**E-CONTENT**

**MJMC,  SEM-IV, PAPER-XIV (CC-402)  
  
 Topic : MEDIA ETHICS & LAW , CONTINUE..  
  
Date : 12-01-2020, TIME : 2.00 P.M.-3.00 P.M.**

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**Deontology**

Deontology focuses on a person’s duty as a means to determine appropriate action.

Immanuel Kant, the most famous deontologist, felt that it was the intention behind

an action that rendered it ethical or unethical. He 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 ‘goodwill’ was the only virtue that was good

without qualification. Actions done out of goodwill are done out of respect for

moral law and out of duty. This is a very pertinent concept for the media as it is

the media’s duty to serve the public by providing information which is impartial

and which promotes knowledge and reason.

Journalists have many duties, however, 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 towards the employer can at

sometimes be in moral and ethical juxtaposition to each other. 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 is

thus vitally important for a journalist to be aware of the implications of a report

before publishing or broadcasting it.

Social welfare is the *raison d’être* of the media. Various media of mass

communications - print, radio, television, cinema and the Internet - reach out to

large numbers of people, often from different sections of society and from across

diverse societies. The function of the mass media — sourcing, reporting and

dissemination of information is aimed at the public. The media revolves around

society; it is people who provide news and it is people to whom the news is

reported, hence the need for media ethics.

**Media in the Complex Social Milieu**

Individuals are complex, societies even more so, especially societies like India,

that are highly heterogeneous, plural, variegated and even deeply divided.

Journalists are faced with social nuances at every turn and have to come to terms

with these complexities. In sourcing information while presenting news, journalists

have to report on gender crimes; exploitation of the underprivileged; indulgence

of the affluent; arrogance of those in positions of power and authority; natural

calamities and man-made accidents; communal tensions and riots; conflicts and

wars and acts of terrorism. While reporting news, explaining facts, analysing

information and placing these in their historical, social, economic and political

contexts, journalists have to be aware of their audience and accordingly use the

language and tone considered appropriate, proper and relevant.

Media serves society by disseminating accurate information which is essential to

facilitate reasoned and ethical behaviour. Knowledge is an invaluable social

commodity and that is reflected in legal provisions such as the right to information,

freedom of expression, speech and debate — all of which lead to the freedom of

the media. Reason, which is facilitated by information and knowledge, has often

been recognised by philosophers, such as Immanuel Kant, as the best means for

determining ethical action. Ethics is such an important area of concern because it

views humans as being inextricable from society and that social interaction should

be governed by mutual consideration and respect. Journalism is concerned with

promoting ethically based decision-making and behaviour.