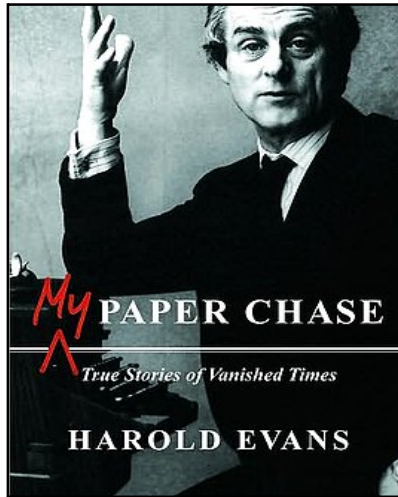
sri.mukul@gmail.com

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

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

www.mukulmedia.com

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



own 'nose for news'. That is, they should be able to smell news even in slumber.

ii. How to present News?

According to Harold Evans, "If reading an intro requires careful perusal then it should be considered a failure". A successful and effective intro is that which epitomizes the complete news in minimum possible words and is easily intelligible to the readers even in a cursory glance. Intro should be apposite to the news. That is, it should be complementary to the

news and not contradictory to the news in any manner. A good intro should have the quality of arousing inquisitiveness in the minds of the readers so that they may be compelled to read the whole story. Each and every fact related to the story must be thoroughly analysed and logically arranged before writing the final copy. This is done to ensure that no fact, however small it may be, is overlooked and all pertinent data gets space in the intro. A typical intro should not contain more than hundred words. Information sources should not be mentioned in the intro. Loading an intro with too much data is a cardinal sin and journalists must avoid temptation to show their language and knowledge skills in it, otherwise reading it would become cumbersome for the readers. It is a general practice in Indian language newspapers to write intros based on quotations. Making use of quotations to write intros was considered to be a sign of excellence in the days gone by. Even today there are a lot of journalists who use this style to write intros based of the same premise but from the point of view of comprehensibility this style of intro writing is not appropriate. Intros should be written in simpler words and sentences.

iii. What should be the level of language-style used? Level of language-style to be used for news writing is among the biggest problems confronting journalists. Language used for news writing should be simple and clear. Journalists should use short and simple sentences while writing news in order to convey their messages to the audiences with clarity and authenticity. Use of embellished language

containing too many esoteric words in news writing makes news reading a cumbersome and enervating process for the readers. Therefore, language-style of news writing should be such that it can be understood by people having elementary knowledge of the language. Simple and easy language-style is imperative for success of any reporter or journalist.

iv. How to achieve 'balance'? News should never be one-sided or biased. One-sided news stories mar credibility and reliability of journalists. Versions of all the parties involved should be inculcated in the news. If any one of the concerned parties was not available for comments then the same must be explicitly mentioned in the report. This is done to minimize the chances of prejudiced or biased reporting. Therefore, the 'principle of balance' has been given a very important place in the process of news writing. The point to remember here is that the foundation of good news stories is never laid upon one-sided versions and should never be biased, discriminatory or prejudiced in any manner. Special care should be taken while reporting criminal stories or matters involving police.

v. How to maintain 'neutrality'? Maintaining neutrality is among the greatest difficulties confronting modern journalists. Journalists should never give personal opinions while reporting any event or incident. They should write only the bare facts involved in the event and should punctiliously abstain from writing their feelings about the occurrence. Readers are quite conscious about this. News writing process should not get influenced by personal prejudices of the journalists. This hampers journalistic credibility as well as damages the reputation of journalists or newspapers writing and publishing such stories. Any element of subjectivity creeping in the process of news writing adversely affects ideal standards of journalism.

vi. News Organization: Word limit of a typical and general news depends upon availability of space in a newspaper. While synchronizing two news stories, it must be kept in mind that this does not lead to distortion in their original structure. There should be coordination between the intro and the body of any news. Harmonization different parts of news story should be maintained invariably.

In short, problems encountered by journalists during the process of news writing can be easily surmounted by continuous practice and help of senior journalists who have already mastered the craft. It is imperative for aspiring journalists to prepare themselves for all kinds



of expected or unexpected problems and obstacles that they may have to face in the field, because time is more precious than any gem in the realm of journalism. If a newspaper does not reach the market on time then it loses both; its credibility as well as its popularity. Therefore, problems related to news writing must be solved as quickly as possible. Only then any aspiring journalist may hope to find the ladder of success.

Making news luscious, enthralling, captivating, mesmerizing and interesting depends upon the capabilities of a skilful and talented journalist. Whenever, news writing contravenes these principles readers are most likely to prefer slumber to reading news.

sri.mukul@gmail.com, <http://mukulmedia.blogspot.com/>