

# The Role of Media Ethics: A Philosophical Quest

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## Abstract

In today's scenario the role of media as such plays a vital role to reconstruct and rejuvenate the society, community, country, and nation. In short it can be said that media is the mouthpiece of present generation. The media, at large, is spreading ever across the globe by leaps and bounds. Media in haste become more pervasive and in turn gain more influence. However, the general perception of media in many areas of the world is of a decline as far as ethical standards are concerned. This, in turn, creates a gulf between public and private life. Media of different forms, such as, print media, television, etc., is biased, unfair, and inaccurate in the sense of violating the codes of conducts. This is where the relevance of ethics. Media must be accorded by ethical rules and principles because media as a business enterprise deals with public. It has a great role in bringing harmony and integrity of the society. Unfortunately, media in these days' work as an agent of the Government. When the Government of a country is corrupted and if media works at the hand of Government, it would bring a wrong signal to the society. Media must act with freedom and responsibility. The accountability of media cannot be set aside. Media is responsible to the society. The main strategy of my paper is to explore and examine with critical outlook the role and responsibility of media persons.

**Keywords:** *media ethics, society, community, freedom, responsibility.*

## Paper

Media is an *umbrella term* as it includes mass communication and media in general, print and electronic media – the press and broadcasting, book publishing, advertising and film. Media ethics is an area of study that passes through many academic disciplines, viz., media, journalism law, cultural studies, philosophy and applied ethics. Thus, it would be desirable that media practitioners may find it useful in guiding them through the ethical problems they meet in their work. Media without ethics is a gaffe to the society. Freedom of speech, the right to know, access, accountability, democracy, censorship, privacy, truth, honesty, accuracy, fairness, objectivity, confidentiality of sources and the values of professionalism of journalism are certainly all included. Therefore, it appears that the length or discourse of media ethics is enormous. It would therefore difficult to incorporate and examine all these areas. Therefore, special emphasize would be laid on the

ethical aspects of media. In this regard an attempt has been made to show the relevance of media ethics in present day scenario.

### **What then is the Role of Media?**

At present media plays a significant role. Media, in fact, acts as the mouthpiece of present generation. Media is an umbrella concept comprising various wings, such as, print media, television, broadcasting, theatre, the arts, internet etc. Media at large is being spread by leaps and bounds. Modern society is habituated with various media. Public opinions regarding various issues can be developed with the information arising out of media. From dawn to dusk men depend on media. The information arising out of media gets its relevance in every sphere of human life. Thus, the role and activity played by various wings of media bear a lot to the development of society, community and nation at large. Media with the blessing of science and technology bring the world at home. Even in the rural village, people with the help of media come to know what is happening around the world. Media help one to know everything about science, technology, agriculture, health, religion, culture, and what not. Simplistically, the role of media is colossal in contemporary era. Various wings of media institutions in the past knowingly or unknowingly were banned because of dirty politics played by political decision making body. Even at times, people are guessing that something is going wrong with a particular institution of media even though specific rules and guidelines are prevailing within media. Press trust of India is a case in point. When society is being corrupted; when politicians are primarily involved in fulfilling their vested interest for retaining or regaining votes; when dirty game is played just for seizing votes in favor of their own, when tendencies are persisting there to hide the truth, it would indeed be difficult for media institutions to work honestly. They have to fight for honesty and responsibility and respect the rules laid down in favor of them at any cost. Otherwise, they cannot work at the mouthpiece of common public.

Thus, the problem of media men is that they have to adjust and readjust within the various situations arising out of ins and outs. Media of various wings have to work for the betterment of society, community and the country at large. The world is global family and this is made possible because of media. Media helps at

large to know the cultural of other communities, to know about the development of knowledge, to know about the conflicts happening and the way out of such conflicts and what not. India is a multicultural country and the privilege that the people of India enjoy is the feeling of unity among diversity. Media always plays the prime role to retain harmony and integrity among the people of India having cultural diversity. The role of media must be constructive, but not be destructive. Media at large must act as a responsible institution so that it can bring accurate information before the people. This is where the relevance of ethics actually hinges on. Media men must be moral and ethical agents beforehand. Otherwise, it would be very hard for media men to maintain the sanctity and responsibility rested on them.

### **Key Ethical Concepts of Media:**

Truth, fairness and objectivity are three important concepts of media ethics. A media man must be fair otherwise he cannot make justice to the society as a professional man. The sanctity of any profession actually hinges on truth and fairness. Truth and fairness are related with objectivity. Objectivity is the hallmark of fairness. Media ethics deals with normative account of the actions performed by various men associated with media. When the action of a man is being evaluated from moral and ethical perspective, the man should be treated as a moral agent. The philosophical and ethical position of a moral agent paves the way to enjoy freedom of speech. In any situation whatsoever, the freedom of speech of a media man cannot be ignored. This would be an interesting account of this research proposal.

There is no question of doubt that a media man must be a responsible man. He should work on the face of social and national integrity. He must be a free man, but at the same time, he should be a responsible one as well. Many would say that freedom and responsibility in some sense or other contradictory in nature, but Kant tells the other way round. A bird is free to fly in the sky, but still he is responsible because at the end of the day he returns to the nest and brings basic requirements for his or her siblings. A man by virtue of a rational agent must be a responsible man and we understand freedom and responsibility as coherent concepts instead of incoherent concepts. Of course, media must be abided by rules and principles laid on in favor of it. But one cannot ignore that media must work under the shadow of

the government. Media as such has to cope- up with the government as well. In this process there arise conflicts in the form of agreement or disagreement. Having said this, media should not succumb to the government. Media at any cost must work to provide the best information to the public. Because the fate and progress of the country actually hinges on public opinion, but surely not based on the corrupt vision of the government if there be any. In normal cases, media always appreciates good governance because people at most like it. However, the conflict will arise, knowingly or unknowingly, when there is no good governance. Media must work out of freedom and responsibility with the anticipation that the government if it is corrupt must get a change to rectify it and in turn will work in favor of common people. Instead of this, if media is succumbed to the corrupt government as it seems at times, then it would be detriment to the media, the corrupt government and the common people of the country at large.

#### **Ethical Guidelines of Media:**

There are three different philosophical approaches of traditional ethics. Such as, virtue based ethics, rule-oriented ethics, and consequential ethics. A normal media man must have some virtues or clusters of properties for which he earned the job in media. These are inner qualities of a man without which nothing can be acquired. Thus, every media man must be a virtuous man beforehand. Then a media man must follow some stringent rules and principles laid on in favor of the institution he or she belongs to. He has to follow the rules. This is where the relevance of rule based ethics actually hinges on. The third and the most important one is the consequentialism. It states that an action would be good and acceptable if it will address the benefits of the 'greatest numbers of the people', (The greatest good of the greatest numbers). All practical or applied ethics function under the realm of consequentialism. Media ethics being a business organization belongs to development ethics where besides freedom and responsibility, individual prudence plays an important rule. A media man must be a prudent one. Thus, in a sense, a media man must work along with the proviso of prudent consequential outlook. Media appears as a mass communication with the contribution of which an integral society or community or global family can be built on the basis of tolerance, harmony and care.

Of course we are living at present living within a society which is primarily materialistic, individualistic, and subjectivist in nature where economy plays the all-important role. Thus, media has a big role to play in economic aspect as well. Besides, media is social as well. The social aspect is again significant. At present people are much concerned about social media. Everything is being spreader and shared within a few minutes all over in the globe. In fact, it would not be an exaggeration if we adhere to the view that social media is the backbone of present society. It creates a bond among individuals. It helps to make and extend relationship in every passing moment. The platforms of social media, such as, Facebook as well as the network devices give access of this platform. As a result of that “these platform became the new-cantered media forms that constitute the life-worlds of billions of people across the planet.”<sup>1</sup> Now media is thought to be an on-going process. It plays just like the process of social revolution. It is just like the process of transformation. Accordingly, it has to be copped with the rapid changes of our surroundings. One has to use to get by because historiography would intervene post-facto and rescue the process of revolutionary change from the ‘thickening shadows of time and give them narrative life, both philosophical as well as theoretical, to reflect upon and lessons from’. As a result of that, the histories of media are more obscure that ever. We notice transformative breakthroughs because of rapid technological revolutions in media. It seldom came along in the history of our species. Even they physically disappear like many remarkable and historical notable things. Rather they evolve as normative material things to shape economy, culture and society in ways ‘we feel but cannot see.’<sup>2</sup>

### **Why media matters to ethics?**

Media ethics is the sub-division of applied ethics dealing with the specific ethical principles and standards of media, including broadcasting media, film, theatre, the art, print media and the internet. There are various areas of media ethics, such as, ethics of journalism; ethics of entertainment media; media and democracy. Like the different areas of media ethics, there are different context of media ethics.

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<sup>1</sup> Hassen, R. and Thomas Southerland, *Philosophy of Media*, Rutledge, London and New York, 2017, p.1.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.2.

These are: media ethics and the law; media ethics and media economics; media ethics and public officials; inter-cultural dimensions of media ethics. Even though media ethics is a branch of applied ethics, but there is no boarder line of media ethics. From the context of present scenario media ethics plays a huge role in guiding the society. Media is the only medium through which people can express their views. People come to know what is going around the world. In fact, media brings the world at our home. The world of 21<sup>st</sup> century is a global village in the sense that what is happening far and remote is being disclosed or manifested through media. Thus, there is nothing wrong to assume that media is the part and parcel of human interaction.

Media is an inseparable part of daily life. Media is a matter of central concern for all citizens, whether media producers, consumers or hybrid producer consumers, and that therefore we must build within an inclusive framework of media ethics that can address the ethical concerns and ambitions of anyone involved in, or affected by, the media process. Such a broader framework for media ethics could contribute to the wider critique of 'mere' consumerism and to generating new models of pleasurable and empowered consumption, and the obligations it entails. But an immediate hindrance is that how media would be ethical? How we might build at least the foundations of such a framework from within the tradition of ethical thought that derives originally from the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC Greek philosopher, Aristotle. Moreover, since media unquestionably do help shape actions and worldviews on a global scale, we cannot exclude the global from our reflections. A media ethics must in scale and scope is a global media ethics, a cosmopolitan ethics having no boarders. If media ethics must from the state aspire to an application beyond boarder, it must take account of the lack of value consensus on a global scale. Therefore, a global media ethics cannot legislate such diversity and disagreement away. Instead, it should acknowledge such diversity, by starting from premises that are normatively minimal. A global media ethics thus requires a *pragmatic eclecticism* with which a mediated world confronts us.

There are many types of normative positions that people take up in relation to media. On one hand freedom of speech and expression is the main prerogative of media. The idea of man through the ages has expressed through several media

like symbols, signals, speech, script and print, and these days through computer language. There is no question of doubt that man's greatest invention is language. In fact the invention of the script has helped mankind immensely to preserve thought and learning. Indeed, it has helped society to conquer both space and time. Such information and ideas are so important in the context of human development and social development for growth and survival of a free and democratic society and such goal cannot be achieved unless every citizen has a fundamental right to give expression to his ideas or opinions. With the initiation of printing technology, freedom of press was included in the freedom of expression. Freedom of expression of the media never went unchallenged simply because it is the only root through which the voice of people is revealed. In this regard, we can remember the view of John Milton who, in fact, gave a solid reason in favour of the freedom of press. According to Milton, in a free and open encounter in public view between truth and falsehood the truth shall prevail. In his essay *On Liberty*, John Stuart Mill conceived that liberty was the right of the individual. He says, "If all mankind minus one were of the opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person than he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing mankind."<sup>3</sup>

One should not forget that media of any kind, whether broadcasting, printing, etc., are nothing but a business organization. As a business organization its main objective is to make profit like every other types of business organization. Otherwise, the question of their survivability comes into being. Every kind of media, whether it is print-media or broadcasting media, must gain popularity in order to survive with the competitive environment. Thus, a particular kind of media is survived within a strife competition with other media. However, most unfortunately, there we notice complains about media in terms of bias, inaccuracy, unfair treatment, invasion of privacy and so on. It has been objected by saying the biasness of media towards political parties is being prominent or pronounced in every passing day. Even in India if we compare regional paper and regional or local T.V. Channel, it appears to us that every paper in some sense or other functions in favor or disfavor of a particular political parties. Due to this biasness, the

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<sup>3</sup> John Stuart Mill. *On Liberty*, 1859, P.143

information they publish in every day has been biased and to some extent inaccurate. If we compare two T.V. Channels side by side regarding particular important political sensitive news, we can easily realise that the difference; the same actually happens in print media as well. In the developed countries where there is no corruption, economic and educational disparity, media in general function neutrally. However, in country like India, and other developing and under developing countries, we have a different picture. Even though there are strict controls and regulations on the press and broadcasters in India, but violation of these rules or bypassing of these rules is vivid and clear. We think in India political parties actually overhang the direction of the media for fulfilling their vested interest. As a matter of fact, regional papers are nothing but the playing dolls of the political parties. It is not only true in West Bengal; it is equally true in every other state in India. Thus, there is concern not only about media themselves, but also about the attitudes of the governments throughout the world to the *freedom and independence* of the media.

There is no question of doubt that when we talk about the relevance of media on public life from ethical perspective, the concepts of freedom and independence are vital. According to Kant the action of a moral agent cannot be treated from ethical perspective so long it has been assumed that the moral agent is free and independent from external factors. We think the concept of freedom is vital. Unfortunately, each and every government time and again exercises power and influence to curb the freedom of the media. Side by side media also takes the shelter of the politics for ensuring its survival. There is no question no doubt that media plays an all-important rule for the survival of any government. It has been proved time and again in India. Media is the only source on the basis of which people of the country come to know the performance of the government. If the media perform its action by following the rules and regulations as given to them by *The Press Trust of India*, then it would be august for the country as a whole. However, the ground reality is different. Most of the media organizations are politically biased and they broadcast everything under the shelter of a particular political party. This is a threat, a real danger of media where the relevance of ethics actually comes into fro. History tells us that wars, civil unrest, terrorism have all

given government excuses to curb the freedom for the media and even in many cases justify expurgation in the name of national security and integrity. Considering the immensely responsibility of the media in general, the need for reaffirming and upholding ethical principles in mass communication seems paramount importance.

### **Freedom of Speech of Media:**

The most important that needs to be taken care of is the *freedom of speech* of the media or press. If media has no freedom of speech to act according its own code, then there would be a serious problem in media. Therefore, the first and foremost issue of media ethics is to ensure the freedom of speech. Here we quote Rajiv Gandhi who once remarked, “*Freedom of the press is an article of faith with us, sanctified by our constitution, validated by four decades of freedom and indispensable to our future as a nation*”.

While talking about freedom of speech of media, we <sup>4</sup>can mention the remark of Milton. Milton says, “Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties.”<sup>5</sup> There is no question of doubt that freedom of speech is one of the key values of liberal democracies. Even though everybody has the right to enjoy his or her freedom as a member of the globe, but at the time it is equally true to say that freedom as a right can be acquired. It is not something given spontaneously, rather in some case one has to struggle to acquire it. In the United States, freedom receives legal protection from the Constitution. In Indian Constitution the freedom of speech has been regarded as the basic constitutional rights. Even though the history reveals that many people in different countries in the past had struggled for freedom of speech, but in the course of time, it has gone on to achieve worldwide status. In 1941, President Roosevelt called freedom of speech one of the four essential freedoms. It has now been included in the various ‘human rights’ declared by the United Nations in its 1948 Declaration of Human Right. Even Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights declares that “Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas

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<sup>4</sup> ‘Media Ethics’, Address by Chairman, Press Council of India on 18<sup>th</sup> January, 2007 at IIMC, Dhenkanal, Orissa.

<sup>5</sup> Barrie MacDonald and Michel Petheram, *Media Ethics*, London and Washington, 1998, p.p.5.

without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers.”<sup>6</sup> While emphasizing on the importance of freedom of speech in media, Junius says, “The liberty of the press is the *Palladium* of all the civil, political, and religious rights of an Englishman.”<sup>7</sup>

Article 361A of our Constitution says: “No person shall be liable to any proceedings, civil or criminal in any court in respect of the publication in a newspaper of a substantially true report of any proceedings of either House of the Legislature of the state, unless the publication is proved to have been made with malice.” The Supreme Court delivered judgments in a few cases proclaiming that freedom of speech and expression included freedom of the press also. However there had been a good deal of debate at various stages in the deliberations of the Constituent Assembly on whether freedom of the press should be explicitly mentioned in what came to be incorporated in article 19(1) (a), the debate has continued till today on the question whether it would have been better to have so.

Even though freedom of speech belongs to humans rights, but this does not make sense to say, all without exception, that it is an absolute value that it can override all other values. Even there are grounds for limiting free speech and it has been recognized in law. Even besides legal limitations, there are also ethical limitations where the values of free speech conflicts with other values of society. These limitations lead to the issues which are the subject of media ethics. Such limitations are often categorized as censorship. But this term ‘censorship’ is also often used more particularly to describe offences against taste and decency, such as, pornography, violence or bad language. The other limitations include conflicts with government, for example, over reporting of war and terrorism, privacy of individuals, blasphemy, and finally what might be called internal restrains in that they apply to the media as an industry, such as, ownership and advertising interests.

### **Justification of Free Speech**

So far we have outlined the concept of freedom of speech of press and we have seen that freedom is an essential criterion of media ethics. Now, we do engage

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid. p.5.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. p.5.

ourselves in exploring the *justification of free speech*. There is at least three main lines of argument on the basis of which the principle of free speech can be justified. It is a general perception that if anybody is not allowed to express his views then how he, being a media person, can gather correct news for the people. In this sense, freedom of free speech deserves special protection. In fact, the protection of free speech produces special benefits to the readers. In the first place, free speech promotes of truth and error through discussion. Secondly, it also gives rise to the necessary information for educated political decision making. Thirdly and more importantly, silencing someone is a trespass against their dignity. It is indeed against the deference to a free agent. Moreover, it is equally supposed to be a blow to the autonomy of a free agent. Freedom and autonomy of freedom are two important aspects to evaluate the dignity of moral agent. This is equally true to everybody and most important to the media person.

It is important to note here that even though freedom of speech and autonomy of a media person or a journalist is pre-requisite and there is no question of doubt about its relevance, but it is equally true to say that there persists a decision making procedure what might or might not be published. It may be thought that licensing of printing would cause ‘the discouragement of all learning and the stop of truth’. Reflection of true knowledge is the reflection of human virtue and human virtue subsists by way of superseding human vices. Thus, confirmation of truth is nothing but a constant scanning. Media men in most general cases pass their profession with safety and less danger if they overcome sin and falsity. As media is the most common men accessible weapon in judging the balance of the society, country, and the performance of the government, the responsibility of the media is huge. Therefore to link between virtue and truth is the challenge of media. According to Milton, God actually gives man the reason and also the freedom of choice on the basis of which one can freely choose what is desirable to him. There can be no virtue unless it is freely chosen. One must be free to seek truth and this is made possible through argument and counter-argument, through discussion and exchanging views with each other. Here the metaphor of Milton is particularly relevant. Milton says, “And though all the winds of doctrine were let loose to play upon the earth, so Truth be in the field, we do injuriously, by licensing and

prohibiting, to misdoubt her strength. Let her and falsehood grapple; who ever know Truth put to the worse, in a free and open encounter?"<sup>8</sup>

### **Media and Government, Agreement and Disagreement:**

Even though media enjoys freedom of speech, but we cannot rule out the influence of Government on media. In India the influence of Government is colossal. Government most strongly attempts to constrain freedom of speech when it is felt that there is a threat to 'national security'. There are other many contentious issues between government and media where the intervention of the media by the Government is prerogative.

### **Responsibility of Media:**

We think that media has a significant role and responsibility towards society and community. Therefore, media as a responsible organization must act in favor of society. In one sense media is accountable internally and responsible externally. As a business organization, it has to survive by creating wealth. Nobody can deny it. But the problem of media is that at times its works in fulfilling vested interest and in turn fails to fulfill social responsibility and social commitment.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

We think that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century media functions as the architect of society and community. It is the only source and avenue through which the people of the country in general can enlighten them. Media as such can help to build the social integrity and social harmony. It helps men to know what is happening around us. It gives the exposure of the common people by bringing the dynamicity of one society or community to other. Thus, the relevance of media is immense. However, if media does not work as it should do, then there creates a serious problem. In recent past, it has been revealed that different forms of media works in favor of corrupted government, highlights the objective of some commodities which is detrimental to the common people. When media involves in corruption, it does not fulfill the social responsibility and social commitment as it should do. This is where the relevance of media ethics comes into being. Media as a business organization must be abided

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid. p.6.

by ethical rules and principle, the journalists must act in favor of the common people, in favor of the solidarity and harmony of the society.

The role of media ethics is colossal and nobody can deny it. It is compelling as well because the persons associated with media do require some intrinsic qualities on the basis of which they can tackle the unwanted and undesirable situations that may appear any moment of time. Corruption in the media has been fictionalized across the world for many years. Corruption in the mass media in India and elsewhere is as old as media itself. If there is corruption in society, it would be unrealistic to expect media to be free of this affliction. In recent past, however, corruption in the Indian media has gone way beyond individuals and specific media organizations from 'planting' information and spinning views in lieu of favors received in cash or kind to institutionalized and organized forms of corruption wherein newspapers and TV channels receive funds for publishing or broadcasting information that is sought to be disguised as 'news' but are actually designed to favor particular individuals, corporate entities, representatives of political parties and candidates contesting elections. News is meant to be objective, fair, unbiased and neutral. In recent years in India, the distinction between news and advertisements has been sought to be deliberately blurred if not obliterated altogether. The bigger and multidimensional aspects of media ethics have indeed become too important to be left to journalists and media personal alone. This issue concerns all of us irrespective of whether we actually produce content or passively consume it. Putting everything into perspective, I do feel that media as a profession must be taken as a moral and ethical trait. Media is a serious profession and the media persons or journalists must be morally sound so that they never bow their head before the corrupt head.

We think the trio concepts, such as; truth, objectivity and fairness are the hallmarks of media ethics. A more useful notion in journalism is the ethics of truthfulness, i.e., to represent truthfully all information intended for the public. Here the notion of common truth is the most useful method by which journalists can gauge truth, while disseminating information meant for the public. Truthfulness as a journalistic ethics can be divided into two parts. First, to determine the veracity of the information that may be reported. Second, the accuracy and honesty with

which sourced information is reported. Fairness is an important journalistic ethic and is expected of all journalists. In this regard, the choice of language should be carefully considered. Words can have more than one meaning and meaning can change in different contexts. Therefore, context is of uppermost importance for ensuring that the information reported will be properly construed. Neglecting to relate the context of an event is a form of deception as it will mislead an audience. This is unfair because the citizenry deserves to be accurately informed. Objectivity is not the same as being 'objective'. Being objective requires a person 'to see the world as it really is' just by shedding the shackles of subjective interpretation. It is not possible for average mortals to view the world except through their own eyes and perspectives. Most of the time, people verify information that has world consensus. This is to help establish common understandings to facilitate harmony in society. If being objective in its purest sense is not possible, then we can at least simulate objectivity. This objectivity might be relative version of objectivity or an accepted level of objectivity, given that pure objectivity is theoretically unattainable. Thus, a media man can arrive at this relative objectivity by approaching an issue with reason, leaning aside own personal likes and dislikes. Alternatively, it can be said that such moderate form of objectivity might be understood as impartiality. Impartiality means to remain unbiased, to leave aside personal feelings or opinions. Of course, no journalist can be expected to be completely impartial as everybody has particular preferences. The responsibility of being impartial requires that personal preferences be minimized to the extent possible in journalistic endeavors.

We think codes of conduct have played an important role in media. Most of codes of conduct for the media insist that journalists should exercise care and consideration while reporting or commenting on the private lives and concerns of individuals. However, it is admitted that in mitigating circumstances of public interest, the right to privacy may be overridden. Regarding trauma and violence, journalists should not intrude on private grief and distress unless justified by overriding considerations of public interest. While information is the primary objective, it should not be at the cost of causing undue pain to victims and their families. While covering incidents of death and disease, journalists working for the

electronic medium should take care not to broadcast extreme close-up visuals to maintain the dignity of the dead. Traumatized should be interviewed with due care and sensitivity. While considering issues of sensitivity, it is important to keep in mind the scope and power of influence that the media exerts over its audiences. There are certain situations where information should be withheld if there is a chance that its dissemination will have a negative influence on its subjects. For instance, while covering commercial riots, the media must ensure cautious, restrained, and responsible reporting so that the reportage does not incite further violence. By mobilizing public opinions against a communal charge, new organizations can play a positive role in cooling passions and promoting amity.

I think ethics of advertising is another important aspect of media that needs to be taken care of. Of course, there is no question of doubt that advertising has been and continues to be, the biggest source of revenue for most media organizations and is thus an important area. But there must be ethics of advertising practices. Advertising has tremendous potency for it both reflects and influences social trends. This leads us to look at how the audience becomes akin to the commodity and how the media becomes the instrument of advertising. Advertising is commercially motivated communication that seeks to create a favorable predisposition in targeted groups of consumers, users, or influencers towards products, services, or concepts. It is a type of direct messaging contract with public relations which is more indirect route to build credibility and acceptance for a company, product, service, or cause. Advertisements are communicated through a wide range of mass media. Advertisement is not a modern phenomenon. There is evidence of commercial engravings on stone walls in ancient Egypt and Rome. However, advertising has often come under the scrutiny of social and political leaders and commentators because of concerns that its practices are not always responsible or ethical. Therefore, journalists must be careful about the external influence.

Journalists have many duties. There is no guarantee that these will always be concordant. For an honest and sincere journalist, the duty to serve the public, the duty to protect sources and the duty of loyalty to the employer and do sometimes stand on opposite sides of the ethical battleground. To me there are no easy answers

to such dilemmas. It is, therefore, important to be familiar with all aspects of these ethical systems to determine the most appropriate course of action. It, thus, becomes an important duty of the journalist to be aware of the implications of a report before publishing or broadcasting it.

Freedom and responsibility are the two important concepts that media should enjoy. A journalist must enjoy freedom of the will and he would equally be responsible towards society and community. Freedom and responsibility are not contrary to each other; rather these two concepts are entwined with each other. In this regard, we can mention the name of Kant. Kant while outlining the nature of morality emphasized on the autonomy of the will of the moral agent. I think Kant's moral concept is relevant when we deal with media ethics.

Media should emphasize more on taste and decency. Very unfortunately, media at times works in favor of some agents for fulfilling its vested interest. Media as such is responsible to the society. Media in fact would not survive without the support of the society and community. Accordingly, media should work in favor of the society or community; media must work in retaining as well as in building social integrity and solidarity. Media should not work under the shadow of the government. When the government is corrupt and media will act under the shadow of the government, then media would equally be corrupted. This will bring a wrong signal to the people. In such a case media cannot act as the beholders of the society or community. This is where the relevance of ethics comes into being.