

**DJMC 1**  
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ଓଡ଼ିଶା ରାଜ୍ୟ ମୁକ୍ତ ବିଶ୍ୱବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ  
ସମ୍ବଲପୁର  
**Odisha State Open University**  
**Sambalpur**

**Diploma in Journalism & Mass Communication**  
**(DJMC)**

# **Media Ethics**



Journalism & Mass Communication

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Odisha State Open University, Sambalpur, Odisha  
Established by an Act of Government of Odisha.

## **DIPLOMA IN JOURNALISM & MASS COMMUNICATION**

**DJMC-1**

**Media Ethics**

Block

**5**

**Media Ethics**

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**Unit - 1**

**Values and Ethics of Journalism**

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**Unit - 2**

**Right to Privacy**

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**Unit- 3**

**Code of Conduct in Journalism**

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# UNIT – I: VALUES & ETHICS OF JOURNALISM

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## 1.0 UNIT STRUCTURE

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- 1.1 Learning Objective
  - 1.2 Introduction
  - 1.3 Values and Ethics of Journalism
  - 1.4 Conflicts of Interest
  - 1.5 Journalism ethics and standards
  - 1.6 Ethical dilemmas
  - 1.7 Society of Professional Journalists: Code of Ethics
  - 1.8 Check Your Progress
- 

## 1.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVE

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This Chapter discusses various issues faced by journalists to carry out responsible journalism. It gives a fair idea about values and ethics of journalism. At the end of this unit students should

- Have fair understanding about Values of professional journalism
  - Ethical issues in journalism profession
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## 1.2 INTRODUCTION

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Ethics needs to be a part of all the profession. It is even more needed to be followed by media professionals to keep the image as ‘fourth estate’ intact.

According to Webster’s New World Dictionary, ‘ethics’ is a system or code of morals, of a particular person, religion, group, profession, etc. Ethics, according to the Macquarie Dictionary, is a system of Moral Principles, by which actions and proposals may be judged good or bad or right or wrong. Ethics ask what we should do in some circumstance, or what we should do as participants in some form of activity or profession.

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Ethics is the difficult practical task of applying norms and standards to ever new and changing circumstances. Ethics is the process of inventing new and better ethical responses to problems and conflicts.

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### **1.3 VALUES AND ETHICS OF JOURNALISM**

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Law is imposed on journalists by the government of a nation similar to how it is imposed on all the citizens of the nation. Laws like defamation, contempt of court, contempt of parliament exist to check the excesses and errors of the journalists.

Principles of Journalism deal with how news should be received from various sources and reported. Ethics are the moral principles involved in news reporting and coverage.

A journalist needs to have certain moral principles to be followed in his/her profession which could be termed as 'professional ethics'. Ethics could not be forced on any one but each profession carry a 'Code of Conduct' to be seen as rules of practice. Ethical guidelines are peculiar to each profession and are designed to prevent abuse and unrestrained use of the powers and privileges of that profession. Many Newspapers in India have formulated their own code of ethics for their employees to follow.

Those are the days when journalism was considered to be an idealistic profession and pen's mightiness over sword was well maintained. Now the journalist as well as the society has accepted that journalism is just another profession and media organizations are considers being business ventures that compete with each other to win the race and be ahead in ratings. The rising popularity of electronic media and their giving utmost importance to entertainment aspect has paved the way for this sort of unhealthy competition. Even in such a scenario, some basic ethical considerations need to be kept in mind by the journalists.

#### **1.3.1 OBJECTIVITY**

A newspaper or channel might be having affiliation towards a particular political party or a business group. But, in news reporting, such priorities of the media organizations should not get reflected. Also, the reporter of a news item should also be careful that his individualistic opinions should not be part of the report. News and Views need to be always separate to maintain objectivity by the journalists. When public interest and

the interest of a particular media organization may not go hand in hand in certain instances, priority needs to be given to the public interest and not business interests.

### **1.3.2 SINCERITY, TRUTHFULNESS, ACCURACY**

Good faith with the reader is the foundation of all journalism worthy of the name. By every consideration of good faith a newspaper is constrained to be truthful. It is not to be excused for lack of thoroughness or accuracy within its control, or failure to obtain command of these essential qualities.

### **1.3.3 DECENCY**

Journalists also have moral responsibility in using the words and illustrations they use. In news reporting, especially stories on as fire, accident or sex the decision over what details to include involves more than just newsworthiness. The reporting should not show or promote violence and obscenity. Obligation to protect moral of children should also be remembered. Journalist should use the words or illustrations which are decent for the society and are of good taste.

### **1.3.4 IMPARTIALITY**

Sound practice makes clear distinction between news reports and expression of opinion. News reports should be free from opinion or bias of any kind. This rule does not apply to so-called special articles unmistakably devoted to advocacy or characterized by a signature authorizing own conclusion and interpretation of the writer. News Reporting should balance with presentation of every side involved.

### **1.3.5 CRASS COMMERCIALISM**

The practice of cut-throat commercial competition with rivals with sole aim to make money/profit without any consideration of how it affects others is known as Crass Commercialism. All the media organizations are entitled to make profit, but making money should not be sole objective of media organizations. They should not practice unfair means to earn more profits. They should not be involved in Crass commercialism, including in unfair practices like obscene scenes, pictures and writings. That such portrayal would spoil the mind of the young stars and children should be kept in mind by the media.

### **1.3.6 SENSATIONALISM**

Sensationalizing the events/ happenings needs to be avoided by an ethical journalist. Basically in the time of communal clashes and disasters, there is a rush and anxiety among the people to know the latest news. Instead of cashing on such expectations, media should see that the reporting is done in such a way that it would not aggravate the clashes or create unnecessary fear in minds of the people about a disaster.

### **1.3.7 PRIVACY**

Privacy of any individual can be invaded physically by sticking a microphone into someone's face, or it may be publishing embarrassing personal information. But Publication or broadcasting of information, including pictures, about the private lives or concerns of individuals without consent should be avoided. However, this is acceptable only if a serious legitimate public interest outweighs their normal human right of privacy or where the material concerned ought to be published in the public interest which outweighs the normal human right of privacy. Also Sources are needed for breaking news but at the same time their privacy also should be respected and safeguarded and should not be taken for granted by media.

### **1.3.8 OBSCENITY**

Obscenity can be defined as any work that appeals predominantly to prurient interest or any work that depicts or describes sexual conduct in patently offensive way. Obscenity is referred to indecent expressions, such as words, images and actions. Extreme care must be taken by journalists that obscene word and depiction are avoided specially while reporting crime and involving women.

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## **1.4 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

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In an era of great and growing dissatisfaction with the media, it is imperative that journalists avoid conflicts of interest, defined as situations in which there are competing professional, personal and/or financial obligations or interests that compete with the journalist's obligation to his outlet and audience.

**Writing about friends and family members:** Most newspapers bar reporters from writing about, or including quotes from friends or family members, although there may

be some exceptions, if the reporter is open about it. In an autobiography or memoir, obviously it is fine. Even here, however, there is an obligation: the writer should be transparent and stipulate the relationship, whatever form that may take. When a reporter is sent out to sample opinion or find an expert, those sources should not be relations, unless the journalist can honestly claim the relationship won't say what he writes one way or the other. In other words, would the reporter pull punches because he's a friend of the source? That's why it is usually a good idea to stay clear of using friends and relatives in articles in most instances.

**Press junkets:** Most reputable news organizations prohibit contributors from participating in press junkets, which are trips offered to journalists that are paid for by the entities the reporters cover, i.e., movie studios, electronics companies, government agencies.

**Accepting hospitality:** If a reporter is interviewing a CEO at a company or at the executive's home, it is fine to accept a sandwich and a soft drink. At a restaurant, however, the reporter should pay for the meal or drink. Drinking alcohol on the job can be problematic. The Kalamazoo Gazette fired a reporter and photographer in 2005 for participating in a drinking game while researching a story on problem drinking on college campuses. An editor claimed the transgression compromised the paper's integrity.

**Gifts:** Journalists generally should not accept any gifts from sources or from the subjects of their stories. Sometimes sources will send tokens of their appreciation after the fact, which is to say after publication. Every media outlet has its own policy on accepting such gifts. It may be permissible to accept food, private lodging and/or small tokens of affection or gratitude. Similarly, in some cultures (Japan, for example) it is appropriate for a reporter to present a small gift to a source before the interview starts, especially if the interview is being conducted in the source's home. As always, use common sense. A reporter should not guarantee an interview subject favorable coverage in exchange for access.

**Free tickets:** While some publications, like The New York Times, prohibit their reporters from accepting free tickets to a performance they are writing about or

reviewing, most others allow staff writers and freelancers to procure press passes to movie screenings, concerts and theatrical productions. The same goes for review copies of books, compact discs, DVDs and access to subscription-only web sites.

**Paying sources:** Most reputable news organizations do not pay sources for information. To do so can undermine the integrity of the information.

**Investments (stock, bonds, venture capital):** Journalists must avoid all financial entanglements (stock ownership, financial transactions, etc.) with the people and companies they cover.

**Political and charitable donations:** If a journalist donates a politician running office, he should not cover the election which also includes rivals of the politician to whom the journalist has donated. If the reporter donates money to a politically active organization his/her objectivity may be called into question to write about issues of interest to these organizations.

**Blogs:** Nowadays it's common for journalists -- and journalism students -- to blog and to comment on the blogs of others. What the reporter chooses to blog about and what she/he write for publication could potentially raise ethical concerns. For example, if she/he blogs about a hard news story published on stem cell research and bash governmental policy, readers could conceivably question your objectivity. Be aware that whatever she/he writes may remain in cyberspace in perpetuity, revealed with a simple Web search. If you post malicious, immature or prurient material, or engage in online "flame wars," you could inadvertently undermine your credibility and ethical standing. A rule of thumb: since everything you write online is, in effect, published, that violates the rules of honest and decent journalism.

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## **1.5 JOURNALISM ETHICS AND STANDARDS**

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Journalism ethics and standards comprise Principles of ethics and of good practice as applicable to the specific challenges faced by journalists. Historically and currently, this subset of media ethics is widely known to journalists as their professional "code of ethics" or the "canons of journalism". The basic codes and canons commonly appear in statements drafted by both professional journalism associations and individual print, broadcast, and online news organizations.

While various existing codes have some differences, most share common elements including the principles of—truthfulness, accuracy, objectivity, impartiality, fairness and public accountability—as these apply to the acquisition of newsworthy information and its subsequent dissemination to the public.

Like many broader ethical systems, journalism ethics include the principle of "limitation of harm." This often involves the withholding of certain details from reports such as the names of minor children, crime victims' names or information not materially related to particular news reports release of which might, for example, harm someone's reputation.

Some journalistic codes of ethics, notably the European ones, also include a concern with discriminatory references in news based on race, religion, sexual orientation, and physical or mental disabilities. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe approved in 1993 Resolution 1003 on the Ethics of Journalism which recommends journalists to respect the presumption of innocence, in particular in cases that are still sub judice.

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## **1.6 ETHICAL DILEMMAS**

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One of the primary functions of journalism ethics is to aid journalists in dealing with many ethical dilemmas they may encounter. From highly sensitive issues of national security to everyday questions such as accepting a dinner from a source, putting a bumper sticker on one's car, publishing a personal opinion blog, a journalist must make decisions taking into account things such as the public's right to know, potential threats, reprisals and intimidations of all kinds, personal integrity, conflicts between editors, reporters and publishers or management, and many other such conundrum. The following are illustrations of some of those.

Foreign newspaper dealt with extremely difficult ethical dilemmas faced by journalists, despite of government intervention.

- The Center for International Media Ethics, an international non-profit organisation "offers platform for media professionals to follow current ethical dilemmas of the press" through its blog. Besides highlighting the ethical concerns of recent stories, journalists are encouraged to express their own opinion. The organisation "urges journalists to make their own judgments and identify their own strategies."

- The Ethics Advice Line for Journalists, a joint venture, public service project of Chicago Headline Club Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists and Loyola University Chicago Center for Ethics and Social Justice, provides some examples of typical ethical dilemmas reported to their ethical dilemma hotline and are typical of the kinds of questions faced by many professional journalists.

### **1.6.1 RESOLVING ETHICAL DILEMMAS**

The code of ethics in media was created by a suggestion from the 1947 Hutchins Commission. They suggested that newspapers, broadcasters and journalists had started to become more responsible for journalism and thought they should be held accountable.

### **1.6.2 ORIGINAL GUIDELINES**

The guidelines were set up around two important ideas by Straubhaar, LaRose & Davenport. The first guideline is that "whoever enjoys a special measure of freedom, like a professional journalist, has an obligation to society to use their freedoms and powers responsibly." This guideline is useful so that people in power are able to be held liable in case their actions are not professional. People that have high media attention should not abuse the power. The second guideline that was established is "society's welfare is paramount, more important than individual careers or even individual rights." Again, holding people responsible for their actions and stating that society is more important due to the vast number of people that could be affected by poor behavior.

The Hutchins Commission added another five guidelines specifically for the press.

1. "Present meaningful news, accurate and separated from opinion".
2. "Serve as a forum for the exchange of comment and criticism and to expand access to diverse points of view."
3. "Project "a representative picture of the constituent groups in society" by avoiding stereotypes by including minority groups."
4. "Clarify the goals and values of society; implicit was an appeal to avoid pandering to the lowest common denominator."
5. "Give broad coverage of what was known about society".

All of these guidelines are important because the press is needed to maintain a neutral viewpoint, providing the basic facts and allowing for readers to come up with their own opinions from the news that they report.

These guidelines inspired Society of Professional Journalists which is the current version of media ethics that were adopted in 1996.

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## **1.7 SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS: CODE OF ETHICS**

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The Society of Professional Journalists created a code of ethics that are in effect today. The main mantra of the code is "Seek truth and Report it!" The code also states that: "Journalists should be honest, fair, and courageous in gathering, reporting, and interpreting information. Journalists should:"

- ◆ "Test the accuracy of information from all sources and exercise care to avoid inadvertent error. Deliberate distortion is never permissible."
- ◆ "Diligently seek out subjects of news stories to give them the opportunity to respond to allegations of wrong doing."
- ◆ "Identify sources whenever feasible. The public is entitled to as much information as possible on sources' reliability."
- ◆ "Always question sources' motives before promising anonymity. Clarify conditions attached to any promises made in exchange for information. Keep promises."
- ◆ "Make certain that headlines, news teases, and promotional material, photos, video, audio, graphics, sound bites, and quotations do not misrepresent. They should not oversimplify or highlight incidents out of context."
- ◆ "Never distort the content of news photos or video. Image enhancement for technical clarity is always permissible. Label montages and photo illustrations."
- ◆ "Avoid misleading reenactments or staged news events. If reenactment is necessary to tell a story, label it."

- ◆ "Avoid undercover or other surreptitious methods of gathering information except when traditional open methods will not yield information vital to the public. Use of such methods should be explained as part of the story."
- ◆ "Tell the story of the diversity and magnitude of the human experience boldly, even, when it is unpopular to do so."
- ◆ "Examine their own cultural values and avoid imposing on those values on others."
- ◆ "Avoid stereotyping by race, gender, age, religion, ethnicity, geography, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, or social status."
- ◆ "Support the open exchange of views, even views they find repugnant."  
"Give voice to the voiceless; official and unofficial sources of information can be equally valid." "Distinguish between advocacy and news reporting. Analysis and commentary should be labeled and not misrepresent fact or content."
- ◆ "Distinguish news from advertising, and shun hybrids that blur the lines between the two."
- ◆ "Recognize and special obligation to ensure that the public's business is conducted in the open and that government records are open to inspection."

### **1.7.1 MINIMIZE HARM**

Ethical journalists treat sources, subjects, and colleagues as human beings deserving of respect. Journalists should:

- ◆ "Show compassion for those who may be affected adversely by news coverage. Use special sensitivity when dealing with children and inexperienced sources or subjects."
- ◆ "Be sensitive when seeking or using interviews or photographs of those affected by tragedy or guilt."

- ◆ "Recognize that gathering and reporting information may cause harm or discomfort. Pursuit of the news is not a license for arrogance."
- ◆ "Recognize that private people have a greater right to control information about themselves than do public officials and others who seek power, influence, or attention. Only an overriding public need can justify intrusion into anyone's privacy."
- ◆ "Show good taste. Avoid pandering to lurid curiosity."
- ◆ "Be cautious of identifying juvenile suspects or victims of sex crimes."
- ◆ "Be judicious about naming criminal suspects before the formal filing of charges."
- ◆ "Balance a criminal suspect's fair trial rights with the public's right to be informed."

### 1.7.2 ACT INDEPENDENTLY

Journalists should be free of obligation to any interest other than the public's right to know. Journalists should:

- ◆ "Avoid conflict of interest, real or perceived."
- ◆ "Remain free of associations and activities that may compromise integrity or damage credibility."
- ◆ "Refuse gifts, favors, fees, free travel, and special treatment, and shun secondary employment, political involvement, public office, and service in community organizations if they compromise journalistic integrity."
- ◆ "Disclose unavoidable conflicts."
- ◆ "Be vigilant and courageous about holding those with power accountable."
- ◆ "Deny favored treatment to advertisers and special interests and resist their pressure to influence news coverage."
- ◆ "Be wary of sources offering information for favors or money; avoid bidding for news."

**1.7.3 BE ACCOUNTABLE**

Journalists are accountable to their readers, listeners, viewers, and each other. Journalists should:

- ◆ "Clarify and explain news coverage and invite dialogue with the public over journalistic conduct."
- ◆ "Encourage the public to voice grievances against the news media."
- ◆ "Admit mistakes and correct them promptly."
- ◆ "Expose unethical practices of journalists and the news media."
- ◆ "Abide by the same high standards to which they hold others."

All of these guidelines are for the betterment of society and regulation of media.



**Check Your Progress:**

1.1 What do you mean by journalism ethics?

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1.2 How does a Newspaper gain the faith of the readers?

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1.3 What do you mean by conflict of Interest?

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1.4 What do you mean by ethical dilemma in Media?

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## **UNIT – II: RIGHT TO PRIVACY**

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### **2.0 UNIT STRUCTURE**

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- 2.1 Learning Objective
  - 2.2 Introduction
  - 2.3 Right to Privacy
  - 2.4 Sting Journalism
  - 2.5 Yellow Journalism
  - 2.6 Paid News
  - 2.7 Media Net & Private Treaties
  - 2.8 Check Your Progress
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### **2.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVE**

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In this Unit will discuss about ethical issues related to privacy and journalism. The unit also covers other ethical issues in Media like paid news, media net and others. By end of this unit students will have understanding about:

- privacy and ethical issues related to the same
  - unethical journalistic practices
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### **2.2 INTRODUCTION**

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Privacy is the right to be left alone. Privacy is the state of being free from intrusion or disturbance in one's private life or affairs. It is a matter of personal autonomy: we have power over our own lives when personal information is kept private. It is the ability of an individual or group to seclude themselves or information about themselves and their by reveal themselves selectively. According to Norms and Parameters for Investigative Journalism by the Press Council of India, "The private life, even of a public figure, is his own. Exposition or invasion of his personal privacy or private life is not permissible unless there is clear evidence that the wrong-doings in question have a reasonable

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nexus with the misuse of his public position or power and has an adverse impact on public interest".

At present, there is no independent statute protecting privacy in India. The right to privacy is a deemed right understood in the context of two fundamental rights: the right to freedom under Article 19 and the right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution.

Though privacy is very important, journalists, while carrying out their duty often invade privacy of individuals. Invasion of privacy is sometimes essential for journalists to carry out an investigation that interferes with someone's privacy. In such situations, Journalists face professional dilemma. In this unit we will discuss various ethical issues related to privacy of individuals.

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## **2.3 RIGHT TO PRIVACY**

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It is often claimed, particularly by those in the eye of the media, that their right to privacy is violated when information about their private lives is reported in the press. The point of view of the press, however, is that the general public have a right to know personal information about those with status as a public figure. This distinction is encoded in most legal traditions as an element of freedom of speech.

Journalists face a difficult balancing act. They must respect privacy, but they must also be rigorous and robust in their investigation into issues that are in the public interest. This will mean that in some cases it will be necessary for a journalist to carry out an investigation that interferes with someone's privacy.

Such cases could include:

- crime and anti-social behaviour
- corruption or injustice
- incompetence or neglect

The most important rule is that we must treat people fairly and with respect. We must also be clear about our own motives. We must have no personal interest in an investigation that invades a person's privacy. The only justification is that it is in the public interest and we are genuinely trying to expose wrongdoing.

### **2.3.1 WHAT DOES PRIVACY COVER?**

Privacy covers anything that a person might reasonably expect to keep from becoming public knowledge. It could include some facts that are known by some, but not by all. There will also be cases where a person in the public eye, who is in a public place, can expect to have their privacy protected. Cases might be where they are in a clinic or hospital receiving treatment.

### **2.3.2 SUBMITTED MATERIAL**

Increasingly, journalists are using user-generated content. This does not make it right for us to ignore our editorial guidelines. However, it does raise important editorial issues.

For example, if material is in the public domain, and everyone is talking about it yet we ignore it, we might be seen as missing out on an important element of a news story and failing to inform our users. Such situations need careful editorial consideration.

Care needs to be taken with submitted material, particularly that taken from CCTV, webcams, video cameras and mobile phones.

It's unlikely that we will be able to verify all contributed material as being genuine. Many respected news organisations stipulate that material has to be verified by two independent sources. This might not be possible with contributed material. In that case, an editorial call needs to be made.

There are a number of free verification tools that can be used to check the location, date, conditions and validity of submitted content.

Clear labelling is a way round this if we feel the material is justified, but we need to always be careful about displaying material that could compromise our editorial values and those of the news organisation we work for.

Reliability, trust, honesty, fairness and accuracy are hard-won values and we must protect these. If your audience sees material that leads them to believe that you have moved away from such values, you might lose their trust.

### **2.3.3 JUDGE AND JURY**

A journalist's job is to report facts and inform the public debate so that people can make educated choices. We are not the judge and jury regarding what is right and wrong in the communities we serve.

Journalists have a right, and a duty, to investigate stories in the public interest, but they must not consider themselves to be beyond the law. They must also consider the hurt and damage that their digging may cause.

Some feel that an individual's right to privacy is qualified by their behavior. If a person is considered to be involved in crime or anti-social behavior, it could be felt that they have waived part of their rights to privacy because it is more likely to be in the public interest to expose their behavior. This is not for us to decide.

This is also a delicate area, particularly in transition and post-conflict countries where what might be termed by some to be anti-social or unlawful behavior could, in some cases, be seen by others as an important and legitimate protest against unjust regimes and systems.

If we are asked to stop recording because of concerns about privacy, we should do so unless it is editorially justified to continue. At that point we need to be absolutely clear about our reasons.

Keeping up with our competition, winning more viewers or selling more papers are not a good enough reasons. The story must inform the public debate and it must be an accurate and fair balanced representation of the known facts.

Even then, the journalist must be sure that they have come to a considered conclusion having weighed all the facts.

### **2.3.4 OBTAINING CONSENT**

There are a number of places where journalists should obtain two forms of consent, one to gather the material and the other to broadcast or publish it. These include hospitals, schools or prisons.

Journalists should always seek permission from their seniors:

- to use unattended recording equipment without the knowledge of those being recorded
- to record telephone conversations originally intended for background information
- to door-step a potential interviewee without making a prior approach
- to broadcast material recorded by others, such as user-generated content.

### **2.3.5 ELECTRONIC NOTE-TAKING**

Many reporters use electronic equipment as part of their note-taking. Some use recorders instead of notebooks, believing it to be a better way of ensuring accuracy in their reporting. It needs to be made clear at all times that such electronic note-taking is for research and not for broadcast. If you find you have stumbled upon a significant newsworthy clip that is clearly in the public interest to broadcast or publish you will need to discuss this with senior editors and apply the public interest test.

### **2.3.6 DOOR-STEPPING**

Sometimes a reporter must be persistent in order to secure an interview. Is it really necessary? What purpose does it serve? What information is likely to be gathered that is not available through other, more conventional, channels.

A journalist has a duty to continue to question their own motives and the value of what they are doing. The general public can expect a certain amount of protection from door-stepping, however, public figures, particularly politicians, fall into a different category. They expect questions being thrown at them without prior arrangement and should expect the answers to be published.

If you are convinced the story you are chasing is in the public interest, you might want to door-step because the person involved has failed to respond to repeated interview requests, but don't forget, they have a right to refuse. You also have the right to tell the public that this person refused an interview.

**2.3.7 TAG-ALONG SCENARIO**

A tag-along scenario is when a journalist accompanies officials carrying out their work in order to cover a story that is in the public interest. This could include going along as an observer with police, customs, immigration or environmental health officers or other public authorities on operational duties.

But you have to be absolutely certain that there is a clear public interest, because this touches on many issues such as privacy, consent and trespass.

If you do tag along in an official visit to a private property you must make it clear who you are reporting for and where the material will be used, seek consent from the occupier of the property being raided, and be prepared to leave immediately if consent is refused, unless it has been agreed with your senior editorial figures that there is a clear public interest in the event being covered.

**2.3.8 REPORTING SUFFERING AND DISTRESS**

The media's relationship with the public during times of suffering and distress is unpredictable. When a journalist visits the home of someone who has lost a loved one through criminal activity, an accident or a bombing, there are three types of reactions.

The first is when you knock at the door and nobody answers, although you can see lights on and hear voices. You know people are in and you know they don't want to be disturbed. However, you also know that your news editor is expecting an interview and a picture of the person who has died.

What do you do? Do you keep knocking until they answer, or give up and head back to the office, respecting their grief and their decision to hide from you? Your news editor will either be totally supportive or will give you a hard time for not getting the interview and picture. You could write a note and put it through the door telling them why you called and why you wanted to talk to them.

The second reaction is that they open the door and set the dogs on you or give you a mouthful of abuse. The third is that they invite you in, put the kettle on, make a cup of tea, show you all their family photographs and let you take some away.

You never know which reaction you will get. It is important that the reporter is sensitive to the suffering people are going through.

Intruding on private grief can hardly be in the public interest. However, here is the contradiction. The media often get criticised for covering grief, but people buy newspapers expecting to see pictures of those who have died through tragic circumstances.

We can't win, but we can be professional, consistent, and ensure that all we do is in the public interest.

### **2.3.9 GRAPHIC MATERIAL**

We always need to consider carefully the editorial justification for portraying graphic material of human suffering and distress. There are no circumstances in which it is justified to show executions, and very few circumstances in which it is justified to broadcast other scenes in which people are being killed. We should also avoid the gratuitous use of close-ups of faces and serious injuries or other violent material.

We must also be global in our news values. If we have editorial rules that state that we don't publish details of someone who has been killed until the family has been notified, then that rule has to be applied globally. Those in the West who apply such rules to domestic coverage need to ensure that they are consistent when dealing with tragedies in far-flung countries.

The family of a dead person - who can clearly be identified from still pictures or footage - but who is the victim of a killing thousands of miles away, are entitled to the same editorial standards we apply when the incident is on our doorstep.

The passage of time is an important factor when it comes to making judgements about the broadcasting of graphic material. In the immediate aftermath of an event the use of more graphic material is normally justified to provide a reasonable illustration of the full horror, although a good script is equally important in conveying the reality of tragedy.

However, as the story unfolds it may become more difficult to justify its continued use. When it comes to marking the anniversary of an event or when considering it in a contemporary historical context, it may again be editorially justified to re-use it.

We must not add to a person's suffering and grief. We should not put them under any pressure in order to obtain an interview. We must not harass them with repeated phone calls, emails, text messages or calls at their door, we must not ignore their pleas for us to leave, and we should not follow them if they are trying to avoid/escape us.

Graphic scenes of grief are unlikely to offend or distress those victims and relatives who consented to our recording them, but we need to remember that the images could upset or anger members of the audience. It helps if we set out the context for the images people are about to see in order to prepare them and to help prevent any misunderstandings.

### **2.3.10 FUNERALS**

Funerals, except in the case of public figures, are usually considered a private affair. We should not attend without the consent of the family. Even in the case of people in the public eye, such as politicians, entertainers and sports personalities, we should also respect a family's wish to have a private funeral. In such cases there is usually a public event to which the media are invited and often a private event for family only.

### **2.3.11 REVISITING PAST EVENTS**

Responsible media organisations will frequently return to past events in order to put current events in context. As a result, news producers need to ensure they do all they can to minimise any possible distress to the surviving victims and relatives.

This is particularly important when covering suffering and trauma. This also applies even when material being published or broadcast was previously in the public domain. Where possible, surviving victims or the immediate families of the dead people who are to feature in the programme should be notified in advance.

### **2.3.12 LIBRARY MATERIAL**

All news organisations use library material in news coverage. This will include the reuse of scenes of suffering, distress and trauma. We have a duty to ensure that the repeated use of such material, particularly where it features people who can be identified and are still alive, is editorially justified.

We should never use such material to illustrate a general theme. At all times we must be sensitive to the impact such material is likely to have on those who suffered the first time round.

### **2.3.13 MISSING PEOPLE**

The media are often called on to help trace people by broadcasting details of missing people which has been provided by relatives and friends.

We must not give over our journalism to the control of others. It could be that information the family is keen to release could be embarrassing and distressing. It could be that the information is infringing the missing person's privacy.

We must always take editorial responsibility and consider whether the missing person would want the information published if they are found. We should also respect the fact that not every missing person wishes to be found.

### **2.3.14 PERSONAL INFORMATION**

A journalist has a responsibility to be totally open and transparent with people about how they intend to use their personal information. This includes details such as telephone numbers and email addresses. We must never pass these on for others to use without obtaining the owner's consent.

#### **RIGHT TO PRIVACY**

The press shall not intrude or invade the privacy of an individual unless outweighed by genuine overriding public interest, not being a prurient or morbid curiosity. So, however, that once a matter becomes a matter of public record, the right to privacy no longer subsists and it becomes a legitimate subject for comment by press and media among others. Explanation: Things concerning a person's home, family, religion, health, sexuality, personal life and private affairs are covered by the concept of privacy excepting where any of these impinges upon the public or public interest.

Caution against identification: While reporting crime involving rape, abduction or kidnap of women / females or sexual assault on children, or raising doubts and questions touching the chastity, personal character and privacy of women, the names, photographs of the victims or other particulars leading to their identity shall not be published.

Minor children and infants who are the offspring of sexual abuse or 'forcible marriage' or illicit sexual union shall not be identified or photographed.

**(THE PRESS COUNCIL OF INDIA'S NORMS OF JOURNALISTIC CONDUCT)**

## **2.4 STING JOURNALISM**

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Sting Journalism is investigative journalism that uses deceptive journalistic investigation operation designed to catch a person committing a crime. It intends to make a secret recording they have to be able to justify the decision on the grounds of there being a clear public interest.

It is sometimes justified if it is likely to gather evidence or behavior that the audience would otherwise not see and hear. Justifications for secret recordings could include:

- ◆ Where there is evidence that there is an intention to commit an offence.
- ◆ Where an open approach would be unlikely to succeed.
- ◆ Gathering evidence.
- ◆ Consumer, social or scientific research in the public interest.

In all cases, the material gathered should be a fair and accurate representation of what has happened. There is also an obligation on the journalist to seek retrospective consent and, in some cases, obscure some identities.

Secret recording could include:

- ◆ the use of hidden cameras and microphones
- ◆ long-range audio-video equipment
- ◆ small video cameras
- ◆ the use of drone cameras
- ◆ mobile phone cameras
- ◆ concealed radio microphones
- ◆ phone calls
- ◆ continuing to record after the interview is over.

If you are intending to carry out secret recording, make sure that your line manager has approved it. Your news organisation will have a procedure. Ensure that you comply. It will probably involve:

- ◆ senior editorial approval and signed document.
- ◆ a clear declaration as to why the action is in the public interest.
- ◆ a statement as to how the material is to be used.
- ◆ an accurate log of what has taken place.
- ◆ a certificate or licence if legally required.
- ◆ a log of what is to be broadcast and what will not be broadcast.
- ◆ an honest declaration of any deception that was required to gather the material.

That final point is extremely important. Journalists are increasingly coming under pressure not to use editing or newsgathering techniques that could be seen as misleading.

If you intend to use any material gathered secretly in the future - such a review of the year or referring to a story when following up the item - you will probably have to revisit the whole process, but legal advice will need to be taken.

You will need to be certain all you propose to do is in the public interest, particularly in:

- ◆ a private place where the public does not have access,
- ◆ where people are receiving medical treatment,
- ◆ in cases of grief and extreme stress.

It is never justified to go on so-called fishing expeditions where secret recording is carried out on private property in search of crime or anti-social behaviour.

Similarly, you should never leave recording equipment on private property with the intention of gaining evidence of serious crime unless you have first obtained senior editorial sign off and can justify your actions in terms of public interest.

## **2.5 YELLOW JOURNALISM**

The last decade of the 19th century is one of the special significance in the growth of the press because it was the beginning of new kind of Journalism. Yellow Journalism was one of the most dramatic episodes in the development of press. Within this competitive context, brutal struggles for additional readers developed between the leaders of giant rival papers. They would fight by any means available to expand their circulation figures, which of course the key to increased advertisement revenue and profits. Various features, devices, gimmicks, styles, and experiments were tried by each side to make its paper more appealing to the mass of readers.

Newspaper Today Contain many of the devices that were actually products of the rivalries of the 1890s (one of these was color comics: an early comic character was called the Yellow Kidd from which Yellow Journalism is said to derive its name.) Yellow Journalism is a muted division of Journalism that goes against the key

**YELLOW JOURNALISM:**  
The term was coined in the mid-1890s to characterize the sensational journalism that used some yellow ink in the circulation war between Joseph Pulitzer's New York World and William Randolph Hearst's New York Journal.

principles of reporting as unbiased and objective tools for conveying the news. Yellow Journalism is “journalism that exploits, distorts or exaggerates the news to create sensation and attracts readers.” Yellow journalism believes in gross misreporting and under reporting of facts in playing up news that is likely to create a frenzy, stringing an emotional chord with the masses, feeding the appetite for the sensationalism, scandalizing and exciting public opinion.

The Battle on Park Row, New York, between Willam Randolph Hearst’s Journal and Joseph Pulitzer World n the late of nineteenth century, marked the advent of Yellow Journalism.

India has increasing fallen prey to this contagion and stands today under its heavy and gaudy canvas. Newspaper and television media, in an attempt to boost circulation and enhance viewership, have restored to do such devil practice with a tactics of Journalism. Distinguished and renowned media people, writers, correspondents and editors have

routed to garish and often lewd news items with each channel in a rush to 'breaking news' news or catch an exclusive far too be taken seriously. Where as controversy are usual course and die a natural death: but in this case it is dredged up and twisted to keep animate and breathing.

The average Indians will identify the symptoms of this yellow journalism with ease. On the other level the foul play is visual. Large fonts, dramatic colours, irrelevant and theatrical photography are used in an attempt to embellish the most trivial news. As the same time the language used for the bold headline or news flashes is inflaming and exaggerated, forcing the readers or viewer to halt abruptly and take notice. The media often plays along with the rumor mill not bothering to verify, faking quotes and printing bogus interviews.

Newspaper, not to be left behind, have played just as a strong role. What was a need to blow the Sarukh-Salman-katrina fiasco, or the Mallika and Minissha lamba or for that matter, the Sourav Ganguly-Gerg Chappell controversy to humongous proportion, when matter of far more relevance to the average Indian were grappling for attention?

The media in India, in a number of ways, exists a degrading inferior version of itself, compromised in its ethics, stirring panic and grappling for attention in ways that have been outgrown long ago. India as a newly born country needs pure unbiased news of relevance. As all infants, Young India can't always be expected to tell the difference between what it needs to know and what it wants to know. One would expect the experienced media moguls to be in better place to decide upon what news deserves notice and what can be thwarted. But, perhaps this discretion blurrier than anticipated. India needs facts, not biased opinions. Our media needs not to stand big and looming, but instead, to mature and grow.

In India some of the Hindi news channels are involved in practice of yellow journalism. No one can beat them in the absurdity of the news that they breaks. These channels are creating history by spreading such baseless rhetoric. They give utterly sensational words to simple stories (for example, when Amitav Bachan got well after an illness - they reported it as his rebirth!). They can scandalize just about anything (a cat was

stranded on a terrace and they made half-an-hour story out of it). They take the viewers for granted and serve just about anything to them in the name of news.

The management of those TV channels are aware of their public image. They know that people refer to the channel as the one with stupid breaking news. But still they are unwaveringly continuing with their strategy of sensationalism. Why? Simply because they are doing business and they do have a viewership. They are targeting a niche market of people who want to have sensational news and have little or no interest in important news.

The tone of the news anchors is hilarious! The news anchors speak in a fashion as though they are trying to sell the news from a roadside. They look more like nautanki artists than professional news anchors!

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## **2.6 PAID NEWS**

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Paid news or paid content are those articles in newspapers, magazines and the electronic media, which indicate favorable conditions for the institution that has paid for it. The news is much like an advertisement but without the ad tag. This kind of news has been considered a serious malpractice since it deceives the citizens, not letting them know that the news is, in fact, an advertisement. Secondly, the payment modes usually violate tax laws and election spending laws. More seriously, it has raised electoral concerns because the media has a direct influence on voters.

Paid news is a phenomenon in Indian media, which refers to the systematic engagement of mainstream media outlets in publishing favorable articles in exchange for payment. This type of news is typically sponsored by politicians, businessmen, and celebrities in order to improve their public image or accomplish political goals.

It seems the Election Commission of India is the only body in the country that is seriously trying to combat the pernicious practice of "paid news". If other organizations, including organizations that claim to represent the interests of journalists and other media professionals, played a more proactive role in curbing this corrupt practice, the phenomenon of masquerading advertisements as news could be curtailed to some extent. This is unfortunately not happening at a significant pace.

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## 2.7 MEDIANET & PRIVATE TREATIES

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In 2003, leading newspaper of India the Times of India group set up a company called Medianet. This company offered space in the form of advertorials in the Times of India's supplements for a price. The Supplements are sold and distributed with the main paper and called Delhi Times or Bombay Times or after the name of the city where the edition is published. Anyone can have visual or textual coverage in these supplements for a price. It offered to send journalists to cover product launches or celebrity events for a fee and came out with a tariff for different types of coverage. The advertorial content published is written by staff reporters. Celebrities, Politicians and Companies use such service extensively to promote their reputation. News that was published in such a manner was suspect because of the fawning manner in which events/persons were described while the reports gave an impression of being objective and fair. The byline of the journalist was stated upfront. . Such practices are not only limited to the Times of India. Several other Indian newspapers are also following such practice, though not organized like ToI.

The Medianet practice has received criticism from several quarters. People condemn that, such move make the news a commodity. In 2010, a sub-committee of Press Council of india reported that the practice and model of buying space introduced by Medianet has subsequently led to the edidemic of paid news during elections.

Besides Medianet, the Times of India (ToI) Group devised another “innovative” marketing strategy called ‘Private Treaties’ in 2015. Ten companies, including Videocon India and Kinetic Motors, allotted unknown amounts of equity shares to ToI’s Group also called Bennett Coleman & Co. Ltd (BCCL) as part of a deal to enable these firms to receive advertising space in ToI Group media. The success of the scheme turned BCCL into one of the largest private equity investors in India. At the end of 2007, the media company boasted of investments in 140 companies in aviation, media, retail and entertainment, among other sectors. Such practice has been adopted by other media organizations to maximize their earning. It involves deals where corporates pay media companies in shares for advertising, plus other, favourable treatment. The “Private Treaties” have also disturbed the Securities Exchange Board of India (SEBI) which, as early as July 2009, wrote to the Chairman of the Press Council of India, Justice G.N. Ray, that such strategies “may give rise to conflict of interest and may, therefore, result in dilution of the independence of the press vis-à-vis the nature and content of the news/editorials relating to such companies”. The SEBI pointed out that

‘private treaties’ may lead to commercialization of news reports since the same would be based on the subscription and advertising agreement entered into between the media group and the company?. Furthermore, biased and imbalanced reporting may lead to inaccurate perceptions of the companies which are the beneficiaries of such private treaties. SEBI “felt that such brand building strategies of media groups, without appropriate and adequate disclosures, may not be in the interest of investors and financial markets as the same would impede in them taking a fair and well-informed decision”.

The Practice of ‘Medianet’ and ‘Private Treaties’ are another form of paid news and raise serious concerns about the independence and the credibility of editorial practices. The integrity of news was compromised in both the cases. Such practices militate against the rights of people to be informed accurately and truthfully.



**Check Your Progress:**

2.1 Why media step back to report private information?

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2.2 When yellow journalism was more popular?

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2.3 What do you mean by paid news?

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## **UNIT – III: EMERGING MEDIA AND MAINSTREAM MEDIA**

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### **3.0 UNIT STRUCTURE**

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- 3.1 Learning Objective
  - 3.2 Introduction
  - 3.3 Evolution and purpose of codes of journalism
  - 3.4 The Press Council of India's norms of journalistic conduct
  - 3.5 Self-regulation
  - 3.6 Ombudsman
  - 3.7 Pros & Cons of Media Activism
  - 3.8 Check Your Progress
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### **3.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVE**

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This unit covers topics on professional code and ethical practices in journalism. By end of this unit Students will have understanding about:

- Code of Conduct practiced by Professional Journalists
  - Control mechanism in journalism
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### **3.2 INTRODUCTION**

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Every profession functions by certain norms of conduct evolved by years of practice with objective to improve its standards prevent its abuse and above all contribute to the society and social development. Journalism requires a high degree of public trust. To earn and maintain this trust, it is morally imperative for every journalist and every news medium to observe the highest professional and ethical standards. These standards or known as professional code of ethics in journalism. The The principles of Journalistic codes of ethics guides the journalists in difficult situations. It serves as a companion of the practicing journalist provides ethical guidelines by which practitioners can judge and be judged.

Adoption of a code of ethics by a news medium helps to safeguard the public trust given to journalists. Professional media, including print and online newspapers as well

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as broadcasters, commonly adopt codes of ethics and other policy guidelines to govern their journalistic pursuits. Such codes give uniformity to the newsgathering process and serve to remind all staff members that they operate under standards of honesty and performance.

Various organisations have set their own code of conduct for journalism. Some media organisations have their own code of conduct for their reporters. In this unit let's discuss the commonly practiced code of conduct in journalism.

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### **3.1 EVOLUTION AND PURPOSE OF CODES OF JOURNALISM**

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The principles of Journalistic codes of ethics are designed as guides through numerous difficulties, such as conflicts of interest, to assist journalists in dealing with ethical dilemmas. The codes and canons provide journalists a framework for self-monitoring and self-correction.

#### **CODES OF PRACTICE**

While journalists in the United States and European countries have led in formulation and adoption of these standards, such codes can be found in news reporting organizations in most countries with freedom of the press. The written codes and practical standards vary somewhat from country to country and organization to organization, but there is a substantial overlap among mainstream publications and societies. The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) launched a global Ethical Journalism Initiative in 2008 aimed at strengthening awareness of these issues within professional bodies. In 2013 the Ethical Journalism Network was founded by former IFJ General Secretary Aidan White. This coalition of international and regional media associations and journalism support groups campaign for ethics, good governance and self-regulation across all platforms of media.

One of the leading voices in the U.S. on the subject of Journalistic Standards and Ethics is the Society of Professional Journalists.



The Preamble to its Code of Ethics states:

*...public enlightenment is the forerunner of justice and the foundation of democracy. The duty of the journalist is to further those ends by seeking truth and providing a fair and comprehensive account of events and issues. Conscientious journalists from all media and specialties strive to serve the public with thoroughness and honesty. Professional integrity is the cornerstone of a journalist's credibility.*

The Radio Television Digital News Association (RTDNA), an organization exclusively centered on electronic journalism, maintains a code of ethics centering on—public trust, truthfulness, fairness, integrity, independence and accountability

*“Professional electronic journalists should present the news with integrity and decency, avoiding real or perceived conflicts of interest, and respect the dignity and intelligence of the audience as well as the subjects of news.”*

The RTDNA Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct specifically cites the need for avoiding conflicts of interest, whether real or perceived. The act of reporting and presenting the news often puts journalists in the position of working very closely with sources. This is where conflicts of interest can occur. Electronic journalists have an obligation to carry out their jobs—and their private lives—with no real or apparent conflicts of interest.

RTDNA strongly encourages journalists to ask the following questions when covering stories or beats that may produce real or perceived conflicts of interest.

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### **3.4 THE PRESS COUNCIL OF INDIA'S NORMS OF JOURNALISTIC CONDUCT**

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The Press Council of India, in keeping with its mandate to build up a code of conduct for newspapers, news agencies and journalists in accordance with high professional standards, has on the basis of its adjudications of cases from time to time, built up a code of journalistic norms. Though these codes have emerged out of cases relating to print media, the fundamental principles evolved in the process are as much relevant to radio and television journalism.

the forward section of this Norms for Journalistic Conduct says:

Ignorance and an inborn antipathy to any external pressure on one's inclination to do, speak and write that which one pleases, are often responsible for a blind resistance to any law, custom, tradition or norms. It is forgotten that some discipline and standard are necessary for a healthy and decent life, and they promote rather than thwart, the creative urges of the individual. A distinction has to be made between those restraints which inhibit wholesome potentialities and those which encourage them. Freedom and creativity gain their content only in a society. Unless, life in a society is conducive to the growth of the personality of the individual, the *raison d'etre* of an organised living will be defeated.

Human beings being what they are, liberty frequently degenerates into licence and creativity into perversity; and the society itself becomes a cesspool of corrupt practices and pursuits. Tempering checks and constructive directions are necessary to preserve and promote decent values, robust creativity and healthy growth.

All customs and traditions, norms, mores and laws are born precisely to achieve this object. To the extent they promote that objective, they fulfil the purpose. The greatest single factor responsible for the human progress so far, is word. The invention of the word and communication through it, though only orally first, paved the way for human advancement.

The invention of the script and then of print took the graph of human achievement to new heights in a geometrically ascending scale. Today mankind finds itself amidst information explosion too fast to keep pace with and too difficult to assimilate, thanks to the mind-boggling progress in science and technology.

But the unbounded progress in the material sphere and in particular in the means of communication, itself warns us, that unless proper precautions are taken to control the method and the manner of the use of the word - spoken or written, typed, printed or copied, human society will be swept of its feet.

More wide-ranging and penetrating the sweep of the word, more the need to regulate its use, in the interest, of the peace, unity, fraternity and co-operation among the members of the society. All countries have therefore, throughout the ages tried to regulate the

expression of the word, whatever the nature of the political regime, dictatorial or democratic.

The degree and the extent of the regulation have varied with times, and political, social, religious cultural climes; but the need for restriction of some kind or the other has been felt by all, all the time. Our constitution gives to every citizen the fundamental right of the freedom of speech and expression under Article 19 (1) (a) and at the same time makes its use subject to the restrictions mentioned clause (2) thereof.

The guarantee of the fundamental right does prevent the state from making any law, in so far as such law imposes reasonable restrictions on the exercise of the right, in the interest of the sovereignty and integrity of the state, the security of the state, friendly relations with foreign states, public order, decency and morality and in relation to the contempt of court, defamation or incitement to an offence.

The Press Council of India has been established with the objects of preserving the freedom of the press and of maintaining and improving the standards of newspapers and news agencies in the country. It is to further these objects, that the council is required among other things, to help newspapers and news agencies to maintain independence; to build up a code of conduct for newspapers agencies and journalists in accordance with high professional standards to ensure on their part the maintenance of high standards of public taste and to foster a due sense of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and to foster the growth of a sense of responsibility and public service among all those engaged in the profession of journalism.

To discharge these functions entrusted to it, the council has to frame a code of ethics for those engaged in journalism and to enforce it. The council over the years has built up a code of ethics covering aspects of journalism which came to the fore from time to time and which needed to be dealt with at its end, keeping in mind the objects with which it has been established and the role it is expected to perform.

Since its last publication, there have been some additions to the ethical code on important aspects such as financial journalism and pre-poll and exit poll surveys. The council decided to publish and update code and the result is the present publication. This publication has been designed to be a trim and at the same time a comprehensive treatment on the subject.

Besides the ethics, the publication also contains references to the provisions of the constitution and of the various statute laws which have a bearing on the print media. It is hoped that it will be found useful by all concerned. The council hopes to publish its translation in regional languages in due course, for the council is of the view that the education in the code of ethics of journalists connected particularly with the small and regional language newspapers is very necessary if the code is to be effective.

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### **3.5 SELF-REGULATION**

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In addition to codes of ethics, many news organizations maintain an in-house Ombudsman whose role is, in part, to keep news organizations honest and accountable to the public. The ombudsman is intended to mediate in conflicts stemming from internal and or external pressures, to maintain accountability to the public for news reported, and to foster self-criticism and to encourage adherence to both codified and uncoded ethics and standards. This position may be the same or similar to the public editor, though public editors also act as a liaison with readers and do not generally become members of the Organisation of News Ombudsmen.

Newspaper used to follow some common elements to regulate it.

#### **3.5.1 ACCURACY AND STANDARDS FOR FACTUAL REPORTING**

- ◆ Reporters are expected to be as accurate as possible given the time allotted to story preparation and the space available, and to seek reliable sources.
- ◆ Events with a single eyewitness are reported with attribution. Events with two or more independent eyewitnesses may be reported as fact. Controversial facts are reported with attribution.
- ◆ Independent fact-checking by another employee of the publisher is desirable.
- ◆ Corrections are published when errors are discovered.
- ◆ Defendants at trial are treated only as having "allegedly" committed crimes, until conviction, when their crimes are generally reported as fact (unless, that is, there is serious controversy about wrongful conviction).
- ◆ Opinion surveys and statistical information deserve special treatment to communicate in precise terms any conclusions, to contextualize the results,

and to specify accuracy, including estimated error and methodological criticism or flaws.

### **3.5.2 SLANDER AND LIBEL CONSIDERATIONS**

- ◆ Reporting the truth is almost never libel, which makes accuracy very important.
- ◆ Private persons have privacy rights that must be balanced against the public interest in reporting information about them. Public figures have fewer privacy rights in U.S. law, where reporters are immune from a civil case if they have reported without malice. In Canada, there is no such immunity; reports on public figures must be backed by facts.
- ◆ Publishers vigorously defend libel lawsuits filed against their reporters, usually covered by libel insurance.

### **3.5.3 HARM LIMITATION PRINCIPLE**

During the normal course of an assignment a reporter might go about—gathering facts and details, conducting interviews, doing research, background checks, taking photos, video taping, recording sound—harm limitation deals with the questions of whether everything learned should be reported and, if so, how. This principle of limitation means that some weight needs to be given to the negative consequences of full disclosure, creating a practical and ethical dilemma. The Society of Professional Journalists' code of ethics offers the following advice, which is representative of the practical ideals of most professional journalists. Quoting directly:

- ◆ Show compassion for those who may be affected adversely by news coverage. Use special sensitivity when dealing with children and inexperienced sources or subjects.
- ◆ Be sensitive when seeking or using interviews or photographs of those affected by tragedy or grief.
- ◆ Recognize that gathering and reporting information may cause harm or discomfort. Pursuit of the news is not a license for arrogance.
- ◆ Recognize that private people have a greater right to control information about themselves than do public officials and others who seek power, influence or

attention. Only an overriding public need can justify intrusion into anyone's privacy.

- ◆ Show good taste. Avoid pandering to lurid curiosity.
- ◆ Be cautious about identifying juvenile suspects or victims of sex crimes.
- ◆ Be judicious about naming criminal suspects before the formal filing of charges.
- ◆ Balance a criminal suspect's fair trial rights with the public's right to be informed.

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### **3.6 OMBUDSMAN**

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An ombudsman is someone who handles complaints and attempts to find mutually satisfactory solutions. Ombudsmen can be found in government, corporations, hospitals, universities and other institutions. The first ombudsman was appointed in 1809 in Sweden to handle citizens' complaints about the government.

A news ombudsman, also known under other labels as readers' advocate, public editor, and reader representative, receives and investigates complaints from newspaper readers or listeners or viewers of radio and television stations about accuracy, fairness, balance and good taste in news coverage. If she/he finds them justified she/he brings them to the notice of the editors and reporters responsible for them for remedial actions. She/he recommends appropriate remedies or responses to correct or clarify news reports. Sometimes she/he writes a weekly column to clarify the readers' doubts, and if need be he can take liberties to criticise the newspaper for its transgressions.

- ◆ Responsible newspaper or broadcaster can be benefited by having an ombudsman because it helps
- ◆ To improve the quality of news reporting by monitoring accuracy, fairness and balance.
- ◆ To help his or her news provider to become more accessible and accountable to readers or audience members and, thus, to become more credible.
- ◆ To increase the awareness of its news professionals about the public's concerns.
- ◆ To save time for publishers and senior editors, or broadcasters and news directors, by channelling complaints and other inquiries to one responsible individual.

- ◆ To resolve some complaints that might otherwise be sent to attorneys and become costly lawsuits.

An news ombudsman monitors news and feature columns, photography and other graphic materials for fairness, accuracy and balance. They bring substandard items to the attention of the appropriate members of the news staff. They investigate and reply to comments and complaints concerning published or broadcast news and feature material. They obtain explanations from editors and other staff members for readers, viewers or listeners. Some supervise

*The Hindu is the first newspaper in the history of Indian journalism to appoint a news ombudsman — an independent, full-time, empowered professional, known as the Readers' Editor (RE), with a clearly defined daily role in the newspaper and transparent terms of reference. And this happened in 2006, when the newspaper was 127 years old.*

*The inspiration had come from the exemplary practice and experience of The Guardian, whose pioneering RE, Ian Mayes, had set the bar high.*

the preparation of corrections. Others write internal newsletters about readers' views and complaints. Many news ombudsmen write regular columns that deal with issues of broad public interest, or with specific grievances. Where appropriate, columns may criticize, explain or praise. Other ombudsmen initiate or coordinate public forums or reader advisory boards in an effort to connect more closely with readers. Many speak before various public and private groups to help explain media practices. Some send accuracy questionnaires to persons whose names have appeared in news stories and ask for comments. In some smaller news organizations ombudsmen find it necessary to assume other news related duties. But in any event, news ombudsmen generally function in an advisory capacity only, not as disciplinarians.

An ombudsman helps to explain the newsgathering process to the public, a process that often is mysterious and, therefore, suspect to many readers.

Having a contact person can help overcome the belief that news media are aloof, arrogant or insensitive to concerns of the public and generally inaccessible to average citizens.

An ombudsman's column provides still another useful forum for readers, particularly in one newspaper cities.

## **3.7 PRONS & CONS OF MEDIA ACTIVISM**

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Media Activism is a broad category of activism that utilizes media and communication technologies for social and political movements. Methods of media activism include publishing news on websites, creating video and audio investigations, spreading information about protests, and organizing campaigns relating to media and communications policies.

Media activism can be used for many different purposes. It is often employed by grassroots activists and anarchists to spread information not available via mainstream media or to share censored news stories. Certain forms of politically motivated hacking and net-based campaigns are also considered media activism. Often, the focus of media activism is to change policies relating to media and communications.

### **3.7.1 FORMS OF MEDIA ACTIVISM**

Social media is often used as a form of media activism. Because of the interactive features and widespread adoption users can quickly disseminate information and rally supporters. Platforms like Facebook and Twitter can reach a much larger audience than traditional media. Although often only a small percentage of people who express interest in a cause online are willing to commit to offline action, social media interaction is viewed as "the first step in a ladder of engagement". "Social media has helped us organize without having leaders," "Our ideas, our demands are discussed on Facebook. There are no meetings, no rules".

Live streams applications or websites such as Live stream is an other media form which can replace TV when there is a kind of censorship. The protests in Istanbul can be an example of this way of broadcasting in terms of the lack of the objectivity of the actual media and the television. On the other hand, a lot of protestors used Whatsapp or Walkie-Talkie application with their smart phones in order to improve communication between protestors during the manifestations thanks to its quick and instantenious information share. Moreover, the usage of applications such as Whatsapp can increase the organisation of the protestors due to the group messages.

YouTube is another efficient tool of spreading information. It is generally used with other social media forms such as Facebook and Twitter. The most important example to the media activism through YouTube can be the video of Kony which reached to

one hundred million views in 6 days. Manifesting by using videos allows protesters to reach the whole world easier than just publishing in a local language.

Culture jamming, another form of media activism, is a subversive strategy of protest that re-appropriates the tropes of mainstream media "in order to take advantage of the resources and venues they afford".

Media activism has expanded its scope to include fields of study such as journalism and news media. Media activism additionally educates the audience to be producers of their own media. Media activism to be expanded to facilitate action through media production and involvement.



### **Check Your Progress:**

3.1 What is the purpose of journalism code?

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3.2 In India what states on behalf of ombudsmen?

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3.3 Write different form of media activism.

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**FURTHER READINGS**

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**ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS****Unit I****Answer to Question no 1.1**

Journalist deals with how news should be received from various sources and reported. Ethics are the moral principles involved in news reporting and coverage. A journalist needs to have certain moral principles to be followed in

his/her profession which could be termed 'professional ethics'. Ethics could not be forced on any one but each professional carry a 'Code of Conduct' to be seen as rules of practice. Journalism or Newspapers in India have formulated their own code of ethics for their employees.

**Answer to Question no1.2**

Newspaper which comes on a daily basis are trust worthy because of the journalist who brings the report and write it in a true and fair way to catch hold the readers attraction. The objective of a Newspaper and Journalist is to provide justice to society from right information and right time. So the readers have lot of faith on Newspaper.

**Answer to Question no 1.3**

In an era of great and growing dissatisfaction with the media, it is imperative that journalists avoid conflicts of interest. Journalists are offered with hospitality in hotel, free air ticket, gifts in different accusation, and donations from different business houses and political parties. Journalists have to face in such type of conflict of interest to cover stories. But they have to avoid from such type of conflict of interest on behalf of public interest.

**Answer to Question no 1.4**

Everyday a reporter has to file a story and which goes to the table of an editor which may be dealing with much information to publish or not to publish. From highly sensitive issues of national and international such as the public's right to know, potential threats, reprisals and intimidations of all kinds, personal integrity, conflicts between editors, reporters and publishers or management, and many other such challenges. This situation is known as ethical dilemma. Foreign

newspaper dealt with extremely difficult ethical dilemmas faced by journalists, despite of government intervention.

## **Unit II**

### **Answer to Question no 2.1**

Media people step back while reporting about the private life of any person. Right to privacy is violated when information about their private lives is reported in the press. Journalists face a difficult balancing act. The most important rule is that we must treat people fairly and with respect. We must also be clear about our own motives. We must have no personal interest in an investigation that invades a person's privacy. The only justification is that it is in the public interest and we are genuinely trying to expose wrongdoing.

### **Answer to Question no 2.2**

The last decade of the 19th century Yellow Journalism was more popular. Yellow Journalism was one of the most dramatic episodes in the development of press. Within this competitive context, brutal struggles for additional readers developed between the leaders of giant rival papers. They would fight by any means available to expand their circulation figures, which of course the key to increased advertisement revenue and profits.

### **Answer to Question no 2.3**

Paid news are those articles in newspapers, magazines and the electronic media, which indicate favorable conditions for the institution that has paid for it. The news is as like as an advertisement but without the ad tag. This kind of news has been considered a serious malpractice since it deceives the citizens, not

letting them know that the news is, in fact, an advertisement. Secondly, the payment modes usually violate tax laws and election spending laws. More seriously, it has raised electoral concerns because the media has a direct influence on voters.

## **Unit III**

### **Answer to Question no 3.1**

The purpose of Journalistic codes of ethics is designed as guidelines for the journalist to face number of difficulties, such as conflicts of interests, to assist journalists in dealing with ethical dilemmas. The codes and canons provide journalists a framework for self-monitoring and self-regulation.

### **Answer to Question no 3.2**

In India the Lok Ayukts states on behalf of ombudsmen. The typical duties of an ombudsman or Lok Ayukts are to investigate complaints and attempt to resolve them, usually through recommendations (binding or not) or mediation. Ombudsmen sometimes also aim to identify systematic issues leading to poor service or breaches of people's rights.

### **Answer to Question no 3.3**

Social media is often used as a form of media activism. Because of the interactive features and widespread adoption users can quickly disseminate information and rally supporters. Platforms in online media like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Whatsaap are more viable to reach a much larger audience than traditional media.

## MODEL QUESTIONS

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### A. Very Short Questions

Q1: What is content aggregator?

Q2: Define Digital Technology.

Q3: What is virtual world?

Q4: What is mainstream media?

Q5: Define crowd sourcing.

### B. Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q1: Define Emerging Media?

Q2: Discuss the interactivity nature of emerging media?

Q3: What is customisation and personalisation of emerging media?

Q4: How emerging media disseminates information faster and flexible way?

### C. Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-600 words)

Q1: Discuss various types of emerging media.

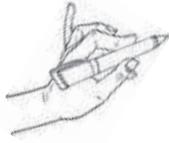
Q2: What are the characteristics of Emerging Media?

Q3: Discuss relationship between mainstream media and emerging media?

Q4: What are the benefits of using emerging media for a journalist?



Comments



**Comments**



A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for writing comments. The box is mostly empty, with only the small sketch of a hand holding a pen at the top left corner.



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