



POPULARITY OF MEDIA AND THEIR ETHICS

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Media is a powerful tool. It influences every one, irrespective of age, sex; social status etc. modernization has converted media into an indispensable part of our life. Media can bring about desirable changes, keeping its viewers vigilant and well informed about the world, 24x7. But along with its positive side, it has negative impact as well. In a democratic country like India, where everyone enjoys its fundamental rights, media is found to misuse its right of freedom of speech and expression. The growing consumerism and materialism have adversely impacted the media. But no freedom is absolute. Every freedom is subjected to certain reasonable restriction. Media too is bound with certain social duties and ethics. According to News Broadcaster Association (NBA) guidelines

1. **Media should be Impartial and objective in its reporting**

Accuracy is at the heart of the news television business. Although the viewers of 24-hour news channels expect speed, but it is the responsibility of TV news channels to give accuracy and balance precedence over speed. Channels should be transparent about the errors and must be corrected promptly and clearly, whether in the use of pictures, a news report, a caption, a graphic or a script.

2. **Ensure neutrality**

TV news channels must provide for neutrality by offering equality for all affected parties, players and actors in any dispute or conflict to present their point of view.

3. **Reporting on crime and safeguards to ensure crime and violence are not glorified**

Television news has a greater reach and more immediate impact than other forms of media, and this makes it all the more necessary that channels exercise restraint to ensure that any report or visuals broadcast do not induce, glorify, incite, or positively depict violence and its perpetrators, regardless of ideology or context. Specific care must be taken not to broadcast visuals that can be prejudicial or inflammatory. Equally, in the reporting of violence (whether collective or individual), the act of violence must not be glamorised, because it may have a misleading or desensitising impact on viewers. News channels will ensure that such reconstructions will not cross boundaries of good taste and sensibility. This includes taking adequate precaution while showing any visual instance of pain, fear or suffering, and visuals or details of methods of suicide and self-harm of any kind, and will not cross boundaries of good taste and decency.

4. **Depiction of violence or intimidation against women and children**

News channels will ensure that identity of any woman or juvenile, who is a victim of sexual violence, aggression, trauma, or has been a witness to the same, must be concealed. Similarly, the identity of victims of child abuse and juvenile delinquents will not be revealed, and their pictures will be morphed to conceal their identity.

5. **Sex and nudity**

Channels should not show explicit images of nudity, sexual activity or sexual perversions or acts of sexual violence like rape or molestation, or show pornography, or the use of sexually suggestive language. (As a qualifier however, channels are not expected to be moralistic or prudish, and this self-regulation is aimed not at moral policing but rather at ensuring that overtly regressive and explicit acts and visuals do not slip into broadcasts.)

6. **Privacy**

As a rule, channels must not intrude on the private lives or personal affairs of individuals unless there is a clearly established larger and identifiable public interest for such a broadcast.

7. **Endangering national security**

In the use of any terminology or maps that represent India and Indian strategic interests, all news channels will use specific terminology and maps mandated by law and Indian government rules. (The depiction of a map of the territory of India will reflect official guidelines, as detailed in official literature.) However, it is in the public interest to broadcast instances of breach of national security and loopholes in national security and reporting these cannot be confused with endangering national security.



8. Refraining from advocating or encouraging superstition and occultism

News channels will not broadcast any material that glorifies superstition and occultism in any manner. In broadcasting any news about such a genre, news channels will also issue public disclaimers to ensure that viewers are not misled into believing or emulating such beliefs and activity.

9. Sting operations

As a guiding principle, sting and undercover operations should be the last resort of news channels in an attempt to give the viewer comprehensive coverage of any news story. News channels will, as a ground rule, ensure that sting operations are carried out only as a tool for getting conclusive evidence of wrongdoing or criminality, and that there is no deliberate alteration of visuals, or editing, or interposing done with the raw footage in a way that it also alters or misrepresents the truth or presents only a portion of the truth.

10. Corrigendum

All news channels will, in keeping with the principle of due accuracy and impartiality, ensure that significant mistakes made in the course of any broadcast is acknowledged and corrected on air immediately.

11. Viewer feedback

All news channels should, on their website, create provision to receive consumer feedback, respond to their complaints if any.

Media in Assam

In Assam, many News channels have flourished in the last few years. These 24 hr, News channels have tried to serve the people with different types of News, which are mostly entertaining than informative. Many discussions are being carried out on the type of language, content and the style of news reporting. The languages used by the readers are found to be mere colloquial. Many have also complained on its content that they cover some horrified News in its Prime Time News (7 pm) which leaves psychological effect in the minds of its viewers. Footages such as man carrying a cutoff head of a women on the streets, police assaulting a drunk girl, hanged body etc . These leaves the young minds horrified and may have long lasting effects. It is also noticed that some of the News Channels present news of supernatural powers like ghosts, which serve nothing but encourage superstitions. Often, media ethics is being questioned. In the present scenario, where media is within the reach of each and every person, media compromising its ethics may become a potential threat to the society.

Bearing this in mind the present study was conducted with the following objectives:

- i. To find out the popularity of the Assamese News Channels among the mass of Assam and
- ii. To know the viewpoints of the respondents regarding the content of the Assamese news channels and its style of presentations.

A survey method was conducted among 50 samples comprised of college students, housewives, and employed men and women, from the Guwahati city, Kamrup district, Assam.

Findings:

While questioning on the opinion of the respondents regarding the content of the News and its style of presentation, it was found that-

Sl.No.	Content of the Assamese News Channels	Responses of the respondents Percentage (%)
1.	News Channels are impartial and objective	66.6
2.	Bias in nature	24
3	News of crime and violence are glorified	57
4	Shows nudity	14
5	Do not ensure privacy	52
6	Encourage superstition and occultism	9
7	Use socially accepted language	62

Majority of the respondents find the news channels to be impartial and objective in nature but 57 percent commented that the news channels glorify the news of crime and violence, and they also do not ensure privacy of the people (52%). 62 percent said that they use socially accepted language.



On enquiring about the effects of the news channels after watching the glorified footages of the crime and violence, it was found that 71.4% of the respondents keep thinking about the scene and 25 percent get depressed and feel scared all the time (24%).

Although Assamese news channels covers various types of News for its heterogeneous viewers and are quite popular among the viewers. But in competing with each other, they sometime leave their ethics far behind. While surveying, half of the respondents have commented that their news are more entertaining (along with background music) than being informative.

Conclusion

Ruthless dictators. Media is a strong tool which has far reach, can bring about desirable changes in the society, by providing various informations and keeping each and every citizen of the country vigilant. If the media goes out of the line and forget its ethics, then it will be very dangerous and devastating. Therefore it's high time for the media persons to realise its ethics and perform their social duties sincerely.

References

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