



## What should be the Moral Rules of Conduct that Guide one's Decisions about Media?

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### Abstract

Off late, media ethics is a moral problem in India and across the globe. Journalist and moralist have tried to solve the problem of media ethics in various ways. In the present article my tentative goal is to show different types of problem and endeavor to sketch an ethical reply answer the problems of media ethics. In the first part of the article, we have tried to define that what media is? In the second part of my article, we have discussed about the activities of media and in this connection we also tried to judge of the morality of mass media. Thirdly we have introduced Propaganda Model which is propounded by Edwards S Herman and Noam Chomsky in their book *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* in 1988 and finally we tried to endeavor an ethical response about media that should be a model to contemporary journalist (Herman & Chomsky, 1988).

**Keywords:** *Propaganda, Flak, Anti-communism, Mass Media, and Journalist*

### 1. Introduction

Philosophers who deal with morality since antiquity have been grappling with the problem of the activities of media ethics and tried to solve the problem of media. News media around the globe must balance a shared goal of providing truthful accounts for citizens with the pressures constantly applied by governments, business, religion and other social forces. A vocabulary and consensus about ethics has emerged in the past half century in countries relatively free of government control to guide news organizations in that balancing act (Simpson, 1985). This article examines the idea of ethical communication, considers the pressures on ethical journalism because of social media and new technologies and places three important ethical conflicts in its spotlight: how can the truth be gathered and shared in rapidly changing circumstances? How can the news media honor fairness and justice when social forces challenge that goal? Can an institution that feeds on violence also play a role in minimizing harm?

### 2. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the proposed study are as follows:

1. To investigate ethical rules that helps a journalist to write news properly.

2. To investigate moral laws which help a person to judge the truth or falsehood of news or social events?
3. By which morality should we access social media like Facebook, What's app, Email, Twitter and so on?

### **3. What Media ethics is?**

Media ethics is the subdivision of applied ethics dealing with specific principles and standards of media, including broadcast media, film, theatre, the arts, print media and the internet. Media ethics involves promoting and defending values such as a universal respect for life and the rule of law and legality (Moldovan, 1991). The role of the media in contemporary politics forces us to ask what kind of a world and what kind of a society we want to live in, and in particular in what sense of democracy do we want this to be a democratic society? There are two different conceptions of democracy about media. One conception of democracy has it that a democratic society is one in which the public has the means to participate in some meaningful way in the management of their own affairs and the means of information are open and free. If you look up democracy in the dictionary you will get a definition something like that (Goldman, 1987).

An alternative conception of democracy is that the public must be barred from managing of their own affairs and the means of information must be kept narrowly and rigidly controlled. That may sound like an odd conception of democracy, but it's important to understand that it is the prevailing conception. In fact, it has long been, not just in operation, but even in theory.

### **4. The Propaganda Model**

The Propaganda Model, which sought to explain the behavior of the mass media in the United States, was developed by Edward S Herman and Noam Chomsky in *Manufacturing Consent: the Political Economy of the Mass Media*, published in 1988. The model seeks to explain how populations are manipulated and how consent for economic, social, and political policies is 'manufactured' in the public mind due to this propaganda. The theory posits that the way in which corporate media is structured creates an inherent conflict of interest that acts as propaganda for undemocratic forces (Chomsky, 1991).

The theory postulates five general classes of filters that determine the type of news that is presented in news media. These five classes are: Ownership of the medium, Funding, Source, Flaks and Anti-communism. Although the model was based on the characterization of United States media, Chomsky and Herman believe the theory is equally applicable to any country that shares the basic economic structure and organizing principles that the model postulates as the cause of media biases. Now we would like to discuss five classes of filters in details.

#### **4.1 Ownership**

The first has to do with ownership. Mass media firms are big corporations. Often, they are part of even bigger conglomerates. And so it's in their interests to push for whatever guarantees that profit. Naturally, critical journalism must take second place to the needs and interests of the corporation.

## **4.2 Funding**

The second filter exposes the real role of advertising. Media costs a lot more than consumers will ever pay. So who fills the gap? And what are the advertisers paying for? And so it isn't so much that the media are selling you a product. They are also selling advertisers a product — YOU.”

## **4.3 Source**

The establishment manages the media through the third filter. Journalism cannot be a check on power because the very system encourages complicity. Governments, corporations, big institutions know how to play the media game. They know how to influence the news narrative. They feed media scoops, official accounts, and interviews with the ‘experts’. They make themselves crucial to the process of journalism. So, those in power and those who report on them are in bed with each other.

## **4.4 Flak**

If you want to challenge power, you'll be pushed to the margins. When the media – journalists, whistleblowers, sources – stray away from the consensus, they get ‘flak’. This is the fourth filter. When the story is inconvenient for the powers that be, you'll see the flak machine in action discrediting sources, trashing stories and diverting the conversation.

## **4.5 Anti-communism**

To manufacture consent, you need an enemy — a target. That common enemy is the fifth filter (Communism, Terrorists, and Immigrants). A common enemy, a bogeyman to fear, helps corral public opinion.

## **5. Ethical Theory of Relevance to the Media**

There are two main ethical theories which are frequently employed to determine correct media behavior: Consequentialism and deontology.

### **5.1 Consequentialism**

The consequentialist theory holds that the ethical value of an action should be judged on its consequences. Actions themselves lack inherent value, but can be appraised on hindsight by virtue of their consequences. Consequentialist theories focus only on the outcome of an action, without regard for the means, that is, how the consequences came about. Therefore, all actions should be thoroughly considered in terms of their possible outcomes before being executed. The outcomes of an action can be evaluated from two perspectives: ethical egoism or ethical altruism. Ethical egoism holds that action whose consequences will benefit the agent of the action can be considered ethical. Ethical altruism, on the other hand, holds that actions that benefit others can be considered good.

## 5.2 Deontology

Deontology focuses on a person's duty as a means to determine appropriate action. Kant was the most famous deontologist. He felt that it was the intentions behind an action that rendered it ethical or unethical. Kant argued that the only right intention was the intention to act out of duty. This duty is that which can be said to be good in all situations. He believed that there was only one virtue which was good without qualification: goodwill. Actions motivated by goodwill are done out of respect for moral law and out of duty. The real definition of 'duty, however, is a little unclear. Kant's categorical imperative-will to act well out of duty-has three important guidelines

- 1) An agent should be motivated by a principle, which he would be happy to see as a universal maxim.
- 2) Always treat people as an end in themselves and not just a means
- 3) Act as if you were a lawmaker in the kingdom of 'ends'.

This is a very pertinent concept for the media -it is the media's duty to serve the public by providing information which is impartial and which promotes knowledge and reason. It is the duty of the judiciary to pronounce judgment over certain questionable acts. Problems can and do occur when the media assumes the right to judge a purported crime.

Journalists have many duties, however, and 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 can and do sometimes stand on opposite sides of the ethical battleground. 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.

## 6. Ethics about Social Media

If we critically follow the view of previous moralist philosophers, we can understand that they generally concern about the nature or morality of a journalist and about the morality of news, movie, drama etc. but in this connection I also want to analysis the ethical view of social media viz, Facebook what's app email and so on. It is very important to remember that whenever you connect with a social media network, you are joining a community. In any community, there is an appropriate time to discuss business. You need to be sure to treat the people in your community with respect and kindness (Deuze, 2005). It is of utmost importance to respect the boundaries of others. Aggressive targeted marketing has no place in social media. Your motivation for being a part of the community is to give others the benefit of your experience and to build relationships with other members of your community. I think there should be three rules for accessing social media. These are as follows:

- A. Authenticity – people will respond positively if you are sincere.
- B. Transparency – having hidden agendas will only count against you.
- C. Communication – getting to know people as people and letting them get to know you.

## 7. Conclusion

The study so far done thinks there is only one method (deontological theory) to defeat the problem of media. If all the journalists do accept deontological method while publishing the news then the news will be much more accurate and appropriate. In this connection I also propose that, if we, the audience, also follow the deontological method while accessing Facebook, E-mail News and so on then our experience about world will be much more clear and distinct.

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