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FUNCTIONS OF THE PRESS

Section - A

The staff of a big newspaper consists of many persons, those who work on the front desks, like the employees in the advertising and circulation departments, and those who work behind the screen, like the editor, leader writer, sub-editor, manager etc.

In the past, the press mainly concentrated on two important functions, that is information and influence. But now-a-days, it performs four major functions. In addition to the above two functions the press now also performs the functions of entertainment and paid advertising.

INFORMATION

This function includes all reports, news and happenings concerning the daily life. It does not include any information involving or concerning the pursuit of leisure. But it does cover all news, regarding government, politics, foreign affairs, weather, accident, business, labour, education etc. This function consists of most of the matter which is given in news-broadcast on the radio and Television as well as the news-columns of the newspapers and magazines.
It does not include information regarding sports, hobby columns, theatre reviews, films, short stories etc.

INFLUENCE

It means influencing the opinion of the readers through editorials, articles or certain special features. It also includes editorials cartoon and comments made on the news and events by the journalists or the editors. But it does not include the slanted news or any other form of indirect influence accidental or otherwise. In this we should include only attempts which are made directly to influence the readers and listeners. It also excludes the space which is sold to the advertisers.

ENTERTAINMENT

The next important function of the press is entertainment of the readers. Under this function can be included all types of fiction like comic strips, stories etc. It also includes the factual material, sports news, theatre reviews and hobby columns which deal with leisure. The entertainment function of the press is very important. This function not only completes for space and time with other functions, but it can also exert indirect influence and import information incidentally.
ADVERTISING

This function of the press can very easily be recognised, because it is commercially oriented, sometimes the advertisements also have some public service messages under the prestige advertisements regarding family planning, driving safely, child care, health care etc. The commercially oriented advertising seeks to promote the sale of their good.

Generally, people have to depend upon the press for the major share of their total news information, because even television news casts cannot carry that much bulk, nor could the television viewers assimilate it, if they did. Of course, information can be written and edited in such a slanted fashion that it exerts more influence than the printed editorial. Entertainment is the most important function of Journalism, because it is like a magnet which attracts and holds large audiences. It plays a vital role in selling newspapers and magazines by the millions. The sports pages, comic strips, astrology columns, advice to the lovelorn and cross-words are essential to the average newspaper's survival as a mass media.

The entertainment function's greatest threat to good journalism is its competition against information and
influence for media space and time and consumer attention. Addition of an extra page of comic strips may add to circulation and accompanying advertising revenues, thus enabling the newspaper to add editorial material, or it may simply oust a few columns of news and commentary. Similarly, a second lovelorn column not only steals space from significant offerings, but also tempts more readers away from the remaining substance.

Advertising plays a very important role in the success of running a mass media. Advertising provides the largest part of the revenue of finance the most elaborate technically sophisticated press system. In fact all sorts of daily newspapers, magazines, publications depend on advertising revenue. Advertising also supplies essential marketing information to the public and helps inform the businessmen of changes within their fields.

Even in 1832, the promoters of MADRAS CHRONICLE, in their petitioner to the Governor, proclaimed that they would publish advertisements and auction notices at reasonable price. In 1842, the Telugu daily, VARTAMAN TARANGINI, the second paper in Telugu, prescribed the rate of three annas (16 annas make one rupee) for a column of advertisement.
Each of the above mentioned functions of the press is being monitored by a department exclusively set up for the purpose. Thus the main functionaries of any Newspaper office consists of 1. Advertisement department 2. Production department 3. Circulation Department, and 4. Administrative wing. We now briefly mention the structure of each of these departments, its nature and scope of work.

ADVERTISEMENT DEPARTMENT

The Advertisement Department in any newspaper is one of the most important wings that provides 'oxygen' to sustain them. They are now run on modern professional values.

The Advertisement department in a newspaper is not only responsible to collect the advertisements, but also to publish them in appropriate place that suits the customer. It is also responsible to collect the money from them for their advertisements. It is this department that decides the page and column where an advertisement should appear. First half of the title page and the entire editorial page,
however, are an exception. It sends dummy pages, showing how the advertisement should appear, to the editorial department itself everyday. The editorial department, on its side, tries to use the remaining parts in the page its news coverage. In exceptional cases, they may suggest a change. It is then given to the editorial wing to make up the page with news. Sometimes, the Advertising department itself prepares the advertisement depending on the information given by the customer. They have also a translation wing for the advertisement coming in English. They also utilise services of artists to make up the advertisements. These artists are not employees of the paper but their services are used whenever necessary.

One more important function of the Advertisement Department is to fix the advertisement tariffs and collect the amounts from the parties according to the tariffs and remit it to the newspaper account. It has an accounts section to maintain the accounts. With that its role ends. Today, advertisement department that runs on modern management techniques is very important.
It is customary to consider personnel in the production in the production of a paper, other than journalists, to be working in the production department even though the work of the journalist is part and parcel of the production of the newspaper. Composing, plate making, providing the raw-material like newsprint, inks etc., printing and the like under the production Department.

Photo composing with the help of computer is now used in almost every important newspaper. It is necessary to know something about the process. Photo type setting arrangements commence with air-conditioning. The computers and other hitech instruments used for photo composing of the type cannot function unless air conditioned facility is provided. This requires uninterrupted power supply. If there is any fault in either of them, the computers have to be stopped lest they mix-up get completely damaged causing loss of huge amounts in lakhs of rupees. So the big Newspaper provide themselves with powerful generators to have uninterrupted power supply. When the printing is in progress if power supply is interrupted the paper from the reel gets cut. It takes atleast an hour to correct it and recommence the printing. Also, the type done by the operator
an phototype terminal is also wasted. Then it goes to 'Later camp machine and 'Bromides' with the type photo composing come out after 'developing.

The 'Bromides' are then sent to 'page Make up Section'. Under the guidance of artists and editors there, page is made up by suitably arranging the bromides and photos. The bromides are pasted with gum on an art paper fixed to a glass stand. The columns as appear in the paper are drawn on the art paper in advance. Artists do the pasting of bromides carefully within the space provided for each column. Then they draw designs or lines either on their own or on the advice of the editors to make the news boxed. For doing all this, only artists are employed as the work requires skill and creativity. This process is being slowly replaced by making up the page on computer video screens in a few minutes.

After the page is made up, it goes to 'Camera Section'. The plates made there are now put in the printing press. In the past, the Telugu dailies have the printing press that could print eight pages at the same time. Now they have facilities to print 12-16 pages simultaneously. These printing machines are produced in our country by two companies - 'Bandu' and Orient companies. It is Udayam
that had first got the machine of Harris Graphica from aboard. The newsprint reels are fixed in the machine and the required number of copies of the newspaper (fully made) come out of the machine and is ready for circulation. In the past when such technology was not true, the process used to be time consuming as the pages were arranged manually. Even the number of copies coming out is done by the machine.

The persons to pack the papers to be sent to various destinations are engaged on daily basis on meager wages. After the printing is over, the papers reach the nook and corner of the state in a few hours.

The dailies get the newsprint s per quota granted by the Central Government. Papers have to produce their paper requirements from private dealers in the beginning. All the stationery required is produced in the country. Big newspapers have their separate 'Stores' with a procurement officer whose duty is to purchase the stationery as per the requirements of their paper from time to time.

**ADMINISTRATIVE DEPARTMENT**

It is the management of a paper that makes the policy of the paper, fix the targets, provides necessary funds and coordinate the works of different departments of the paper as a representative of the management. Its Chairman or
Managing Director or General Manager will be performing the day to day functions. Under him works the Administration Department, personnel department and Accounts Department. The head of the organisation, be it its Chairman or somebody else, gets the approval of the Board of Directors in advance regarding the policy to be pursued, provision of funds etc., Determining the price of the paper, editorial policy & news coverage are his important functions. Besides them, appointments, raising required funds, procurement of newsprint and other raw-materials, creating structural facilities are the other important duties.

Accounts Department will be headed by Chief Accountant or Accounts Manager or Finance Manager. Generally a person holding charted accountancy., degree is appointed to the post. Sometimes, he is also appointed as Company Secretary as required by the company laws. The Chief Accounts Department receive the amounts collected by the advertisement and circulation departments, to maintain the accounts, and also make the payments for the purchases and other items as decided by the management. The wages to the staff, contributors and honorariums will be paid by the Accounts Department. When a large scale employment is needed, the head of the Department gives financial advice to the Chief of the organisation. In some newspapers separate
financial advisors are appointed for this purpose. They also do the internal auditing of the accounts of the other departments of the paper.

The personnel departments identifies the staff requirements, conducts interviews for prospective employees and sends advice to the accounts department regarding the salaries to be paid to them. The head of this department is called personnel office or personnel manager or Executive (Personnel wing). He will be on the interview board of any department for choosing the personnel. The department maintains a personal file on every employee. It represents the management before the labour courts. Transfers of employees, their welfare etc., are taken care of by this department.

The Administrative wing assists the head of the organisation in his day to day functions. It makes necessary arrangements, whenever necessary, looks after the power supply, telecommunications and provides necessary facilities to various departments of the newspaper. In some organisations, 'Stores' is also kept under this departments. Representing the managements in different fora and coordinating the work of different departments is also its work providing transport facilities and items to correspondents is also done by this department. Changes are
taking place everywhere to make the functioning more efficient and newspaper management is no exception.

CIRCULATION DEPARTMENT

The Circulation of a newspaper may be compared to the Blood circulation system in our bodies. In the management of a newspaper, this department has its role from beginning to the end. They play their role from deciding the number of copies to be printed to transport the paper to different places in time. To attract larger readership they are now having Agencies for Sales Promotion attached to them. When modern transport and communication facilities were not available, it used to take days and months for the newspaper to reach its readers. For instance, the Europeans used to get their papers from England by ship at the time of company rule and it used to take nine months for a paper to reach them. Now, they reach the reader within a day, sometimes in a few hours after its printing.

The Telugu newspaper realised the importance of time dimension in reaching the readers right from the beginning with the first Telugu paper Vrittanti. In those days, 1840's, Vartamana Tarangini was distributed in the Madras city by paper boys so that the work was done within hours
after the paper was printed. But to send the paper to other places, they were depending on the postal department.

Appointing agents for quick delivery of the paper to its readers was also done by Vartamana Tarangini by offering concession/commission to any one who buys more than ten copies. The system is continued till today. It is more systematised now giving larger profits or incentives. No newspaper can do its business without agents.

Besides delivering the paper in time to readers, the circulation department also acts like a bridge between the management and the reader. By conducting surveys, it gets the opinion of the readers about the paper and their desires, which is passed on to the management for reorienting its policy and work. The circulation department appoints the agents, collects the deposit amount from them and sees that the copies are delivered to them efficiently is time. In the past agents were required to go to the newspaper office to deposit the amounts and get the agency. The change in the procedure has lightened the burden of the agent and improved the sales of the paper. For example Vartamana Tarangini could sell about 600 copies only (Report of the Police Commissioner 1858) in Madras City whereas in 1974, when Eenadu was bunched, it could sell 4000 copies in Visakhapatnam alone. The credit of applying modern
management techniques in appointing agents goes to Eenadu. This is done after proper survey of the place and collecting necessary information regarding persons seeking agency and their financial background before appointing them is how practiced by almost all the newspapers.

The circulation department makes the transport arrangements to see that the paper reaches all places in time. For this, they engage taxis on contract basis to all important towns. The agents in a town sends the papers (already packed by the department as per indents) to the nearby villages by Road Transport Commission buses, making it possible to reach them in time. It is the circulation department that decides the time of completion of the printing work so that it can attend to the distribution work efficiently.

To attract new readers newspapers are now taking interest to convince the readers about their papers. This is done through sales promotion agencies which work under circulation department. In some papers, the head of the circulation department heads the sales promotion agency, but some papers have independent heads for the Agency.

The work of the persons in the Sales promotion Agency is not an easy job. It is on their work that the sales of a
paper depends. For this, they require patience and persuasive skill and command of local language and the manners. If Telugu papers are sold in lakhs it is mostly due to the untiring work of these people. Sometimes, they identify the potential agents for the paper and also do the collection of the dues from the agents.

Because it is business, Accounts section has its own importance in the circulation department. Maintaining the account of daily remittances from the agents, preparing dues from them and handling over the accounts and the collections to the Main Accounts Department of the organisation is the responsibility of this section in the circulation department.

SECTION B
EDITORIAL SECTION AND THE PRESS

The infinite variety of the press and the subjects it handles is naturally reflected in a whole range of specialities among journalists: politics, economics, social affairs, law, arts, philosophy, science and technology, sport, newsitems etc. - infact a mirror of the numerous aspects of human activity. But when these specialities are looked at across the board, a certain number of functions can be defined. These are shared among journalists and
effectively determine their ranking in the hierarchy. Three of them, common to all important newspapers are: editor, sub-editor and reporter.

EDITOR

The editor "selects, revises and arranges material for publications in newspapers and periodicals". He or she "allots assignments to reporters, correspondents and photographers; appraise reports, commentaries and photographs submitted and select them for publication; assigns writing of editorials and leading articles to specialist writers; examine material for conformity with established policy and literacy standards of publishers and revises it as necessary; decides spacing and positioning of items to be included, writes headlines and instructs printer concerning kinds of type to be used". The editor may also be called upon "to write articles or columns".

The editor is therefore a key person whose decisions dictate the contents and look of each edition. However, the position of editor can be ambiguous because of the dual obligation; on the one hand to the editorial team which he or she organises and directs; and; on the other hand, through the management functions of the job, to the employer
(that is, the owner of the newspaper or the owner's director - representative).

The independence of the editor is not guaranteed unless certain fundamental rights are respected:

* the right to reject editorial material supplied by the central management or editorial services;
* the right to decide on the contents of the newspaper;
* the right to authorise expenses within the agreed budget;
* the right to carry out investigative journalism;
* the right to reject advice on editorial policy;
* the right to criticise the group to which the newspaper belongs or other elements in the same group;
* the right to change the position of the newspaper on specific problems, while following the general agreed line;
* the right to hire or fire journalists, to fix the terms of their employment contacts within the context of the established policy of the group and to assign jobs to them.

Conferences with department heads or columnists, editorial work, discussions, management duties, and social obligations make the job an extremely busy one.
SUB - EDITOR

The sub-editor "assists with editing of newspapers, magazines, trade journals and other publications, edits copy for spelling, punctuations, grammar and continuity; verifies factual content of articles using standard reference sources; rewrites articles for greater consistency, clarity and adherence to space limitations; prepares layout of pages showing position and sizes of illustrations; reads unsolicited manuscripts and selects those for review by editor; drafts headlines and captions; replies to correspondence concerning publication matters".

In large newspaper, a deputy editor, aided by the chief sub-editor, directs and co-ordinates the work described above. This person is ultimately responsible for the production of the newspaper, under the direction of the editor, and is responsible for make-up and scheduling in particular.

The news-room is in many ways a demanding place. The journalists who work there must be all-round performers, with a sharp news sense, a sound journalistic style, a mastery of language, a solid general culture and a good understanding of the laws governing the press.
REPORTER

The reporter "seeks and reports information of interest to the public for publications in newspapers; travels to scene of assignment, such as a reported crime, a trial, a fire, an accident, an important public function, a sports meeting or a fashion show; collects all available information concerning assignment by observation, interview and investigation, seeking especially information on aspects of subject likely to interest newspaper readers; writes reports based on information collected and submits them to editorial department for approval and preparation for publication".

The reporter is often accompanied on outside assignments by a news photographer who "takes photographs to illustrate stories and articles for publication in newspapers, magazines, and similar journals..... specializes in travelling on assignments to photograph people and events of current public interest". At times the reporters themselves take the photographs to illustrate their articles; this is often the case with local correspondents who send their own stories and photos to the newspaper.

Apart from the technical qualifications necessary for the job, the reporter and the news photographer must have a
highly developed sense of initiative and flexibility. Whether acting on an order or of their own free will, they must be ready at any moment to go to the spot where the event is happening even if it offers no hope of bringing off the "scoop" that every ambitious journalist dreams about. They must also accept irregular hours of work. The newsroom of a big daily newspaper operates under the same kind of high pressure as the major news agencies and reporters are moving in and out continuously. For them, perhaps more than for any other journalist, the concept of fixed working hours is meaningless.

DIFFERENT KINDS OF CORRESPONDENTS

There are different kinds of correspondents who work for a newspaper.

THE CORRESPONDENT

The newspaper may have its correspondents at important district headquarters. Generally they are full-fledged journalists. The correspondents of a newspaper at the state capitals are called 'staffers'. They do full-time reporting work and are the regular employees of a newspaper or an agency. The correspondents in the different state capitals are in direct contact with the newspaper office.
Special correspondents cover some specified fields in the capital of a country. They keep in touch with the government agencies, other news sources and attend the parliament sessions.

THE STRINGER

The stringer (contributor, honourary correspondent) is also not a full time journalist. He may write for some papers and have whole time profession. He is attached to a newspaper through a string and paid small amount, to retain him for the paper.

THE LINER

The liner is not a full time journalist. He may live in a small town; he may send news stories to the newspaper from time to time; he is paid on the basis of the lines of the news stories and is only a part-time journalist.