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An assessment of the status of media ethics under contemporary social conditions

**Nainsi Raj • Falak Mariyam Rahman • Anjali
• Subroto Guha**

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Corresponding Author : Subroto Guha

Abstract : *Media ethics is an inevitable issue. The ushering-in of the 21st century has brought about far-reaching changes in the culture, value, ethical standards of media persons, and media presentation is an example of the changes which have been brought about. Contemporary social conditions have become varied and most of the media vehicles today are trying to be within the media ethics benchmarks. This research aims at examining and establishing the media ethics related variants and various*

other related issues which play an important and complementary role in affecting / influencing ethical standards.

Keywords :- *Media Ethics, Contemporary Social Conditions, Media Audience.*

Nainsi Raj

CEMS III year, Session: 2008-2011,
Patna Women's College, Patna University, Patna,
Bihar, India

Falak Mariyam Rahman

CEMS III year, Session: 2008-2011,
Patna Women's College, Patna University, Patna,
Bihar, India

Anjali

CEMS III year, Session: 2008-2011,
Patna Women's College, Patna University, Patna,
Bihar, India

Subroto Guha

Assistant Professor, Department of CEMS,
Patna Women's College, Bailey Road,
Patna – 800 001, Bihar, India
E-mail : subroto.guha@hotmail.com

Introduction :

This research study is about the principles of ethics and of good practices as applicable to the specific challenges faced by professional journalists and media persons. Media Ethics is widely known as the professional Code of Ethics of journalists or the Canon of Journalism.

Every news organization has only its credibility and reputation to rely on and therefore it becomes imperative for all concerned media persons to follow the Ethical Code as to develop a proper work benchmark (*Canons of journalism – as adopted by ASNE originally in 1923*).

Hypothesis of the Research :

Hypothesis is the basic assumption on which a research is based. It also refers to the set of beliefs on which the entire research is conducted. In this study the hypothetical assumption is that public groups expect the media to present information and news honestly, accurately and timely. Unfortunately, in the age of rapid privatization and commercial entertainment the media often falls short in fulfilling our expectation. By falsifying or exaggerating information in a story and transmitting partisan information with little scrutiny, the big media conglomerates have undermined their reputation as objective messengers of information. These actions, on the part of the media, reduce their medium from an art form to mere tabloid journalism. Therefore, this study would revolve around the above contentions. (IFJ (International Federation of Journalist) – declaration of principle on the conduct of journalist (DOC version).)

Objectives of the Research :

The major objectives of this research are:-

- To prove that all the journalists themselves are not unethical.
- To recognize that Media Ethics does not end with blaming the media system.
- To demand truthful, objective and responsible news presentations.

(ASNE (American Society of News papers Editor) – statement of principle.)

Methodology Adopted :

Our entire research would be based upon a two tier research concerning primary data analysis and secondary data analysis.

1. Primary Data

Primary data were collected from 200 respondents belonging to different walks of life using a structure schedule consisting of a variety of questions.

2. Secondary Data

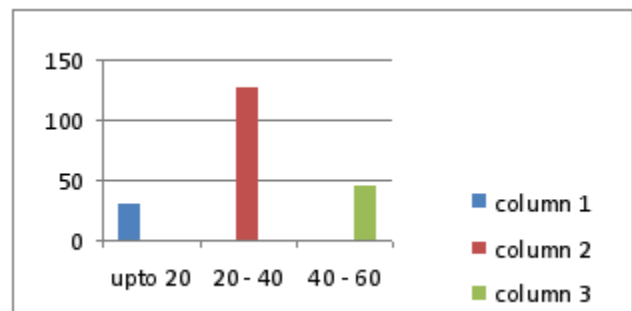
Secondary data related to the research problem were gathered from the published data base, like – journals, ethics, manuals of the different outlets/organizations and on the basis of discussion with various media persons.

(APME (Associated Press Managing Editor) - statement of ethical principle.)

Major Findings of the Research :

AGE

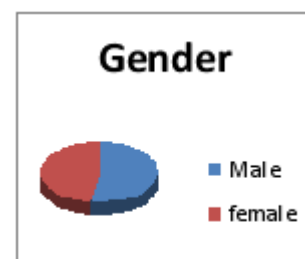
Upto 20	20 – 40	40 – 60
29	126	45
14.5%	63%	22.5%



The frequency table shows that 29(14.5%) respondents are within the age group of upto 20 years, 126 (63%) respondents are within the age group of 20-40 years. The remaining respondents that is 45(22.5%) are between 40 to 60 years of age.

GENDER

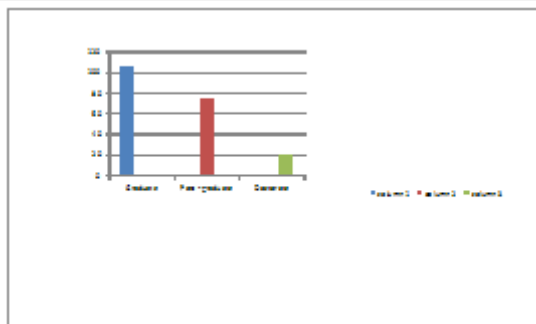
Male	Female
105 (52.5%)	95(47.5%)



Through the frequency table and pie chart we come to know that out of 200 respondent 105(52.5%) are male and the remaining 95 (47.5%) are female.

EDUCATIONAL PROFILE

Graduate	Post - graduate	Doctorate
106(53%)	74(37%)	20(10%)



In this finding the result shows that out of 200 respondents 106 (53%) are graduate, 74 (37%) are post graduate but only 20(10%) respondents are doctorate.

OCCUPATIONAL PROFILE

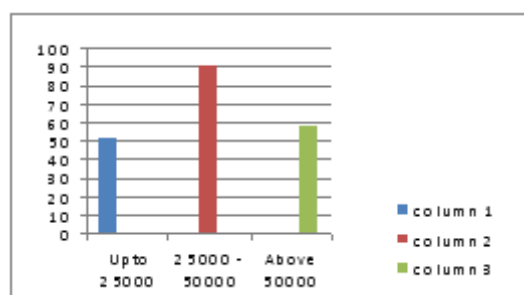
Employed	Self employed	Housewife	Retired
141(70.5%)	21(10.5%)	32(16%)	6(3%)



Through the frequency table we come to know that out of 200 respondents 141(70.5%) are employed, 21(10.5%) are self employed, 32(16%) are housewives and the remaining 6(3%) are retired.

EARNING PROFILE

Upto 25000	25000 – 50000	Above 50000
52(26%)	90(45%)	58(29%)

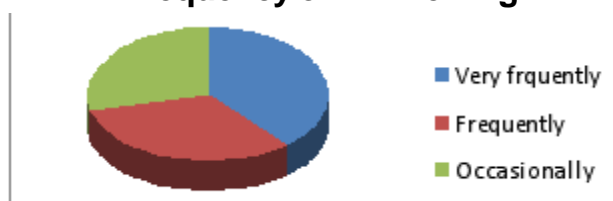


In this finding we come to know that 52(26%) respondent's family earning profile is up to 25000, 90(45%) respondent's family earning profile is between 25000 to 50000 and the remaining 58(29%) respondents have a family earning of above 50000.

FREQUENCY OF T.V. VIEWING

Very frequently	Frequently	Occasionally
77(38.5%)	66(33%)	57(28.5%)

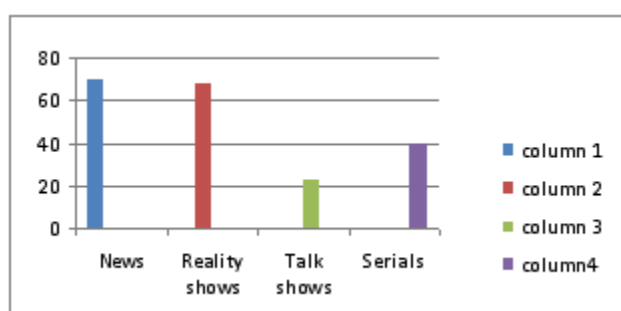
Frequency of T.V. viewing



In this finding the results show that there are 77(38.5%) respondents who watch television very frequently, there are 66(33%) respondents who watch television frequently and the rest that is 57 (28.5%) watch television occasionally.

PROGRAMS NORMALLY VIEWED

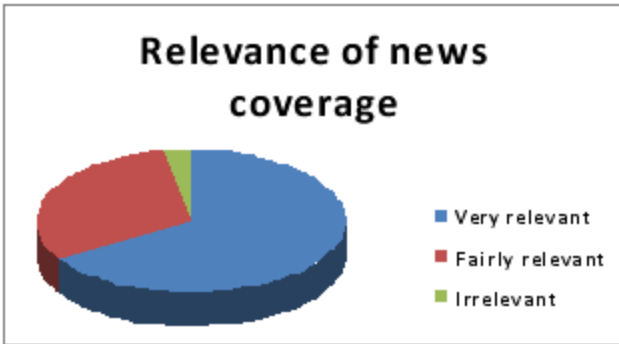
News	Reality shows	Talk shows	Serials
70(35%)	68(34%)	22(11%)	40(20%)



Through the frequency table we come to know that 70(35%) of the respondent watch news, 68(34%) watch reality shows, 22(11%) watch talk shows and the remaining 40(20%) watch serials.

RELEVANCE OF NEWS COVERAGE

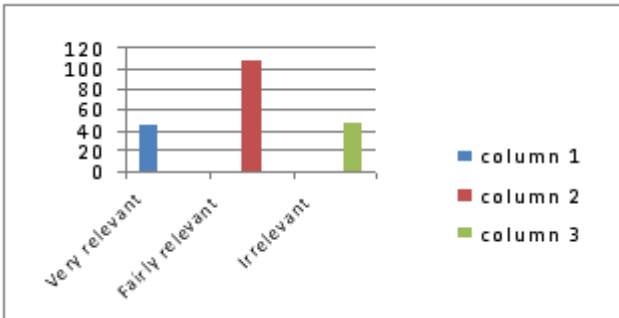
Very relevant	Fairly relevant	Irrelevant
132(66%)	62(31%)	6(3%)



In this finding we come to know that 132(66%) said that news coverage is very relevant, 62(31%) said that it is fairly relevant; whereas 6 (3%) said that is irrelevant. This data can be explained through a pie chart.

SERIALS WITHIN THE CURRENT MARKET CONDITION

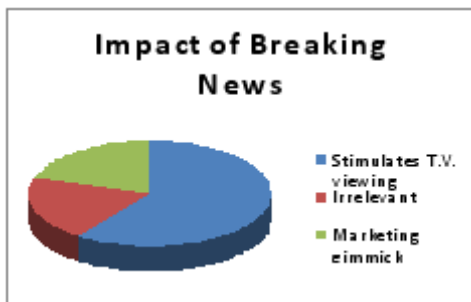
Very relevant	Fairly relevant	Irrelevant
44(66%)	108(54%)	48(24%)



Through the frequency table we come to know that 44(22%) respondents feel that serials within the current market conditions are very relevant, the majority i.e.108 (54%) say that it is fairly relevant, where as 48(24%) say that it is irrelevant.

IMPACT OF BREAKING NEWS

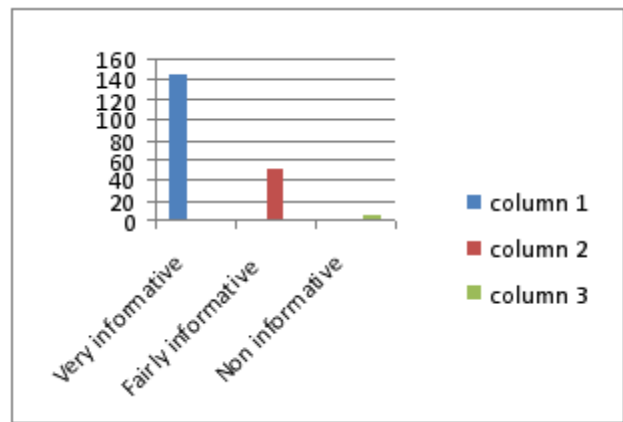
Stimulates T.V viewing	Irrelevant	Marketing gimmick
120(60%)	40(20%)	40(20%)



In this finding we come to know that 120(60%) respondents think that Breaking News concept stimulates T.V. Viewing, whereas 40(20%) and 40(20%) think that at times it is irrelevant and it is a marketing gimmick respectively.

EXTENT OF NEWS COVERAGE IN NATIONAL NEWS CHANNELS

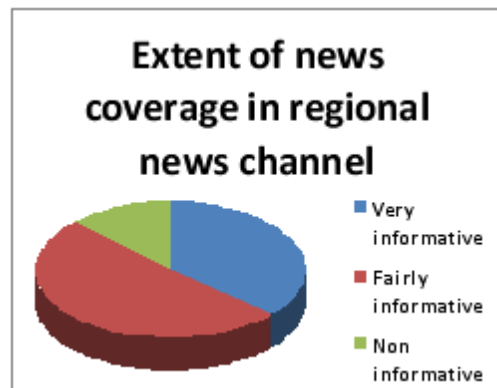
Very informative	Fairly informative	Non informative
145(72.5%)	50(25%)	5(2.5%)



Through the frequency table we come to know that 145(72.5%) respondents rated news coverage in the national news channels as very informative,50(25%) rated it as fairly informative and 5(2.5%) rated it as non-informative.

EXTENT OF NEWS COVERAGE IN REGIONAL NEWS CHANNELS

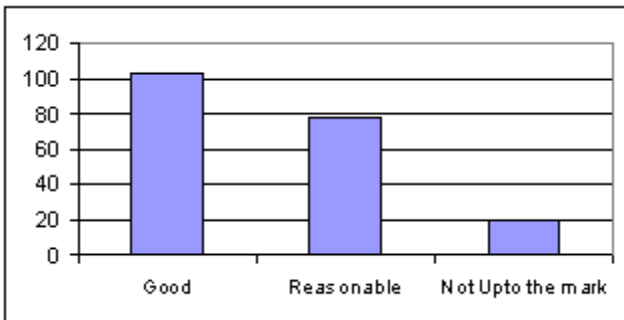
Very informative	Fairly informative	Non informative
73(36.5%)	102(51%)	25(12.5%)



Through the frequency table we come to know that 73(36.5%) respondents rated news coverage in the regional news channels as very informative,102(51%) rated it as fairly informative and 25(12.5%) rated it as non-informative.

STANDARD OF LANGUAGE WITHIN NEWS CAPSULES

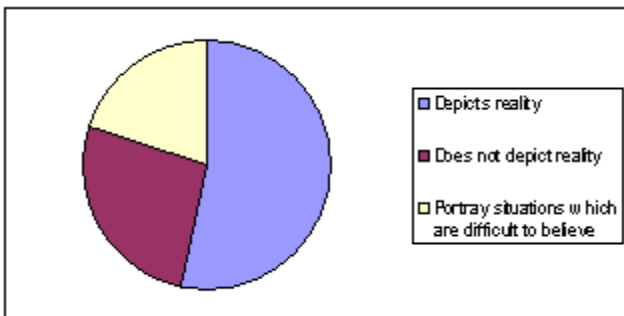
Good	Reasonable	Not Upto the mark
103(51.5%)	78(39%)	19(9.5%)



Through the frequency table we come to know that 103(51.5%) respondents said that the standard of language within the news capsule is by large good,78(39%) said that it is reasonable where as 19(9.5%)said it is not upto the mark.

MORAL STANDARDS OF THE TELEVISION SERIALS

Depicts reality	Does not depict reality	Portrays situations which are difficult to believe
106(53%)	53(27%)	40(20%)

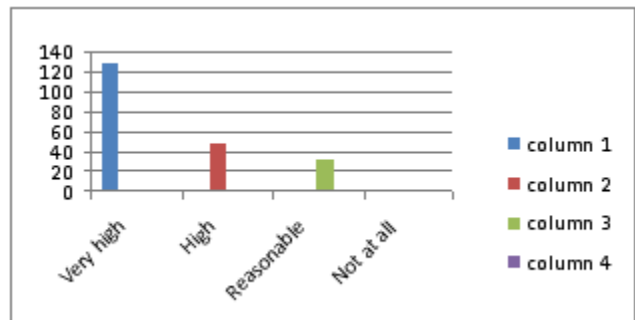


Through the above pie chart we come to know that 106(53%) said that serials depict reality, 54 (27%) said that they do not depict reality, whereas

40(20%) of the respondents said that they portray situations which are difficult to believe.

EXAGGERATION IN NEWS COVERAGE

Very high	High	Reasonable	Not at all
128(64%)	46(20%)	32(16%)	0



In this finding we come to know that 128(64%) of the respondents said that the level of exaggeration in news coverage is very high, 46(20%) said that the level of exaggeration is high,32(16%) said that it is reasonable.

References :

- APME (Associated Press Managing Editor) - statement of ethical principle.
- ASNE (American Society of News papers Editor) – statement of principle.
- Canons of journalism – as adopted by ASNE originally in 1923.
- IFJ (International Federation of Journalist) – declaration of principle on the conduct of journalist (DOC version).
- SPJ (Society of Professional Journalists) – code of ethics.