

### ASSIGNMENT No.2

#### Q. 1 What are detailed note on Media's lack of maturity and professionalism with examples.

Media professionalism is the conduct of media coverage and activities according to high standards of ethics, accountability, legality and credibility, while exercising rights such as freedom of expression and information.

An important element in a media environment is the degree of professionalism and experience of journalists and other media practitioners. It is common that journalists in a country that has only recently emerged from a highly restrictive political system will lack many of the skills and professional standards of their counterparts in a country with a long history of media freedom. However, the experience of an authoritarian regime may not be entirely negative. In many cases, courageous independent journalism has played an important part in pressuring dictatorships to open up the political space. Journalists who have successfully investigated and published sensitive stories in such a media environment will have developed professional skills that are unmatched by their colleagues in friendlier circumstances. In the context of an election, the professional challenge will be to bring these skills to bear on a new and unfamiliar set of stories to be reported.

Most of the ethical and professional issues that journalists encounter in covering elections are variants of what they confront in their everyday working lives. However, these issues and dilemmas may present themselves in particular ways during elections.

Examples of such professional dilemmas might include:

- **Newsworthiness v. balanced and thorough coverage:** News coverage is typically driven by considerations of what is unique or remarkable and therefore of particular interest in an event. Yet electors require fair and balanced presentation of the manifestoes and agendas of the different parties (which may be far from distinct or interesting). How can the media reconcile their news function with their public service function?
- **Transparency v. integrity of the election process:** One of the reasons that the media play an essential role in democracies is that they are able to scrutinise and expose malpractice in elections. However, proper administration of an election also depends on security and confidentiality. Balancing these two elements is an issue for lawmakers and those responsible for drawing up electoral regulations. However it is also a day-to-day practical issue for journalists themselves.
- **Reporting inflammatory speech:** Politicians are more likely to express extreme and inflammatory sentiments during election campaigns – with the intention of impacting large audiences. Yet, it is perhaps paradoxical that while election campaigns are occasions where these sentiments frequently have negative impact or consequences, campaigns are also occasions when freedom to express differing political views is of utmost important. The regulatory implications of

# Course: Media Ethics & Laws Part – I (6603)

## Semester: Autumn, 2021

this dilemma are for policymakers to resolve. For journalists the challenge is to report inflammatory political speech in a manner that is both accurate and least likely to provoke violence.

- **Resourcing elections coverage:** In the developing world in particular, media outlets often operate with minimal resources, and journalists are often poorly paid. This provides a number of ethical problems for editors. For example, what should a media outlet do if there are not enough journalists (or supporting communication equipment and funding) to cover an election? For some, one answer has been to allow journalists to receive ‘per diem’ or ‘honoraria’ or other material reward for covering a story, sometimes by a candidate or contestant, a practice which although widespread is in fact bribery and detrimental to independent reporting.

The following pages explore the following elements of media professionalism:

- Codes of conduct
- Legal issues in election reporting
- Accuracy in election reporting
- Impartiality in election reporting
- Responsibility in election reporting

### Q. 2 Elaborate the ethical issues of online journalism.

Digital media ethics deals with the distinct ethical problems, practices and norms of digital news media. Digital news media includes online journalism, blogging, digital photojournalism, citizen journalism and social media. It includes questions about how professional journalism should use this ‘new media’ to research and publish stories, as well as how to use text or images provided by citizens.

### A REVOLUTION IN ETHICS

A media revolution is transforming, fundamentally and irrevocably, the nature of journalism and its ethics. The means to publish is now in the hands of citizens, while the internet encourages new forms of journalism that are interactive and immediate.

Our media ecology is a chaotic landscape evolving at a furious pace. Professional journalists share the journalistic sphere with tweeters, bloggers, citizen journalists, and social media users.

Amid every revolution, new possibilities emerge while old practices are threatened. Today is no exception. The economics of professional journalism struggles as audiences migrate online. Shrinkage of newsrooms creates concern for the future of journalism. Yet these fears also prompt experiments in journalism, such as non-profit centers of investigative journalism.

A central question is to what extent existing media ethics is suitable for today’s and tomorrow’s news media that is immediate, interactive and “always on” – a journalism of amateurs and professionals. Most of the principles were developed over the past century, originating in the construction of professional, objective ethics for mass commercial newspapers in the late 19th century.

We are moving towards a mixed news media – a news media citizen and professional journalism across many media platforms. This new mixed news media requires a new mixed media ethics – guidelines that apply to amateur and professional whether they blog, Tweet, broadcast or write for newspapers. Media ethics needs to be rethought and reinvented for the media of today, not of yesteryear.

### TENSIONS ON TWO LEVELS

The changes challenge the foundations of media ethics. The challenge runs deeper than debates about one or another principle, such as objectivity. The challenge is greater than specific problems, such as how newsrooms can verify content from citizens. The revolution requires us to rethink assumptions. What can ethics mean for a profession that must provide instant news and analysis; where everyone with a modem is a publisher?

The media revolution has created ethical tensions on two levels.

- On the first level, there is a tension between traditional journalism and online journalism. The culture of traditional journalism, with its values of accuracy, pre-publication verification, balance, impartiality, and gate-keeping, rubs up against the culture of online journalism which emphasizes immediacy, transparency, partiality, non-professional journalists and post-publication correction.
- On the second level, there is a tension between parochial and global journalism. If journalism has global impact, what are its global responsibilities? Should media ethics reformulate its aims and norms so as to guide a journalism that is now global in reach and impact? What would that look like?

The challenge for today's media ethics can be summarized by the question: Whither ethics in a world of multi-media, global journalism? Media ethics must do more than point out these tensions. Theoretically, it must untangle the conflicts between values. It must decide which principles should be preserved or invented. Practically, it should provide new standards to guide online or offline journalism.

### LAYERED JOURNALISM

What would an integrated ethics look like?

It will be the ethics of the integrated newsroom, a newsroom that practices layered journalism. Layered journalism brings together different forms of journalism and different types of journalists to produce a multi-media offering of professional-styled news and analysis combined with citizen journalism and interactive chat.

The newsroom will be layered vertically and horizontally.

Vertically, there will be many layers of editorial positions. There will be citizen journalists and bloggers in the newsroom, or closely associated with the newsroom. Many contributors will work from countries around the world. Some will write for free, some will be equivalent to paid freelancers, others will be regular commentators.

In addition, there will be different types of editors. Some editors will work with these new journalists, while other editors will deal with unsolicited images and text sent by citizens via email, web sites, and twitter. There

will be editors or “community producers” charged with going out to neighborhoods to help citizens use media to produce their own stories.

Horizontally, the future newsroom will be layered in terms of the kinds of journalism it produces, from print and broadcast sections to online production centers.

Newsrooms in the past have had vertical and horizontal layers. Newspaper newsrooms have ranged vertically from the editor in-chief at the top to the cub reporter on the bottom. Horizontally, large mainstream newsrooms have produced several types of journalism, both print and broadcast. However, future newsrooms will have additional and different layers. Some news sites will continue to be operated by a few people dedicated only to one format, such as blogging. But a substantial portion of the new mainstream will consist of these complex, layered organizations.

Layered journalism will confront two types of problems. First, there will be ‘vertical’ ethical questions about how the different layers of the newsroom, from professional editors to citizen freelancers, should interact to produce responsible journalism. For example, by what standards will professional editors evaluate the contributions of citizen journalists? Second, there will be ‘horizontal’ questions about the norms for the various newsroom sections.

The ‘democratization’ of media – technology that allows citizens to engage in journalism and publication of many kinds – blurs the identity of journalists and the idea of what constitutes journalism.

In the previous century, journalists were a clearly defined group. For the most part, they were professionals who wrote for major mainstream newspapers and broadcasters. The public had no great difficulty in identifying members of the “press.”

Today, citizens without journalistic training and who do not work for mainstream media calls themselves journalists, or write in ways that fall under the general description of a journalists as someone who regularly writes on public issues for a public or audience.

It is not always clear whether the term “journalist” begins or ends. If someone does what appears to be journalism, but refuses the label ‘journalist’ is he or she a journalist? If comedian Jon Stewart refuses to call himself a journalist, but magazines refer to him as an influential journalist (or refers to him as someone who does engage in journalism) is Stewart a journalist?

Is a person expressing their opinions on their Facebook site a journalist?

A lack of clarity over who is a journalist leads to definitional disputes over who is doing journalism. That leads to the question: What is journalism? Many people believe, “What is journalism?” or “Is he or she doing journalism?” is a more important question than whether who can call themselves a journalist.

At least three approaches to this question are possible – skeptical, empirical, and normative. Skeptically, one dismisses the question itself as unimportant. For example, one might say that anyone can be a journalist, and it

is not worth arguing over who gets to call themselves a journalist. One is skeptical about attempts to define journalism.

Empirically, there is a more systematic and careful approach to the question. We can look at clear examples of journalism over history and note the types of activities in which journalists engaged, e.g. gathering information, editing stories, publishing news and opinion. Then we use these features to provide a definition of journalism that separates it from novel writing, storytelling, or editing information for a government database.

The normative approach insists that writers should not be called journalists unless they have highly developed skills, acquired usually through training or formal education, and unless they honor certain ethical norms.

The skills include investigative capabilities, research skills, facility with media technology of media, knowledge of how institutions work, and highly developed communication skills. The ethical norms include a commitment to accuracy, verification, truth, and so on.

The normative approach is based on an ideal view of journalism as accurately and responsibly informing the public. One defines journalism by considering the best examples of journalism and the practices of the best journalists.

A writer who has these skills and these ethical commitments is capable of publishing good (well-crafted, well-researched) and ethically responsible journalism. Persons who do not meet these normative requirements may call themselves journalists but they are not considered journalists from this normative perspective. They are at irresponsible, second-rate, or incompetent writers seeking to be journalists, or pretending to be journalists.

### **ANONYMITY**

Anonymity is accepted more readily online than in mainstream news media. Newspapers usually require the writers of letters to the editor to identify themselves. Codes of mainstream media ethics caution journalists to use anonymous sources sparingly and only if certain rules are followed. The codes warn journalists that people may use anonymity to take unfair or untrue “potshots” at other people, for self-interested reasons.

Online, many commentary and “chat” areas do not allow anonymity. Online users resist demands from web site and blogs to register and identify themselves. Anonymity is praised as allowing freedom of speech and sometimes helping to expose wrong doing. Critics say it encourages irresponsible and harmful comments. Mainstream media contradict themselves when they allow anonymity online but refuse anonymity in their newspapers and broadcast programs.

The ethical question is: When is anonymity ethically permissible and is it inconsistent for media to enforce different rules on anonymity for different media platforms? What should be the ethical guidelines for anonymity offline and online?

### **SPEED, RUMOR AND CORRECTIONS**

Reports and images circulate the globe with amazing speed via Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, blogs, cell phones, and email. Speed puts pressure on newsrooms to publish stories before they are adequately checked and verified

as to the source of the story and the reliability of the alleged facts. Major news organizations too often pick up rumors online. Sometimes, the impact of publishing an online rumor is not world shaking – a false report that a hockey coach has been fired. But a media that thrives on speed and “sharing” creates the potential for great harm. For instance, news organizations might be tempted to repeat a false rumor that terrorists had taken control of the London underground, or that a nuclear power plant had just experienced a ‘meltdown’ and dangerous gases were blowing towards Chicago. These false reports could induce panic, causes accidents, prompt military action and so on.

A related problem, created by new media, is how to handle errors and corrections when reports and commentary are constantly being updated. Increasingly, journalists are blogging ‘live’ about sports games, news events, and breaking stories. Inevitably, when one works at this speed, errors are made, from misspelling words to making factual errors. Should news organizations go back and correct all of these mistakes which populate mountains of material? Or should they correct errors later and not leave a trace of the original mistake –what is called “unpublishing?”

The ethical challenge is to articulate guidelines for dealing with rumors and corrections in an online world that are consistent with the principles of accuracy, verification, and transparency.

### **IMPARTIALITY, CONFLICTS OF INTEREST, AND PARTISAN JOURNALISM**

New media encourages people to express their opinion and share their thoughts candidly.

Many bloggers take pride in speaking their mind, compared to any mainstream reporters who must cover events impartially. Many online journalists see themselves as partisans or activists for causes or political movements, and reject the idea of objective or neutral analysis.

Partial or partisan journalism comes in at least two kinds: One kind is an opinion journalism that enjoys commenting upon events and issues, with or without verification. Another form is partisan journalism which uses media as a mouthpiece for political parties and movements. To some extent, we are seeing a revival (or return) to an opinion/partisan journalism that was popular before the rise of objective reporting in the early 1900s.

Both opinion and partisan journalism have long roots in journalism history. However, their revival in an online world raises serious ethical conundrums for current media ethics. Should objectivity be abandoned by all journalists? Which is best for a vigorous and healthy democracy – impartial journalism or partisan journalism?

To make matters more contentious, some of the new exponents of opinion and impartial journalism not only question objectivity, they question the long-standing principle that journalists should be independent from the groups they write about. For example, some partisan journalists reject charges of a journalistic “conflict of interest” when they accept money from groups, or make donations to political parties.

Economically, mainstream newsrooms who uphold traditional principles such as impartiality increasingly feel compelled to move toward a more opinionated or partisan approach to news and commentary. To be impartial is said to be boring to viewers. Audiences are said to be attracted to strong opinion and conflicts of opinion.

Even where newsrooms enforce the rules of impartiality — say by suspending a journalist for a conflict of interest or partial comment — they fail to get full public support. Some citizens and groups complain that newsroom restraints on what analysts and reporters can say about the groups they cover is censorship.

Is it good, that more and more, journalists no longer stand among the opposing groups in society and try to inform the public fairly about their perspectives but rather become part of the groups seeking to influence public opinion?

The ethical challenge is to redefine what independent journalism in the public interest means for a media where many new types of journalism are appearing and where basic principles are being challenged.

### **ENTREPRENEURIAL NOT-FOR-PROFIT JOURNALISM**

The declining readers and profits of mainstream media, as citizens migrate online, has caused newsrooms to shrink their staff. Some journalists doubt the continuing viability of the old economic model of a mass media based on advertising and circulation sales.

In response, many journalists have started not-for-profit newsrooms, news web sites, and centers of investigative journalism based on money from foundations and donations from citizens. Some journalists go online and ask for citizens to send them money to do stories. This trend can be called “entrepreneurial journalism” because the journalist no longer simply reports while other people (e.g. advertising staff) raise funds for their newsroom. These journalists are entrepreneurs attempting to raise funds for their new ventures.

The new ventures raise ethical questions.

How independent can such newsrooms be when they are so reliant on funds from a limited number of donors? What happens if the newsroom intends to report a negative story about one of its main funders? From whom will these newsrooms take money? How transparent will they be about who gives them money and under what conditions?

The challenge is to construct an ethics for this new area of journalism.

### **REPORTERS USING SOCIAL MEDIA**

Many news organizations encourage their reporters to use social media to gather information and to create a “brand” for themselves by starting their own blog, Facebook page, or Twitter account. However, online commenting can put reporters, especially beat reporters, in trouble with their editors or the people they comment about, especially if the news outlet says it provides impartial reporting. For example, a reporter who covers city hall may report dispassionately in her newspaper about a candidate for mayor. But on her blog, she may express strong opinion, saying the candidate is an unlikeable and incompetent politician. Such comments would give the candidate cause to complain about the lack of impartiality of the reporter.

The ethical challenge is to develop social media guidelines that allow reporters to explore the new media world but also to draw reasonable limits on personal commentary.

### Q. 3 What ethical practices should be exercised in photo journalism?

Ethics is rooted in the ancient Greek philosophical inquiry of moral life. It refers to a system of principles which can critically change previous considerations about choices and actions. It is said that ethics is the branch of philosophy which deals with the dynamics of decision making concerning what is right and wrong. Scientific research work, as all human activities, is governed by individual, community and social values. Research ethics involve requirements on daily work, the protection of dignity of subjects and the publication of the information in the research.

However, when nurses participate in research they have to cope with three value systems; society; nursing and science. The societal values about human rights, the nursing culture based on the ethic of caring and the researcher's values about scientific inquiry. According to Clarke these values may conflict with the values of subjects, communities, and societies and create tensions and dilemmas in nursing.

Human experimentation has been conducted even before 18th century. However, the ethical attitudes of researchers drawn the interest of society only after 1940's because of human exploitation in several cases. Professional codes and laws were introduced since then in order to prevent scientific abuses of human lives. The Nazi experiments led to the Nuremberg Code (1947) which was the leading code for all subsequent codes made to protect human rights in research. This code focuses on voluntary informed consent, liberty of withdrawal from research, protection from physical and mental harm, or suffering and death. It also emphasises the risk-benefit balance. The only weak point of this code was the self regulation of researchers which can be abused in some research studies. All declarations followed, forbade nontherapeutic research. It was only in 1964 with the declaration of Helsinki that the need for non therapeutic research was initiated. The declaration emphasised the protection of subjects in this kind of research and strongly proclaimed that the well being of individuals is more important than scientific and social interests.

In terms of Nursing the first inquiry was the "Nightingale Pledge" (1983). Since then there has been a significant development of professional codes in conduct and research. The American Nurses' Association (ANA) Guidelines for Research, the Human Rights Guidelines for nurses in clinical and other research (1985) and the Royal College of Nursing Code for nurses in research (1977) provide a strong assistance to professional nurses as well as reassurance to patients, the public and society, of professionals' intentions.

A common feature in professional conduct codes and those specific to research is the principle of non-maleficence. The ANA Code of conduct declares that the nurse protects the clients and the public from unethical, incompetent or illegal practice of any person. [8] This statement raises the issue of advocacy when nurses have to protect patients from the researchers' incompetence or unethical behaviour. Even if nurses are certain about the incompetence of the investigator, which is usually very difficult, they have to deal with serious

dilemmas. First they have to consider the fact that if patient learn that they are exposed to professional misconduct, they may lose faith in health care. Jameton though, believes that patient should be informed as they will appreciate the trust shown to him by frankness. [13] If the researcher does not inform or compensate patient then nurses have to decide between the duty to safeguard the well-being of patient and be loyal to them, and the loyalty to colleagues.

However, even if nurses decide that their duty of caring and being loyal to the patient is more important, they may have to deal with the hierarchical and bureaucratic systems of institutions which demand loyalty to subordinates to the institution. In case the incompetent researcher is a higher status professional, nurses may be obliged to show loyalty, but this can conflict with loyalty to patients. Consequently, nurses may feel that their patients are vulnerable and exposed and that they can not prevent it because they do not have a voice or power to resist. This is merely why many authors believe that it may not be possible for nurses to act as advocates of subjects in research. Many support the idea that the prohibition from the advocacy role comes from the origins and development of nursing as a women's occupation dominated by medicine in a bureaucratic system.

Another possible issue of conflict is that the caring nature of nursing with regard to the right of patients to the best treatment/care is sometimes conflicting with the aim of research in non therapeutic studies. According to the Belmont commission the general aim of practice is to enhance the well being of individuals while the purpose of research is to contribute to general knowledge. This distinction highlights the differences in the aims of a nurse practitioner and a researcher. It is therefore very difficult for nurses to be engaged in studies whose aim is not directly beneficial to the subject. They must though, consider that these studies may generate and refine nursing knowledge.

Another problem that nurses may have to face is taking part in randomised control trials. According to Brink and Wood dedicated nurses are finding themselves under pressure when they are asked to exclude some patients from an obvious beneficial treatment such as relaxation techniques for relief of post operative pain. So, they suggest that whenever it is possible to predict such problems for nurses, the control data should be collected before introducing the beneficial variable. Skodol Wilson implies that there should be some provisions for alternative effective care. Finally, Brink and Wood recommend that withholding benefits can be rectified at the end of an experiment. This compensation must be planned in advance so that enough money and time will be available.

In order to prevent human exploitation, ethics committees were introduced. The criteria on which the proposals are to be judged are the physical and mental discomfort or harm of subject, the qualifications and experience of the supervisor, the scientific value, the adequate consent procedures and the adequate information given to subjects. Clark warns that there is a danger that the members may have vested interests in a research. The success of any ethics committee will always depend on the commitment and moral competency of its members. If instead of the patient and his needs, the central aims of the committee are personal interests, profits and

academic prestige, then nurses will have none to share their concerns with, and deal with their dilemmas in research. Nurses, need a greater accessibility to committees and demand a multidisciplinary synthesis in order to deal with very difficult cases. Moreover, the committees should be less strict so as not to prevent knowledge development in nursing.

The issue of confidentiality which is stated as very important in the Hippocratic oath, is another possible issue of conflict for nurses either as practitioners or researchers. Clause 10 of the ICN Code for nurses emphasises that all information obtained during nursing practice should be kept secret apart from cases that it should be reported in a court, or in cases that the interests of society are important. On the other hand the ICN Code for nurses in research states that: "Nurses acting as data collectors must recognise that they are now committed to two separate roles".

According to the professional code they can not reveal confidential information not even to the members of the research team. It is important therefore, to seek advice in ethics committees to get approval for disseminating the results of the data collection including an account of what happened. In addition, they have to deal with the issue of anonymity when some features of the research make the subjects easy to identify. It is very important that nurses always bear in mind that they should protect the privacy of the patient. The trust showed to them must not be jeopardised. Patients reveal information concerning their body and mind and expect them to be used only in a therapeutic manner. When dilemmas according to confidentiality arise, trust as a basic element of a therapeutic relationship should be considered and maintained. Ethical issues, conflicting values, and ambiguity in decision making, are recurrently emerging from literature review on nursing research. Because of lack of clarity in ethical standards, nurses must develop an awareness of these issues and an effective framework to deal with problems involving human rights. This is necessary in order to come into terms with the issue of the researcher's values relative to the individual's rights versus the interests of society. Professional codes, laws, regulations, and ethics committees can provide some guidance but the final determinant of how research is performed, rests with the researcher's value system and moral code. To prepare future nurses, ethics in research, must receive special attention in nursing curricula. The criticism and uncertainties that arise, should be rather encouraged than suppressed in nursing education. Hunt suggests that in order to liberate nursing from its "technocratic impasse" ethics should be broadly interpreted as an arena of new ideas which can change professional hierarchies, to open cross-disciplinary discussions, and question the concepts "abnormality", "patient" and "illness". He also declares that nursing, not as a biomedical branch, but as a science and art of caring, is able to start the redefinition of research in health care which was in the recent history dominated by the biomedical "paradigm".

#### **Q. 4 Provide some ethical guidelines in the light of Quran and Sunnah.**

Islam is considered by the majority of Muslims as a way of life and not just a religion. Islam teaches what is 'right' and 'wrong' according to Allah's commandments, conveyed to Mankind by Prophet Muhammad peace be

upon him (PBUH). Ethics according to ordinary people's understanding is about differentiating between 'right' and 'wrong'.

If a Muslim behaves in a manner contradicting the teachings of Islam he will be deemed to have behaved in an unethical manner as he has committed a wrong act. On the other hand if a person for example a journalist slanders an individual then he has acted in an unethical manner. Slander is prohibited by law in many countries and by Islamic Law as well (see Quran Surah No. 104 - Humazah) whether being a Muslim or not the behavior was wrong and it is not expectable from a journalist. Even other journalists will consider this person's behavior as unethical and brings the journalism profession disrepute.

Media is defined as the means of communication used to inform or influence people at a local, national and International level. This could be in the form of television, radio, magazine, newspaper, publications or the internet. It is important to discuss Islamic ethics and the Media because there are many Muslim journalists and media networks employing Muslims all over the world and they need to understand Islamic ethics regarding media in order to guide and assist them in their profession and to help them maintain the Islamic character in their work as adopted by the International Islamic Mass Media Conference in Jakarta in 2000. This may also be very helpful to governments of Muslim countries in regulating the media.

Media ethics differs from one country to another around the world depending on the political system or culture of the country. There might be some agreement on media ethics applied throughout the media but there are some genuine differences. If values differ amongst different cultures, the issue arises of the extent to which behavior should be modified in the light of the values of specific cultures. Consider the following examples of controversy from the field of media ethics, the first being the publication of the book called 'The Satanic Verses' in 1988 by Salman Rushdie. The book was considered blasphemous by many Muslims because in the book it is claimed that the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) first proclaims a revelation in favor of the old polytheistic deities but later renounces these verses as being influenced by Satan hence the reason why the title of the book is 'The Satanic Verses'.

The second controversy was in 2006 the Danish newspaper Jyllands- Posten published cartoons of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) including one with a bomb in his turban which resulted in protests from Muslims around the world and condemnation from Arab and Muslim Governments.

Had Islamic ethics been applied to both Salman Rushdie and the Jyllands Posten cases then there would not have been any controversy as they would not have been able to insult the Prophet Muhammad or any religious figure as respect for other religions is contained in the Holy Quran 'You have your religion and I shall have my religion' (the last verse of Surah Kafirun;109:6).

The issue of drawing the line between censorship and free speech or freedom of expression arose especially when other European newspapers reprinted the cartoons aggravating the situation. In many Muslim countries it

is considered immoral and blasphemous to depict Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) but not so in European countries. Therefore the issue of relativism in morality and media ethics needs to be investigated.

A key issue regarding ethics in entertainment is the illustration of violence, sex and strong language. Ethical guidelines and legislations in this area are common as a way of regulating the entertainment industry in many countries but this may differ from one country to another. Film and computer games are subject to rating system. For example, a particular film may be rated only suitable for adult viewers over the age of 18 in the UK by the British Board of Film Classification but in the USA it might be rated by the Motion Picture Association of America as 'R-Restricted' this would allow viewers under the age of 18 to watch the film if they are accompanied by an adult.

The main principle here is that it is up to the individual countries themselves to decide how to rate the films. There does not seem to be a global agreement on entertainment/film ethics and perhaps there might be a need for one. Islamic ethics would prohibit the depiction of sex, strong language, nudity and most if not all forms of violence.

We may also need to consider applying Islamic ethics to strands of social media such as 'YouTube', 'Twitter' and 'Facebook' as these strands were used during the Arab spring to organize protests and show the world the atrocities being committed by Arab dictators. Arab dictators also banned or placed restrictions on Journalists who are covering the real issues and stories, so YouTube was used by protesters to upload their own videos and share their struggle and stories with others around the world. YouTube was used to show the world that protesters were being shot and killed and this have increased pressure on the dictators which eventually lead to them stepping down. In essence YouTube was used to bypass and overcome the restrictions placed on Journalists.

Changes in journalism practice, developments in new media technologies and different patterns of ownership all play a role in creating ethical dilemmas. Therefore Islamic ethics must be applied where necessary as Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was sent to teach mankind the difference between 'right ' and 'wrong' which is all centered around ethics and character.

### **Q. 5 Elaborate women as consumer of media with suitable examples.**

Media is regarded as eyes and ears of a society which not only serves as a watchdog but also provides credible information regarding important and newsworthy national and international events to enrich and strengthen the social fabric. Thus the significant information through media plays a role of oxygen in social structure. If people do not know precisely what is happening around, they cannot become active citizens and play their meaningful part in the affairs of the country. It is hard to imagine of having real democracy or good governance without informed citizens. In any democratic dispensation, public opinion is required to develop freely and independently and journalists have a special responsibility in this regards. Mass media being an educator, informer, reformer, guide and a trend-setter is more accountable. Hence it should follow ethics strictly.

# Course: Media Ethics & Laws Part – I (6603)

## Semester: Autumn, 2021

Ethics is a branch of philosophy and its purpose is to describe moral sentiment as well as to establish norms for good and fair behaviour. Boundaries of ethics are drawn in different dimensions in different societies. In Pakistan, the ethical dimensions are partly similar to those of other countries having different demographic, religious and social backgrounds. Media ethics kept the journalism and cultural industries with the responsibility to perform for the betterment of society. Until 2002, the only television channels that operated in Pakistan were the state-run PTV and a couple of its specialized news and entertainment subsidiaries. Media in Pakistan purposely followed the ethical lines to disseminate the credible information, which caused to the gradual rise in the maturity in the attitude of the people towards politics and the social responsibility. However, the last decade has witnessed a great shift in the media policy of the government due to opening of a lot of private television channels. In line with the global trends, the government also introduced the new media technologies in the country resulting in a rapid growth of broadcast media in Pakistan. With the passage of time it has become diverse and touching the topics which once were considered forbidden for public consumption.

But in the same vein, media in Pakistan has become an industry in the real sense of the word and is following its own agenda. With the opening up of the media industry, the unrestrained news channels are involved in a mad race of breaking news syndrome in order to gain the audience and popularity instead of delivering correct information to viewers. Today, prominent news channels are broadcasting uncensored violence, crime stories, live coverage of terrorist attacks while compromising media ethics.

Commercial interest of media to generate revenue never let it to observe public service message time. News channels dramatize the event to make them saleable which is against media ethics. The TV anchors are losing their credibility as they are found biased and manipulate the issue most of the time, serving their owners or other specific stakeholders for petty gains. This practice is against the norms of journalism.

Sensitive issues regarding gender are highlighted in a vulgar way. Yellow journalism and inappropriate division of time for coverage of news event and personalities through broadcast media raised the question about media ethics. Issues that are more important for society and have to be dealt with the masses such as non-availability of potable water, loadshedding, public health, infrastructure, wages, poverty, unemployment, etc. are not pursued by the media properly to a point where a solution is eventually reached.

In November 2009, a Gallup Pakistan poll found that almost one-third of all Pakistanis (31 per cent) blame media for political instability in Pakistan. These findings have two important implications: first, media are creating confusion and chaos by distracting the public from the real issues; and second, by discrediting themselves with unconfirmed reports, members of media are undermining their own profession and ultimately freedom of press.

In Pakistan, Council of Pakistan Newspapers Editors, All Pakistan Newspapers Society and Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists have developed code of ethics to follow. Similarly, Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) has developed rules to follow but implementation in this context is the weak link. Media in

Pakistan is not fully mature yet. At such stage it is very vital to prioritize the socio political health of the public through credible and newsworthy information and positive entertainment. We need to develop a code of ethics for the media so that it could serve as a watchdog in the society besides helping public form opinion about national and international issues through provision of authentic and verifiable debates. The government always formulates a code of ethics through which it can control the media in its own favour. Press Council Ordinance and the PEMRA rules and regulations are obtrusive examples. Similarly the code of ethics drafted by the owners and broadcasters unnecessarily defends their rights. The working journalists are not giving any importance and the audience rights not secured. All the abovementioned issues can be resolved through a code of ethics based on a broadest possible consensus among all stakeholders. This is the right time that media owners, editors, practitioners and professional journalists should pay due attention to the issue and prepare a comprehensive code. This code should be acceptable for all parties including audience. Further Pakistan's media community should adopt the international practice of defining standards that it shall always strive to attain. The Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ) has drafted a code of ethics for Pakistani media which is based upon the belief that fair, balanced and independent journalism is essential for good governance, effective public administration and the capacity of people in Pakistan to achieve genuine democracy and peace. The code recognizes that the creation of a tolerant, peaceful and just society depends upon the freedom of citizens to have access to responsible journalism through media that respect principles of pluralism and diversity.

For this code to be effective, journalism and media policy in Pakistan must be guided by the following principles: That media, whatever the mode of dissemination, are independent, tolerant and reflect diversity of opinion enabling full democratic exchange within and among all communities, whether based on geography, ethnic origins, religious belief or language, That laws defend and protect the rights of journalists and the rights of all citizens to freedom of information and the right to know; That there is respect for decent working and professional conditions, through legally enforceable employment rights and appropriate regulations that guarantee editorial independence and recognition of the profession of journalism; That there is credible and effective peer accountability through self-regulation by journalists and media professionals that will promote editorial independence and high standards of accuracy, reliability, and quality in media.