**M.A. DEGREE EXAMINATION, DECEMBER – 2019**

**First Year JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION**

**Reporting and Editing**

**ASSIGNMENT-2**

**Question 2**

Explain fundamentals of editing

**Explain Fundamentals of Editing**

**Introduction**

Editing is the most challenging fact of journalism. A good editor needs creative skills, command over the language, ideas to improve the copy, and correct judgment about how much importance should be given for a particular news item.

**Fundaments of Editing**

1. **Ensure accuracy** : Good reporting is a key ingredient in ensuring accuracy. But all who edit the story too share this responsibility. Sub-editors ensure accuracy by checking and rechecking the facts and if needed they would seek clarifications from the reporters about the information in a story. Carelessness can lead to blunders and embarrassing mistakes. These can greatly tarnish the reputation of a newspaper.
2. **Trimm unnecessary words**: Unnecessary words, adjectives and adverbs should be trimmed. If an event is very interesting, it is sufficient to say it is interesting. Meaningless phrases should also be trimmed. For example the following phrases could be replaced with the words given in brackets: a great number of times (often), a small number of (few), at regular intervals of time (regularly), made an investigation of (investigated), placed its seal of approval (approved) etc.
3. **Protect and polish the language**: Editing involves polishing the language. An editor should have a thorough knowledge of the grammar and the language usages. He/she plays a major role in protecting the language against abuse. People at the desk should know how to spell, to make certain a story is written in proper language, to reorganise and clarify passages and protect the meaning of words. Clear writing, correct spelling and grammar contribute to better communication of ideas.
4. **Correct inconsistencies:** Inconsistencies within the story should be detected and corrected. Inconsistencies in story can confuse the reader. For example: INSAT - IA launched in 1982 ended its life prematurely. But INSAT- IA launched in 1983 was a grand success. The sub-editor should detect the mistake that INSAT- 1A cannot be launched twice. In the second sentence INSAT-1A should be corrected as INSAT-1B. If superlatives cannot be checked they can be softened. The most despicable crime in the world .... is to be changed to One of the most despicable crimes in the world......
5. **Make the story conform to style:** The word ‘style’ in newspaper jargons refers to the consistency provided by rules of usage in a newspaper. Newspapers adhere to rules of style to avoid inconsistencies that would annoy the reader. Adherence to style rules gives the newspaper a sense of consistency that would be absent if goodbye were used in one story and goodby in the next.
6. **Eliminate libellous statements**: Libel is a written defamation. The sub editor must know the libel laws of the country. Libellous/ defamatory statements should be eliminated. It is the duty of the sub-editor to ensure that the stories are free from such statements.
7. **Eliminate Passages in poor taste**: Some newspapers have policies banning profanity of any types. Other permit the use of some words but not others. For example, reputed newspapers by convention will not publish the victim’s names and other identities in a story on rape.
8. **Make the Story Readable and Complete:** A story that is readable and complete has the following characteristics. a) It is precise. b) It is clear. c) It has a pace appropriate to the content d) It uses transitional devices that lead the reader from one thought to the next. e) It appeals to the reader’s senses.
9. **Write Attractive Headlines**: A copy editor’s first task is to correct and refine copy. A second task is to write headline that attracts reader’s attention, summarises the story, depicts the mood of the story and helps the tone of the newspaper.
10. **Edit Pictures and Design Pages**: An important step in the editing process is the packaging of news stories in a page. Designing the page helps the reader to read faster and read more of what is written. The packaging or designing of a newspaper is considered as important as its contents. Quality of writing primarily depends upon a reporter, but a sub-editor can improve writing. Good editing complements good writing. Occasionally good editing can save mediocre writing. Poor editing can make it worse or destroy it. It is said, ‘an excellent staff without a copydesk might produce a fair newspaper. A mediocre staff with a competent copydesk can produce an acceptable newspaper. But an excellent staff, backed by an excellent desk, guarantees an excellent newspaper.’

**Conclusion**

Editing involves reading, correcting, modifying, value-adding, polishing and improving a report for publication. The ideal principle, which governs editing, is: ‘never overestimate the public’s knowledge and never underestimate the public’s intelligence

**References**

1. Floyd K. Baskette et al (1996). The Art of Editing. NewYork: Taylor & Francis
2. Montagnes, I. (1991). Editing and Publication: A training manual. Philippines: International Rice Research institute.