

4.3.3 Foreign Correspondents

The work of a correspondent abroad is a challenging task. Although some administrative help from the Indian Mission is provided, s/he has to manage the professional front on one's own. S/he has to be in constant touch with various sources of news which include officials, the diplomatic corps, local newsmen, other foreign correspondents, local radio, TV and newspapers. The functions of a foreign correspondent include:

- Reporting major developments in the area, keeping in view the Indian interest. At the same time, guarding against the in-built bias in stories filed by foreign agencies,
- reporting developments of particular interest to India and the region and,
- Collecting material for spotlights and commentaries.

For a foreign correspondent, command over English as well as Hindi is an asset. A bilingual can file stories and voice dispatches in Hindi as well as in English. Knowledge of the country, including the language spoken there is also an added asset.

4.3.4 Interviews

Interviews can lead to exclusive stories and scoops. However, for producing a good interview, a great deal of planning and home work are essential. The areas which need probing need to be identified in advance. The interviewer should build up a rapport with the interviewee and make the interviewee comfortable by having some pleasant preliminary conversation as relaxed atmosphere is conducive for a good interview. S/he should also be conversant with the handling of tape-recorder and a micro-phone. Before starting an interview, the correspondent should carry out a thorough check of the tape recorder, micro-phone and the batteries. We have discussed interviews in detail in the previous unit.

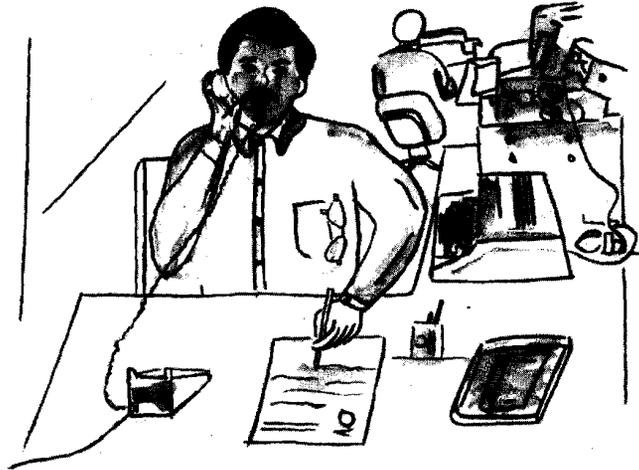
4.3.5 Handouts and Press Releases

The Government offices and private organisations issue handouts and press releases from time to time. Most of these handouts and press releases are exercises in publicity and public relations. The news value of these handouts should be closely examined before including them in the news bulletin. Many a time, the handouts are not written in a logical manner and need rewriting. There is need to look for the lead point, give the story a logical sequence, roundup the figures and add background information wherever necessary.

4.4 RADIO NEWS BULLETINS

To understand the planning and production of Radio News Bulletins, we need to take a look at the working of the News Services Division of All India Radio, which handles all news bulletins and news related programmes. The General News Room of AIR called GNR, functions round-the-clock in four shifts and handles over 300 bulletins in 24 hours. Each shift is headed by an Editor-in-charge, assisted by a number of assistant editors, sub-editors and compilation editors.

The Editor-in-charge is incharge of the news desk where the news copies received from various sources are selected, edited and rewritten. Every story earns its place in a radio bulletin on the basis of its news value. The usable stories emanating from within the country are placed in the Home Pool or Pool-I, those from abroad in Foreign Pool or Pool-II. There is a Sports Pool and on occasions like Parliament session or elections, separate pools viz., Parliament or Election Pool are formed. There is also an External Pool to facilitate compilation of different external news bulletins.



• Editor-in-charge in GNR

The pool system enables the Compilation Editor to prepare their bulletins without having to wade through the mass of news material coming from different sources. S/he selects stories from the News Pool and arranges them in a coherent order. S/he also selects the major stories for the lead and 3-4 stories for the headline thus investing the bulletin an identity of its own.

A normal radio bulletin is of ten-minute duration. However, there are also bulletins of 15 minutes and five minutes duration. A news bulletin begins with headlines, followed by main news, consisting of two 'bunches' with a break in between and repeat of headlines/main points at the end. A fifteen minutes bulletin has two breaks while there is no break in a five minutes bulletin. 'Bunching' means the placement of items and it plays an important role in making the bulletin lively and interesting. The first bunch is generally packed with hard news. Of the four headlines in a ten minutes bulletin, one should invariably be on sports.

A radio bulletin must have variety and should include Political, Economic, Cultural, Sports, Science and Technology and other important items. Regional, national and international events, parliamentary news and important court cases should also find their due places in the bulletins. Weather and human-interest items also need to be included. Continuity in the bulletins needs to be ensured and transition from one set of related items to the other should be smooth without jerks. In moving from one story to another, which is not connected with the previous one, the transition should be smooth. For example; 'The World Trade fair opened in Delhi today' or 'In the Mumbai stock market today.....' or 'In the Wimbledon The word 'meanwhile' is also used appropriately to facilitate such demarcation of items.

As far as possible, voice casts of correspondents on important events should be used. Radio being a spoken medium, voice casts help to enliven the bulletin and break the monotony thus make it lively and interesting. While giving a voice cast, a correspondent tries to take the listener on the scene. In an event like a big fire, floods, accidents, the correspondent gives a first hand account about what s/he saw and how it was being there, on the site. The voice cast is ideally of 40 to 45 seconds duration, however in some cases, it can go up-to one minute. Mostly, it is tape recorded, but it can also be live. A studio-based voice cast can be edited tightly.

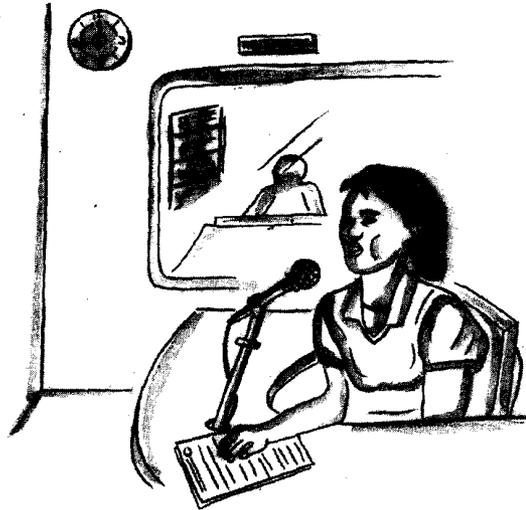
4.4.1 Main Bulletins

AIR broadcasts hourly news bulletins. There are however, three main bulletins in English and Hindi, broadcast in the morning, afternoon and evening. The morning bulletin in English is called the Morning News and Samachar Prabhat in Hindi. It is divided into three segments; the main news, a topical commentary and 'a look at the newspapers' and finally the main points. The segment, 'A look at the newspapers' has been designed to provide the listener with an overview of the lead and other front page stories, editorials and sports stories in the National Dailies. The compiling editor is assisted by two editors, one looks after the segment on Commentary and the other 'A look at the newspapers'.

Generally, the break-up of 15 minutes programmes is like this:

Main News	:	8 minutes
Commentary	:	2.5 minutes
A Look at the Newspapers	:	2.5 minutes
Headline and Signature tune	:	2 minutes

The day and evening bulletins cover all the major developments of the shift. The five minute duration 1800 hours bulletin in English and the 1805 hours bulletin in Hindi, give a resume of important happenings during the day. They are treated as a preview of the 15-minutes Hindi and English bulletins at 2045 and 2100 hours. These bulletins give the listener a roundup of the major events of the day. There are also hourly bulletins of five minutes each giving the listeners the latest news.



2100 hours bulletin going on air

4.4.2 Language Bulletins

Language bulletins broadcast from Delhi and Regional stations are widely listened. You would be surprised to know that the listener-ship of these bulletins is much more than the combined listener-ship of all the English bulletins! The language bulletins broadcast from Delhi have a national character to give the listener a feel of the important national and international events in his/her language. The bulletins, however, do include important regional items.

The master-copy is compiled in the General News Room in English and normally there is one script for each language bulletin. The compiling editor is required to ensure that items of interest for a particular region and particular state are highlighted in the language bulletin of that region/State. Sometimes, if the regional item is very important, it can be the lead or a headline in that language bulletin. Language bulletins are broadcast from Delhi thrice a day and each one is of ten minute duration. They have the same format as English bulletins of similar duration, i.e. four headlines, one break and repeat headlines.

4.4.3 External Bulletins

The News Services Division of All India Radio, broadcasts three types of External bulletins. English bulletins targeted at foreigners and Indians living abroad, foreign language bulletins like Chinese, Burmese, Russian and French for foreigners and Hindi and other language bulletins for Indians living abroad. Indian languages such as; Bengali, Tamil, Telugu, Punjabi, Sindhi and Urdu are spoken in our neighbourhood and bulletins in these languages have a wide listenership.

A common misconception among people is that external bulletins should carry more foreign news. In these days of satellite television the notion that we will be the first to break a news, say about African region to the people of that area will be entirely misplaced as other local sources are better equipped to tell them about the happenings in their regions.

The external bulletins present the perceptions and reactions of the people, leaders and the government of the country from where the bulletin originates in respect of happenings in the other country/countries. The external bulletins need to highlight the social, political and economic developments at home to provide adequate background information on these issues and also explain the programmes and policies of the country. External bulletins have the added responsibility of countering the mis-information campaign being carried out by some foreign networks. Care is also taken to highlight the Indian viewpoint on various issues.

4.4.4 Specialised Bulletins

The News Services Division broadcasts a couple of specialised bulletins. These include the Human Interest Bulletin and the Youth Bulletin, which generally carry soft stories. In addition, special weather bulletins are also broadcast for the benefit of various mountaineering expeditions.

4.4.5 Comments from the Press

Comments from the Press is a review of the different view points presented in the editorials of the national dailies on a particular topic. The editor preparing the Press Comments brings out the main thrust of an editorial by highlighting critical comments in a balanced manner. Care is taken to have some common thread to give a sense of continuity so that the programme does not sound like an unrelated collection of extracts from the editorials of the National dailies.

Activity
Visit the nearest radio station, which has a News Wing. Observe how a radio bulletin is prepared.

Check Your Progress: 2

- 1) Use the space below for your answers.
2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

Fill in the blanks

- 1) Two major Indian news agencies are
2) of handouts should be closely examined for inclusion in news bulletin.
3) is the place where news copies are selected, edited and rewritten.
4) Pool system helps to
5) Bundling means
6) from one story should be smooth.
7) Voice tags help to
8) A common misconception about external bulletins is that.....

4.5 WRITING RADIO NEWS COPY

A Radio news bulletin must have everything of the front page attention. The selected items are rewritten and edited for the bulletin. While editing one has to be brief, as time is a big constraint in a radio bulletin. The target listeners of the news are also kept in mind while selecting and writing the news items. The news items are written in an 'inverted pyramid' style with the climax in the lead. The details follow the lead which is called 'Intro' (introduction).

While writing a radio copy, the style book of the broadcasting station needs to be followed. Broadcast organisations all over the world have their own style rules for their copy. Style rules help the editors in producing a copy, which has consistency and reflects the style and values of the organisation.