

# **News & Media:** **Ethical Values in Journalism**

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# Ethical Values

- Are these notions governed by **Laws** OR are they merely **Social Norms**?
- Note that **one isn't obligated by law to comply with a social norm**; to do so is a **voluntary and personal matter**.
- Note the details included within the **First Amendment** in the American press **guaranteeing press freedom**.

# Aims of Journalism

- **To Inform** - That **the public has the right to know** what is going on in any sphere of activity.
- E.g. the **use of stolen documents** might be justified **IF** the information they contain is **essential to the public** – such behaviour would be unethical but not illegal.

# Unethical Journalism

- **Exploiting others** for one's own gain
- **Sensationalising news** not for the purpose of **informing** but to **sell**.
- **Invading a person's privacy** not to reveal essential information but to sell.

# Unethical Journalism

- **Causing embarrassment or harm by public identification** when it is not essential to do so e.g. *in a rape case*.
- **Conflict of Interest** – when Journalists have a **hidden agenda** in their presentation of an issue.
- **Careless Journalism** – allowing others with **special interests** to influence their work either *deliberately or due to laziness & inattention*.

# Final Note

- Do note that some news organisations may discipline its employees for violating its code of conduct – **BUT** *the employee would not be charged with breaking any law – as these are merely voluntary guidelines.*

# Food for Thought

- Should Journalism **be governed by Ethics** OR merely by **the need to inform** & by **market forces**?
- Have there been any **major repercussions** thus far where unethical journalism has been uncovered. **Discuss & Analyse** the Key Issues.