

## Ethics and Media

*Salini Mahapatra*

The word 'Media' carries a lot of weight and is perceived differently by people of different walks at different times. In layman's term, media are all those entities that offer information, education and entertainment for various purposes. As a fourth pillar of Democracy, media have been playing an important role for the protection of law and justice. Though it is devoid of any powers to punish the law-breakers, it is considered as one of the most important instruments for safeguarding social justice in a democracy like India.

"Let noble thoughts come to us from every side" is the eternal message of the Rig Veda given several millenia ago signifying the freedom of expression.

Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution of India guarantees to the citizen, the right to "Freedom of speech and expression." The media purvey public opinion and shape it. Parliamentary democracy can flourish only under the watchful eyes of media.

At a time when the globalisation of Indian economy has brought about drastic change in the media scape and the Indian Press is also going global, the responsibility of press is to safeguard the interest of the people and the Nation has increased manifold. While playing the role of informer, the media also take shape of a motivator and a leader. All pervasive and all powerful is media's impact on society. With so much strength and power, the media can't lose sight of its privileges, duties and obligations.

Media is mandated to follow certain ethics in collecting and disseminating the information viz., ensuring authenticity of the news, use of restrained and socially acceptable language for ensuring objectivity and fairness in reporting and keeping in mind, its cascading effect on the society and on the individuals and institutions concerned.

As Albert Schweitzer, German Noble Peace Prize winning mission doctor and theologian had remarked "The first step in the evolution of ethic is a sense of solidarity with other human beings."

Ethics is a code of values that govern our lives, and are thus very essential for moral and healthy life. In context of the press, "Ethics" may be described as a set of moral principles and values, which guide the conduct of journalism. The ethics are essentially self restraint to be practised by the journalists voluntarily, to preserve and promote the trust of the people and to maintain their own credibility and not betray the faith and confidence of the people.

The media all over the world have accepted that code of ethics should cover at least the following areas of conduct; i.e. honesty and fairness, duty to provide an opportunity to reply to critical opinions as well as to critical factual reportage, appearance as well as reality of objectivity, respect for privacy, duty to distinguish between facts and opinion, duty not to use dishonest means to obtain information, duty not to endanger people and the duty not to prejudge

the guilt of an accused and to publish the dismissal of charges against or acquittal of any one about whom the paper previously had reported that charges had been filed or that a trial had commenced.

The freedom of press has to be preserved and protected not only from outside interference but equally from those within. These measures not only ensure the accountability of media and act as a brake on the arbitrary and unabridged use of power but also help to enhance the credibility of press. These ethics are not in the nature of control on the press but are necessary for fair and objective use of the press for maintaining freedom of speech and expression in true spirit. It is to be appreciated that our legislation very wisely did not entrust on the council the task of 'laying down' a code of

conduct. For ethics cannot be mined down a strait packet. These broad principles are flexible, general principles, the range, the reach and terrain of which are wider than those of law.

To conclude, best are the words of Mahatma Gandhi, an eminent journalist, "the sole aim of journalism should be service. The newspaper press is a great power; but just as unchained torrent of water submerges the whole country side and devastates crops, even so an uncontrolled pen serves but to destroy. If the control is from without, it proves more poisonous than want of control. It can be profitable only when exercised from within."

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Salini Mahapatra, Class-IX (A), Student, D.A.V. Public School, Chandrasekharpur, Bhubaneswar.

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## Media and Development

*Punam Seth*

Media is the path through which development is possible. Media is the voice of public. It is playing a vital role in daily life. It is impossible to develop the society without the involvement of Media. It provides so many things to the public. It is an instrument through which helpless gets its right. The dirty corruption behind the people comes to the lime light only through Media. Media not only provide the information but also encourage the people to raise their voice against injustice, to fight against corruption. Generally people are thinking that if their children watch any programme, serial or movie in television they will go to the wrong path but this concept is wrong because at the end of every programme there must be a lesson. In fact it not only teaches lesson but also gives message to the audience/viewers/readers that be alert, be aware, because reality is more dangerous than this programme. Media is the key to development. Through media we are getting all

information which is directly or indirectly encourage the society to put step towards development. The bond between Media and development is inseparable. In fact it will not wrong if I say Media is the key that fits the lock of any development. Media is the eye of the society. Day or night media is keeping eye on society. Any development without media is impossible. My words are insufficient to write about the advantages of Media. Media is like a tree. Like tree every branches of media, every root, every leaf, every fruit are serving the public. While rendering its valuable service towards society the media should be impartial and it should be courageous enough to bring out the truth without any sort of influence from any corner.

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Punam Seth, C2M-161, Chhend, Rourkela.