

## Women and Media Ethics

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Media is the means or medium through which information is shared by people at large. The objective of Media ethics is to protect and promote the interest of readers, listeners, and viewers and people in general. It spells out the news for news writers and editors to ensure objectivity and accuracy in presentation of facts or information. Objectivity should be the watch word of a medium person. There should never be any room for distorted information amounting to misrepresentation of truths. Media fails to discharge its bounden obligation, if accuracy is not maintained. Facts must be presented without exaggeration or distortion so that they remain immune to possible public resentment or adverse legal proceedings.

If stating the facts are prejudicial to the interest of the individual and the society, it is better that such truths be not made public.

Yellow journalism is used pejoratively to refer to journalistic practices that focus on scandals and scams by publishing sensational news, especially involving key celebrities and women. Tabloid journalism essentially offers an independent perspective. Thereby it stands distinguished from other competing media agencies. They feature local developments and entertaining contents. Bias of any kind is contrary

to the canons of journalism. Integrity, Independence and accountability constitute the core principles of journalistic ethics. Media ought to respect the privacy of individuals such obligation stems from the right to privacy on part of the individual. Names of photographs of visitors of rape, abduction and sexual assault leading to their identification are not to be published.

Media should exercise caution by way of catering information so that it doesn't become unfair in relation to a person, group or community. Media should have due respect for the indigenous tradition, culture and sentiments of the people. It is unhealthy to hurt the sentiment of a group or community. Commercialism is permissible to the extent it doesn't violate the basic ethical standards.

Women are now seriously examining how the developments in the media since globalization has engendered or hindered their progress and struggle for equality. As a powerful socialising agent, media has become an important tool as well as site of struggle for women seeking to eliminate sexism and violence against women.

The role of media remains crucial in communicating and popularising women's issues, concerns, and actions from women's perspective. Media otherwise has the power to shut out and further make invisible the women's agenda.

The globalized media, caters information designed to build up a consumer-oriented culture. The media's target readership is urban, westernised, rich and middle class consumers. There is at times complete negligence of gender related issues. Women in the globalized media are seen mostly as consumers as well as commodities.

Print media has undergone profound changes in the last two decades. Both vernacular and English print media has had a compound impact on the readers. Women and women related issues and news are presented more but in a context and perspective which may not be empowering. Visual media has engulfed the lives of people. TV too has done its bit in promulgating women issues.

A study conducted by 'Sansristi' a center for gender development, aims to read critically the representation of portrayal of Women in the print and visual media. The study covered both national and local dailies, Magazines and also the T.V. programmes. A local news paper 'Dharitri' rarely provides news on rural and marginalized women in the state, who are hit the most by the

onslaught of globalization. The news paper usually carries provocative and advertisement exposing women's bodies and depicting female sexuality. This certainly defeats media ethics. A local magazine 'Kadambini' mainly depict women as only capable of doing household work and wearing loads of jewellery. The magazine focuses on the upper class life style, consumerism and the luxuries, which have become an indispensable part of the upper crust of the society. Issues relating to the marginalized women and the day to day reality of women are completely sidelined. Media covers the marginalized women but marginally. The most disturbing fact is that media is more inclined towards the elites, not to these women, towards glamour not towards struggle and empowerment.

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