

Role of Ethics in Print Media

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Abstract: This article explores the concept of media ethics in special reference to Indian news media. In India news from print media is a traditional source. But due to advancement in technology, print media to cope up with other media like broadcast media facing many challenges and going for several malpractices. This article discusses the role of media in following ethics, unethical media practices, problems faced by media to follow ethics and the reasons for paid news and treaties. The article draws conclusion on the future of media ethics in context with Indian news media.

Keywords: Ethics in media, unethical practices, paid news, Corruption.

JEL Codes: F-21, E-22, O-24,

1. INTRODUCTION:

Media without which it is difficult to lead a civilized life on earth have played and is playing a significant role in man's life. On a whole, it acts as a mirror of the society. It acts as a disseminator of information and a channel of communication between people and the government. Media educates people by providing wealth of information related to socio- cultural and politico- economic aspects of the society.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

- **News Media and Ethics- Ellen Goodman:** In this article, role of media in delivering news to the public, important characteristics of reliable journalism and effects of bias in news presentations is discussed.
- **Media Ethics: Different Perspectives- Nahida Begum N (2014):** This article comprises of role of media as 'the fourth estate of the government', 'Press ethics' and role of 'Press Council of India' in regulating media.
- **Media today: Bias & Lack of ethics- The Hans India (2018):** The article provides ethical acts of media and perspectives of people.
- **New media - Ethical issues- M.Nadraljanski:** This article examines the problems in the field of media ethics and determines the influence of media on behavior.
- **Freedom of the press and journalistic ethics - Markandey katju (2011):** The article discusses the media's role in past and the present.
- **Five Ethical problems that plague Indian Journalism- Narayan (2015):** In this article, the most common ethical problems with Indian media are discussed with relevant examples.
- **Indian Media - Untrusted Institution - Ambrish Gohil (2017):** The article discloses the unethical media practices taking place in India.
- **Ethics of Magazine on Photo manipulation - Holbrook Glenn (2017):** The article discusses whether photo manipulation in magazines is ethical or not and if ethical, to what extent.
- **India: Boom-time for media but with a growing ethical deficit – Panneerselvan:** The article shows the growth rate of media in India but also proves that the media is growing unethically.
- **Paid news, Treaties and the Indian Media: The cause is the Corporation - Marie Lou Fernandez (2010):** The article is written to study the reasons and cause for paid news and found it to be the Corporation's greed.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- To determine role of Ethical media
- To examine the ethical issues in Indian Media
- To disclose the unethical media practices following by Indian Media
- To study the cause for paid news and treaties

4. PRINT MEDIA: The print media is composed of newspapers, community news letters, magazines and other publications. Print media is one of the oldest forms of information distribution.

General ethics of Print media:

- Balance and impartiality

- Integrity and independence
- Reliability of sources
- Rumors (report the truth)
- Interpretation and translation
- Speed vs accuracy

Theorists often define ethics in terms of a set of principles of right, or moral conduct. Newspapers, broadcasters and journalists had started to become more responsible for journalism and thought they should be held accountable. Immediate news delivery has become the norm. But, journalists have several ethical obligations like:

- Present news stories that inform and serve the needs of citizens by putting the public interest above all else
- Present Issues fairly
- Present stories in a way that address their complexity
- Present diverse perspectives
- Monitor Government and Corporations

Though the print media has to follow these general ethics, all the new stories contain some bias because of the diversity of journalist's perspectives. Bias is now inherent. Independent editorial judgment is disappearing and bias becoming obvious character of the media. Using today's high digital technology, a journalist shapes reality and sells it as a product to users.

A global study warns that India's media boom will be worthless unless some debilitating issues are fixed. An international journalism watchdog identifies the problems with journalism in 18 countries, also lists the main scourges of the Indian media which are as follows:

- **Paid news:** Writing partially true stories of companies, persons and even institutions.
- **Opaque private treaties:** Providing equity for ad space by private treaties.
- **Blatant Blackmail:** Using the information collected on any company and using it in negative way like blackmailing the company and making money out of it.
- **Flawed measurement of audience reach and readership:** The report says the yardsticks to measure the reach and impact of the Indian media are dubious at best.
- **Repetition:** Media tend to show a single news by a different way and each time under the different show.
- **Baloney news:** The media houses figure out controversial topic or tragedies which just generate the interest of the public.
- **Too much focus on film stars and celebrities:** For many film stars, media become a promotional tool. Even a common man becoming a celebrity with too much focus on unnecessary issues.
- **Photo manipulation:** Transforming or altering a photograph by the editor using various methods and techniques to achieve desired results.
- **Plagiarism:** when a writer copies the work of another writer and uses it as his own work, it is said to be plagiarism.
- **Conflict of interest:** A reporter may publish articles in support of a party with whom he was a vested interest or against him if he has any hidden agenda.
- **Twisted or distorted news:** Presenting the stories in the news with unnecessary twists and additional mutilation. Most of these will be the fake news.

People are generally dissatisfied with the ethics in media and their specific contents thus attributing those 'errors' to people who work in the media, which forms the basis of their incompetence.

According to a report that has surfaced in the internet, the decline in the Indian media found to began in the 1980 when 'paid news' was invented.

This offered to send journalists for a price to cover commercial events and write about them in 'advertorials'. Very soon the genie became a monster. Journalists were incentivized against unbiased reportage, and towards the manufacturing of biased publicity. Editors were pressurized to forgo press ethics and chase profitability.

Revenues skyrocketed and the news corporations grew. This fuelled more greed and the news corporation then invented 'treaties'. Lacking access to the corporate funds of the country's commercial capital, they introduced 'paid news' to the political sphere. Publishers through their marketing departments, dictated revenue goals. Journalists approached competing political candidates offering coverage for a price.

Corruption is a common enough challenge to democratic governance all over the world.

5. FINDINGS:

- ❖ Immediate news delivery has become the norm.
- ❖ Bias is now inherent
- ❖ Major unethical practices of Indian media:
 1. Paid news
 2. Opaque private treaties
 3. Blatant news
 4. Baloney news
 5. Twisted or distorted news
 6. Repetition of same news
 7. Flawed measurement of readership
 8. Too much focus on film stars and Celebrities
 9. Photo manipulation
 10. Plagiarism
 11. Conflict of interest
- ❖ Reasons for these unethical practices are advertorials, to chase profitability and News Corporation's greed.
- ❖ Corruption is a common enough challenge to democratic governance all over the world.

6. CONCLUSION:

Ethical behavior of media and its responsibilities:

- ❖ Media ought to work for the information of public opinion.
- ❖ Media should throw light on issues.
- ❖ Media has to do something for the solution of issues by presenting the opinions of experts.
- ❖ Media ought to work for culture.
- ❖ Media should condemn criminal activities.

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