Chapter 4  
Social Responsibility and Ethical Issues

In this chapter we shall examine some of the issues that concern journalism today in the light of what is considered ethically sound and socially responsible practices in the profession. As Schmuhl (1989) has pointed out, ‘so much of contemporary journalism involves immediate response that the ethical formation of the individual newsperson is crucial in deciding how he or she will cover a story. Given the urgency and speed with which journalists need to operate and the challenges posed by fast growing technological developments coupled with competition from the new media, it is becoming increasingly difficult for journalists to verify and check the news for accuracy and ethical precepts. In the course of practicing their profession, journalists do not always have the time or opportunity to consult codes or to refer to journalism books for ethical guidelines. What he or she does at the moment of reckoning will often develop out of the moral principles and standards that have been internalised over time and through one’s conscience and personal convictions.

In the light of growing commercialisation and aggressive competition in the field of journalism and other media today, there is a growing awareness of the need to evolve and practice social responsibility and ethical principles. This requires that
media professionals as well as media teachers learn and refer to norms, guidelines and conventions to understand the goals and objectives that guided the press in the past. Such efforts will enable them to evolve policies and precepts that suit the contemporary needs and challenges. This chapter, while reinstating the need for such an effort, attempts to provide some indicators for this task.

### 4.1 Ethics and Social Responsibility

The issue of journalistic ethics and social responsibility of the press are closely linked. Without defining and specifying ethical standards it would be difficult to lay down the ground rules for a socially responsible press. Efforts to critically look at the responsibilities and ethical functions of the press have brought into sharper focus the importance of a press that is more responsible. Professional codes provide a sense of professional identity for the practitioners. Journalism ethics addresses issues that pertain to the behaviour of reporters, photographers, editors, designers, and managers. Journalists not only provide information but also help their audience to understand the meaning of the information they provide. It is in this complex situation that lack of consensus or clarity and ethically grey areas surface. Sometimes these lead to conflict situations either within the newspaper organisation or with the public or civic bodies.

In assessing the current situation of media, Carter (1983) observed: “the domain of the mass media today is an ethical jungle in which pragmatism is king, agreed principles as to daily practice are few, and many of the inhabitants pride themselves on the anarchy of their surroundings.” But there are several paths being
cut through the ethically unclear landscape that eventually may lead to the road to
greater journalistic responsibility.

Lack of appropriate training about ethical, moral and social issues do affect
journalistic practice, making it socially less responsible (Nordenstreng-Topuz, 1989).
The Hutchins Commission (1947) stressed the importance of journalism training to
improve the standards of journalism education, which should impart not only the
skills, but also values of journalism, the ‘know-why’ as well as the ‘know-how.’
However, it has been pointed out that though many schools of journalism include
ethics as part of their curriculum, journalistic practice seldom entails referring back to
them.

It may also be noted that discussions on social responsibility, ethical
guidelines and codes have remained at times inconclusive due to lack of consensus on
what constitutes an appropriate code and how to apply them. A code can be vague,
and enforcing it can entail practical difficulties. But education in ethical and
responsible journalism is essential to journalism training. Organisations which
employ journalists can provide them on-the-job and on-going formation, which
include training, discussion sessions, exposures, internships, and case study reviews.
These can help journalists to deepen their understanding of ethical issues. Even
though ethical principles are universal and permanent, ethical issues, perspectives,
rules and yardsticks of objectivity may arise, which according to varying contexts
demand fresh approach and response from journalists and editors. Journalists, whose
profession consists in chronicling everyday events of society and interpret reality to
the public, cannot stop the process of learning and updating.
Social responsibility demands something beyond and more than "objective" reporting. Hutchins Commission (1947) urged the press to provide "a truthful, comprehensive, and intelligent account of the day's events in a context that gives them meaning." The goal of accuracy, of striving to discover and disseminate the truth about public affairs, is part of the journalist's conventional responsibility. Most people in the press know the need to separate fact and opinion. Reporting today demands greater interpretation of issues and events. A truthful, complete account of the news is not enough. Today's complex situations often necessitate analysis, explanation, and interpretation of the event that is being reported.

If humans are to remain free, they must live by reason instead of passively accepting what they see, hear, and feel. Therefore, the more alert elements of the community must goad them into the exercise of their reason. Without such goading humans are not likely to be moved to seek truth. The languor, which keeps them from using their gift of reason, extends to all public discussion. Human beings aim not so much as to find truth as to satisfy their immediate needs and desires (Commission, 1947). It is the press, therefore, that must be the "more alert element" and keep the public informed, for an informed populace is the cornerstone of democracy. Lippmann (1922) described the main function of the press as "signaling an event" - the recorder of current history.

Today's large media conglomerates, however, may not function naturally as a public forum where all ideas are shared and available. "The owners and managers of the press determine which persons, which facts, and which versions of these facts, shall reach the public," observes the Commission (1947). In the same light, Siebert et
al (1956) warn: "...the power and near monopoly position of the media impose on them an obligation to be socially responsible, to see that all sides are fairly presented and that the public has enough information to decide; and that if the media do not take on themselves such responsibility it may be necessary for some other agency of the public to enforce it." The Canons of Journalism adopted by the American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE) in 1922 and revised and renamed in 1975 as Statement of Principles, addressed these same obligations when it called on newspapers to practice responsibility to the general welfare, sincerity, truthfulness, impartiality, fair play, decency, and respect for the individual's privacy. Though many countries have formulated code of ethics they vary in form and scope from one country or region to another (Kumar, 1981).

As far as India is concerned, there have been several attempts to draw up a set of guidelines. As Kumar (1981) has observed, "attempts to draw up a code of ethics for journalists in India have up to now drawn a blank. Neither the Press Council nor the All India Editors' Conference have come up with a code acceptable to the whole profession." In 1966 the Press Council circulated a list of guidelines to over 10,000 newspapers and journals, for their observations, but the feedback was not promising. Ten years later a committee of 17 editors presented a Code of Ethics and Editors Charter to parliament, but since it was the period of Emergency when the press freedom was severely curtailed, it was suspect. It demanded that the press must present a truthful, comprehensive and reliable account of the events in a context which gives them meaning, project a representative picture of constituent groups in society, regard itself as a forum for comment and criticism and discharge of social
responsibilities by clarifying the goals and values of society (Kumar 1981). The Second Press Commission as well as media professionals and several experts suggest that the press should be left to itself evolve policies and guidelines to regulate itself rather than controlled from outside. Press Councils and other bodies can step in when the press acts irresponsibly.

4.2 Balanced and Inclusive Approach in Journalism

Most people in the press know the need to separate fact and opinion. The press is urged to evaluate the truthfulness of conflicting sources. Facts need to be placed in a context that gives them meaning (Schmuhl, 1988). The Commission (1947) urged the press to serve as a "forum for the exchange of comment and criticism". It means that newspapers, news agencies, and other media should try to present all significant viewpoints on public issues, including viewpoints that happen to be unpopular or in conflict with their own (Schmuhl, 1988).

Social responsibility demands that a newspaper do not refuse space for the actions and viewpoints of various groups and individuals. Monopoly publishers in this age of one-newspaper cities and towns need to be more sensitive today to their civic responsibilities than in the past. The Commission (1947) reminded the press of its obligation to project a "representative picture of the constituent groups in society". The press ought to portray more faithfully the true condition and aspiration of ethnic and religious minorities and rural people. It needs to adopt affirmative action in this regard (Schmuhl, 1988). Social responsibility also demands that the press remain
independent of the government, industry and business. Its primary obligation is to be
at the service of the public (Nordenstreng & Topuz, 1989).

The press occupies a privileged position in modern society. But more than
simply seeking out truth and reporting it, the press has a role in influencing and
shaping public opinion. It is therefore, a matter of serious concern if the press chooses
deliberately to mislead its readers in full knowledge of the implications of that
decision. When the press lies to its readers they undermine a fundamental trust. The
Canons of Journalism (1922) stated: “A journalist who uses his power for any selfish
or otherwise unworthy purpose is faithless to a high trust.” This does not mean
consumers should uncritically accept whatever opinion the press generates and
provides. The public too has the responsibility to watch the press and to provide
comment and feedback.

As universal rights, freedom of speech, freedom of expression and freedom of
the press may not be abridged by law or abolished by authoritarian governments.
Nevertheless these rights and privileges are not absolute in practice. They need to be
restrained by moral and legal responsibility as they may come in conflict with other
rights similarly guaranteed. Journalists need to be aware of the personal rights of
individuals, like right to privacy, that everyone is entitled to enjoy. Respect for these
rights is the responsibility that should guide journalists while exercising their
freedom. Whether individual journalists or publications meet these ideals is often
debated, but they all, at a basic level, admit that they do have a definitive
responsibility to their readers.
4.3 People’s Right to Know and the Right to Information

One of the important factors that contribute to free flow of information and a more socially responsible press is people’s right to information. The phrase ‘people’s right to know’ was coined in 1945 by Kent Cooper, then general manager of the Associated Press. His primary interest was to break down the barriers to free international communication (Schmuhl, 1988). Harold Cross (1953), a lawyer, in his book “The People’s Right to Know” wrote: “Public business is the public’s business. The people have the right to know. Freedom of information is their just heritage.” It was after years of pressurising by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and social activists, and much debate that the government of India passed the Right to Information Act (RTI) in 2005, granting to all citizens the right and the possibility to access information of a public nature.

The Act makes it mandatory to respond in time to citizen’s requests for government information. It is an initiative taken by Department of Personnel and Training, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions. According to the Act, “right to information” means the right to information accessible under this Act, which is held by or under the control of any public authority and includes the right to—

(i) Inspection of work, documents, records;

(ii) Taking notes extracts or certified copies of documents or records;

(iii) Taking certified samples of material;
(iv) Obtaining information in the form of diskettes, floppies, tapes, videocassettes or in any other electronic mode or through printouts where such information is stored in a computer or in any other device;

Such access made possible through RTI is essential for the press as well as other democratic institutions to function in a healthy manner. The press needs to ensure that it has the wherewithal to act as the watchdog of democracy and that the people are provided with information that is accurate, timely and relevant. As far as the press is concerned, the RTI is a powerful instrument to promote and ensure social responsibility and ethical conduct.

4.4 Development Communication and Social Responsibility

The MacBride (1980) report advocated adoption of comprehensive national communication policies linked to the overall cultural, social and economic development, stating that: "Communication should not be left to chance but fostered to grow for the development of an inter-dependent world." It also argued for strong national news agencies and viable regional networks to increase news flow and to make information more accurate and balanced.

The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) discussed these issues, but because it was a government initiative, many communication experts felt that the media and civil society should discuss these issues by themselves. Therefore, it was felt that there is an independent global forum outside the Summit with participants being active media people in mainstream media, to discuss these issues.
The second Press Commission of India in its report submitted in 1982 maintained that a free press should be neither an adversary nor ally of the government but a constructive critic. The press, it said, should help accelerate the process of development. It recommended development journalism for reporting both successes and failures of various programmes, welcomed the trend of investigative reporting and emphasised the importance of follow-up of issues reported. Development communication does not seem to have received the kind of attention it deserves both in academic circles as well as in journalistic praxis. Newspapers today seem to give lesser and lesser space for development news, issues related to women, youth and children. As Sanjay (2006) has observed what we witness in the press today is insensitivity and apathy to development issues, and overemphasis on celebrities through the infamous ‘Page Three’ phenomenon.

The social responsibility of the press is seriously called into question when we consider the shrinking space devoted to social issues in the press. We find that the press often does only lip service to its social obligations by covering social issues only occasionally. One cannot but notice the serious absence of analysis, depth reporting, and follow up stories. Most newspapers cover the ‘event’ without adequate analysis of issues. Social analysis calls for a breed of journalists who are schooled in understanding the social issues that concern the country. ‘If press responsibility, in its ultimate analysis, is to the readers, then press persons ought to maintain a high degree of integrity and uphold the rights and hopes of all social segment (Nordenstreng & Topuz, 1989). Professional journalism training is comparatively new in India, and
even today, the social content in the curriculum seems to be inadequate to equip would-be-journalists to understand the complex social issues that they need to cover.

The press needs to maintain a balance between its business and commercial interests and the social responsibility. Large segments of society or issues are ignored altogether or downplayed by the press as reporting on them does not seem to be economically profitable. Sainath (1996), a leading development journalist, has written extensively on issues like famine, poverty, health, education and survival strategies of the rural poor. His writings focus on the people who are "beyond the margins of a press and media that fail to connect with them." But the numbers of newspapers that devote space to such stories today seem to be fast dwindling.

The English language press in India has remained by and large a vestige of the British press. The names of several of the Indian newspapers have, for instance, been borrowed or are patterned on British or American press. The excessive preoccupation of the press with politics at the cost of neglecting other important social issues and the confrontationist attitude of the press to political forces are inherited from the colonial times. If one can notice some change in the press, unfortunately it is not always in favour of qualitative improvement. Instead the new trend appears to be directed towards catering to the needs and interests of the urban elites and the consumer class.
4.5 Television and Internet: Challenge to the Print media

Newspapers today face serious competition from the new media, particularly television and internet. Many newspapers are trying to be visually more attractive than focus on the quality of content. One can notice the all too evident tendency of ‘televization’ of the newspapers, a tendency by which newspapers try to make themselves more pleasing to the eye rather than provide content that can feed the mind. Some of the best and most attractive pages of most newspapers today are devoted to less significant content, including trivia, featuring film stars, sports personalities and other celebrities. Even small town papers devote much space to Hollywood actors, models and celebrities and matters related to their private lives at the neglect of serious social and cultural issues that have more significant consequence for the masses.

The task of the journalists has undoubtedly been enhanced by new technologies. But the speed with which information is gathered, presented and transmitted to the audience, make the journalist’s task of being objective, accurate and responsible more challenging. Today information is available through several sources, and the press does not have monopoly as providers of news and information. In the ‘global village’ in which we live today, not only are events around the world easily accessible, but with the availability of many sources of information, the audience cannot be taken for granted as they can shift loyalties from one medium to another, from one newspaper to another.

Responsibility in journalism can be established when a reporter can answer questions like whether the report is accurate and complete, whether it is fair and
balanced, whether the motives and methods used for covering the information are ethically sound, and whether a journalist is aware of the legal and social consequences of publishing a particular report. In short, the relationship between the reader and the newspaper is built over a long period of time through credible and accurate reporting. As in life, so too with newspapers and the reading public, if trust is once lost, it is difficult to rebuild it.

4.6 Need to Watch the Watchdog

In the new media environment, watching the so-called ‘watchdog’ has become essential. Readers, as well as viewers of media have become more critical and conscious than in the past. People inside the industry as well as social scientists and civil society have become more and more critical consumers of media, including the press. They have become more discerning and discriminating in the way information is accessed and processed. They criticise the specific conduct and practices of journalists and news institutions. They pay attention to ethical questions concerning issues like the lack of fairness and balance, the disregard for privacy, the existence of bias, and the glorification of the sensational and trivia (Schmuhl, 1989). While a section of the media professionals are doing some soul-searching, the public is becoming more restive and less intolerant of aberrations in media. Criticism of the press come from different quarters- media reviews, media critics, from public officials, from individual citizens, from courts and judiciary, from press councils and other bodies.
The news business builds people up and then acquires an interest in tearing them down. Newman (1989) thinks that there is 'not nearly enough criticism of us, not nearly enough understanding of how we work, of why we do what we do, and of how powerful our habits and stereotypes are. According to him the responsibility of a journalist “is to be a journalist- a competent, qualified journalist”.

Newspapers in developing countries like India earmark only a meager budget for newsgathering. Eapen’s (1989) comment that only five percent of a newspaper’s revenue in India, on the average, goes into gathering information, should be a matter of serious concern. A newspaper that intends to do justice to its readers need to spend more on newsgathering and research. When newspapers invest only such a meager portion of its revenue for newsgathering they are compelled to depend on press releases, briefings and official news sources, which may be easily accessible, but less relevant, reliable and socially responsible. The lion’s share of coverage given to political events and the utterances of politicians at the cost of neglecting other important social issues may be considered to be direct fallout of this phenomenon.

Serious long term educational programmes can ultimately lead to making a journalist become aware of his or her responsibilities, and lead to institutional sensitivity and action (Schmuhl, 1989). Codes, internal and external criticism, news councils, and above all education can contribute to an environment within journalism that places ultimate value on ethical responsibilities. If the public perceives that, as a result of these acts of self-regulation, media reports are more truthful, fair, balanced, and sensitive, credibility and trust will follow. As journalism becomes more professional and as the audience served by the news media becomes more
sophisticated and vigilant, acts of irresponsibility will be unmasked for what they are (Schmuhl, 1989).

### 4.7 Regulating the Press

The press, like other institutions in the service of the public, need to be regulated. But any form of restraint or control by the authorities is often viewed by the press as censorship. However, the fact remains that in the absence of any countervailing forces, the press can exhibit lack of responsibility and accountability to the public and become a medium for publicising messages about licentiousness, murder, crime and violence, immorality, ‘objectification’ of women, glorification of greed and force, consumerism and individualism. Such an environment of undesirable values, role models, and desensitising experiences has important consequences on every one - particularly the young and most vulnerable sections of society. The media conglomerates are happy to reap the reward of modifying behaviour for monetary gain. That's what media do: they charge for advertising, and people pay to have their advertising messages carried in the media, because they believe that advertising makes people buy more of whatever products are being advertised. But the media do not welcome the suggestion that they should bear some of the costs associated with their power to change behaviour, usually for the worse, in areas of human activity that aren't focused on selling products.

Any law or court decision, or guidelines of non-judicial organisations or public opinion, which can change the press for the better, would be a step in the right direction, particularly if these could enable the press to become more conscientious
about its responsibility. At the moment it seems that there is too much of creative freedom in the press, and not enough creative responsibility or self-regulation.

Credibility and trust of the press became subject of much discussion and debate since Janet Cooke of *The Washington Post* won Pulitzer Prize for a story which was later found to be false. In 1981, after her deception was exposed, she was stripped of the prize and sacked from the *Post*. The diverse, yet constant stream of analysis and evaluation keeps the fundamental principles of media responsibility in the forefront of the minds of practitioners and the public. The work of critics can lead to a reassessment of media practices and to a more enlightened and demanding audience for journalism (Schumhl, 1989).

### 4.8 Social Responsibility and Commercial Interests

Social responsibility implies that the press assumes voluntarily the task of providing adequate coverage to all sections of the community, be they economically or ethnically significant, powerful or not. The privileges allotted to the press by the constitutions of various countries imply that the press is not merely an industry or business establishment like any other. The privilege is founded on the assumption that the press is supposed to serve some important public good. The press is exempt from restraints and restrictions that fall on others because of the contribution journalists make. The information they reveal, it is assumed, contributes to the search for truth, to democratic citizenship, and to the solution of social problems. If what journalists do doesn’t serve these goals, then journalism is nothing more than a business and deserves no special protection (Lichtenberg, 1990).
Social responsibility, therefore, demands that a newspaper should not refuse space for the actions and viewpoints of various groups and individuals merely because they do not serve its commercial interests. The understanding of newspaper management about what a newspaper should be seem to be undergoing rapid change today. While one group argues that the newspaper’s role should continue to be in the public domain with necessary responsibility, another group argues that a newspaper is a brand like any other consumer item and accordingly, marketing is what the newspaper should be focusing on. Often, proprietor-editors are tempted to run a paper just like any other business venture. Financial interests might weigh heavily with such a group whereby public accountability of keeping society at large reasonably well informed dwindles (Nordenstreng & Topuz, 1989).

The press is urged to evaluate the truthfulness of conflicting sources. Facts need to be placed in a context that gives them meaning (Schmuhl, 1989). The Commission (1947) also said that the press must serve as a “forum for the exchange of comment and criticism.” It means that newspapers, news agencies, and other media should try to present all significant viewpoints on public issues, including viewpoints that happen to be unpopular or in conflict with their own.

The Commission exhorted the press of its obligation to project a “representative picture of the constituent groups in society”. The press should portray more faithfully the true condition and aspiration of ethnic and religious minorities and rural people (Schmuhl, 1989). The press needs to adopt affirmative action in this regard.
All media have a fascination for negative news, news with violence. As Schmid & Graaf (1982) observed, crime has always been good news as far as selling newspapers is concerned. The rape and murder of two sisters in Chicago in 1965 boosted newspaper circulation by 50,000 copies. The circulation of Italian newspapers *La Stampa* and *Il Corriere* recorded 35 to 40 per cent increase in circulation following the kidnapping and assassination of Aldo Moro. Often journalists, during the course of their professional training, are taught to select news events that are more profitable. In Great Britain there is a rule of thumb for the relative newsworthiness of disasters, called ‘McLurg’s Law’ after the legendary editor that says for instance that a crash in Europe is more newsworthy than one in Asia. This proximity principle has various expressions, one of which says, ‘one European is worth twenty-eight Chinese, or perhaps two Welsh miners worth one thousand Pakistanis’ (Schmid & Graaf, 1982).

The press needs to maintain a balance between its business interests and social responsibility. Today many newspapers tend to make their publishing decisions primarily on the basis of economic considerations, leaving little space for socially relevant content. Sections of community or kinds of news are downplayed as trivial and insignificant, or are ignored altogether since they are considered to be economically not lucrative. The publisher of *Los Angeles Times* is said to have argued that it would not make sense financially for his paper to expand its coverage of low-income minorities because, that audience “does not have the purchasing power and is not responsive to the kind of advertising we carry” (Schmuhl, 1989).
4.9 Press and Propaganda

World War II witnessed the way information was falsified and propaganda and misinformation were used as a tool for manipulating truth. Truth, as has often been said, is the first casualty in war. This was proved true when Hitler’s minister for Propaganda, Josef Goebbels used media for subversion of truth. The post-war Europe and the countries that gained independence from colonial powers in Asia and Africa recognised the importance of a free press as an essential tool for democratic governance and social development.

However, propaganda is not something of the past as was evident in the recent US led war in Iraq. During the same war journalism also gained a new, but unethical, word in its lexicon called ‘embedded journalism’. Journalistic work was heavily controlled; stories were planted, manipulated and pre-fabricated. The war in Iraq witnessed how the leading news agencies of the world became the unofficial news agencies of the US, helping it to trivialise what was crucial and deify what was trivial. The US army was embedded with journalists from all over the world, who wrote and told the world what were dictated stories (Sanjay, 2006).

The New York Times revealed in January 2002, that the US Minister of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, had created the “Office of Strategic Influence”–authorised to manipulate media with lies if necessary to rally the media behind the war against terrorism. The ‘Office’ was apparently closed down after this exposure, but the operation continued under the name “Operation for Special Plans” and was under the direct control of Central Command at the headquarters in Qatar, during the war against Iraq. Hollywood consultants were used to polish up the Pentagon’s
information strategy. The war in Iraq, according to Rune (2003), was the most dangerous war for journalists ever.

Even a liberal nation like the United States can manipulate the media. A Washington Journalism Review article after the Gulf War in January 1991 pointed out that media in fact are censored. Kamen (1991) reports how the American reporters were required to run battlefield stories past censors before being dispatched.

Newspapers are constantly tempted to be tools of propaganda for political parties, governments, multi-national companies, and other vested interest groups. Many journalists depend heavily on official versions of the news, government press releases, and dispatches from organisations. Some of these organisations do not have credible record of being truthful or objective, and the newspapers concerned do not always verify, nor seek independent reports as these entail time, costs and strenuous efforts.

4.10 Gender

Gender issues have assumed a lot of attention and interest in India as far the press is concerned. While the number of women entering journalism is on the increase, women's capacity to influence the agenda, practice and output of the media is still limited by several factors. This according to Ammu Joseph (2005) is due the fact that "the number of women in key decision-making positions is still relatively small. For the majority of women in the press today, the struggle to overcome gender bias and win respect and recognition as proficient professionals seems to be far from over. The concentration of women in certain areas of journalism is one indication of
this reality. She notes that in many parts of the country, the women reporter is still a rare species. The desk is usually considered a more appropriate place for women in the profession; yet, even there, they are often sidelined.

Citing national as well as international studies Gallagher (1995) highlights the continuing reality of the glass ceiling, the male-defined ‘rules of the game’ that determine journalistic culture, as well as the persistence of gender based discrimination in media organisations, all of which militate against women’s advancement and empowerment in the media. Looking at the issue from a broader perspective she observes that “the pursuit of equality in the media- as in all other spheres- is not a radical feminist issue. It is a matter of human rights, a part of the struggle for genuine democracy in society at large and in media institutions in particular. As long as women and men are not given the possibility to work together on an equal basis, sharing the same rights and the same responsibilities, there is a “democratic deficit” in our societies. Until media employment patterns reflect a more equitable gender balance, it will be impossible to claim that there is genuine democracy in the media or their messages.”

Bathla (1999) points out how coverage of violent crime against women, which was a media focus in the early 1980s, declined sharply since then, with editors citing ‘reader fatigue’ over atrocity-related stories as an excuse for no longer focusing on them, even though there was no cessation of such violence in everyday life. According to Philipose (2005) the neglect of journalism in the public interest had serious repercussions on the coverage of gender issues. ..The self-confident, urbanised women professional, unrepresentative though she was of the women in the country,
came to be hailed as the symbol of the 'liberated' Indian women who flaunted her disposable income and sexuality with equal élan. She now figured in advertisements for scooters, computes, holiday packages.

There is poor representation of women from traditionally disadvantaged communities in the media profession. The representation of scheduled castes and tribes in the media workforce is not only minimal but, also, completely disproportionate to their presence in the population. With gender compounding the disadvantages of caste, women from Dalit- not to mention Adivasi- communities clearly have even less access to media employment than men from the same or similar social groupings. Likewise, the representation of some religious minorities, notably Muslims, in the media is relatively marginal. Here, again, women from these communities are undoubtedly doubly disadvantaged.

Despite being a diverse and complex nation like India women from minority communities and from the underprivileged sections of society are missing from the pressroom. Jeffrey (2000) observes that women in the 1990s were estimated to hold about 8 per cent of jobs on Indian newspapers but majority of them worked at the desk or in administration than as reporters or editors. Many women also tended to work on women’s page and women’s magazines. Commenting on the role of women in language press, Jeffrey (2000) further observed: “Their numbers… were scant, the jobs few and the prejudices against them formidable.” Yet the fact that many women worked at all on Indian-language newspapers marked a change. The consequence of a paucity of women writing and editing Indian-language newspapers nevertheless meant that the ‘woman’s angle’ on a story would be just that- an angle probably
determined and written by men. He observes that newspapers willing to encourage a substantial influx would give the wheel of history a visible shove.

The special situation of the media and media women in the Northeastern states was highlighted by the participants from the region during a women journalists' workshop in Shillong (September 2001). It was noted that within a media context where most newspapers (other than a few in Assam) belong to the small and tiny sectors, are typically run in an ad hoc rather than professional manner, exist primarily to serve the needs and interests of the numerous ethnically, culturally and linguistically diverse communities that make up the population of the seven states in the region, and operate in as situation of perennial (often violent) conflict, gender is only one of the main problematic factors that journalists have to contend with. According to the study though most women journalists in the northeast admitted that there is no gender discrimination at the workplace, they suggested that the gender bias prevailing in society as a whole is reflected in the media, too, especially in terms of the beats to which women are traditionally assigned and the fact that some newspaper houses have an unwritten policy against employing women as reporters (Ammu Joseph, 2005).

Obstacles to women's advancement in media occupations include social roles and attitudes, lack of institutional support that would allow the reconciliation of family and professional responsibilities, sexual harassment, lack of training, exclusion from male networks where decisions are often made as well as working hours and in sometimes shift work. There is a high attrition rate of women from the media industry, even among those in high-level positions. Some of the complex
reasons for this trend include women’s perception and experience of discrimination; frustration arising from their limited impact on news priorities and other media content; a feeling that they can regain autonomy and made a bigger contribution from working outside the media’. The increasing market orientation of media systems’, the growing cult of celebrity or personality journalism, associated with heavy commercialization of media’, shifting ‘the emphasis away from quality news and information to sound bite and entertainment news’ (Ammu Joseph, 2005)

4.11 Monopoly and Control

The MacBride (1980) report addressed the issue of inequalities in the information flow and called for a new information world order which would turn around the practice and perception of news flow and make it a more balanced, equitable and just process. The report analysed in detail the inequalities existing in the flow of information between the North and the South, with the latter only on the receiving end and the former determining what information was best for the rest of the world. The so-called Third World countries as well as developed western countries were dependent on four major news agencies for their basic news supplies. A flood of western value-loaded news flows to the third world, and a trickle of distorted third world news into the west – was inimical to third world interests (Samarajiwa, 1984). The report linked information flow with economic development, arguing that media organisations in the south were at a disadvantage since they did not have the technology that their northern counterparts wielded. It emphasised information as a right, both in receiving and communicating.
The issue of communication rights cannot be underestimated. For example, the Communication Rights in the Information Society (CRIS) campaign aims to broaden and deepen the debate on the information society by promoting democratisation of access to communication and strengthening commitments to communication in the service of sustainable development. What is envisaged is "a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented information society, where everyone can create, have access to, utilise and share information and knowledge, enabling individuals, communities and peoples to achieve their full potential. By its very nature, the media have always claimed an intention to serve or represent the public. It is premised that media derives its so-called power from the public, whom it claims to serve, awaken, and sensitise (Sanjay, 2006).

Information monopoly has struck at the communication rights of communities and nations in spite of the fact that information and communication technologies (ICT) are perhaps the most outstanding development and the biggest leap in information and communication sector since the MacBride report. But twenty-five years since the publication of the Report there seems to be increased concentration of information in the hands of a few multinational conglomerates. Today we seem to be worse in many ways than in the past. Information is no longer considered a cultural factor in development but merely a market commodity.

4.12 Information as Entertainment

News, information and entertainment are being trivialised for the vast majority of people. Emphasis is given to information rather than meaning, surface
events rather than depth and reflection. Information is being piped to audiences through the television as entertainment. It is becoming increasingly difficult to distinguish the two. The emphasis seems to be on glamour, 'audience appeal' and not so much on the quality of content. The choices that influence news selection in the media are prompted by its value as a 'saleable' commodity than as information that is essential to the community. Media content presents itself today as a global form of entertainment. The concepts of game shows, talk shows, soaps and films are equally created around the world to mirror one type of society. What works in one country is exported heavily through a complex network of distribution and co-operation agreements as well as economic interests in other countries than their own. The implications of these for small ethnic groups, cultures are often devastating.

Thussu (2008) has studied the explosion of 'infotainment'. His account of war as infotainment, the 'Bollywoodization' of news and the emergence of a global infotainment sphere, is as compelling as it is alarming. He examines the rise of infotainment, the infrastructure for its globalisation as well as coverage of recent wars on television news as high-tech infotainment and the growing synergies between Hollywood and Bollywood-originated infotainment. A 'global infotainment sphere' is emerging, within which competing versions of news - from 24/7 news networks to bloggers - coexist.

4.13 Reporting Crime and Violence

Violence is one of the dominant contents of newspapers. How responsibly should a journalist report violent incidents are a matter of debate. Brucker (1973)
writing about the journalists' responsibility in covering riots and violence states that most press persons want to be responsible about reporting the news. Yet their first responsibility is to get the news. The Eisenhower Commission on Violence in USA, (Eisenhower, 1969) whose task it was to suggest ways of avoiding violence, learned that for the press to soft-pedal reports of violence is a dereliction of duty: “Unless we propose to emulate the ostrich, we must expect – indeed the public has a right to demand – that the press will report the day’s intelligence including that which is violent. As with other events, when there is violence, the public has a right to know it”.

Another US Commission headed by Kerner (1969) came to the identical conclusion when it said: “…it would be imprudent and even dangerous to downplay coverage in the hope that censored reporting of inflammatory incidents somehow will diminish violence.” The word will spread independently of television or newspaper reports, and it can diminish confidence in the media and increase the effectiveness of those who monger rumours and the fears of those who listen. Media, as the Kerner commission observed, are not a cause of riots, “any more than they are the cause of other phenomena which they report” (Kerner, 1969). Rumours always fly when there is a vacuum of authentic, believable news. You can no more separate news coverage of a spectacular event from the event itself than you can get rid of a man’s shadow. Therefore the wise course is neither to overplay violence nor to hide it. Sociologist Otto N. Larsen (1968) author of Violence and the Mass Media said: “The basic issue is not the elimination of violence from the mass media. The matter rests more on how rather than on whether it is presented.
Coverage of crime, conflicts and violence call for utmost caution and objectivity. How does a journalist weigh conflicting ideologies in the context of communal riots, ethnic clashes and violence? It is on occasions of such turmoil that the society at large looks to the journalists for direction and light. The spotlights are turned on them, and people expect them to show the way. Grover (1990), a former judge of the Supreme Court and Chairman of the Press Council of India, led a comparative study of the press coverage of events following the assassination of former Indian Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi. According to him, the coverage, albeit small aberrations, exaggerations of death tolls, were balanced and responsible. Violence was condemned and appeal for peace and calm was made in the editorials of these papers.

Grover (1990) however observed that the guidelines issued by the Press Council on reporting of communal matters have not been followed by most of the newspapers in India. The communal polarisation and periodic communal and ethnic clashes in the country demand that the press is made to strictly adhere to the guideline of the Press Council. Since the print media is growing and can never cease to be a major means of mass communication, it is necessary that the question of social responsibility must be kept in the forefront.

It would be futile to suppress violent events from being reported either through censorship or suppression. Rather than government action to have news suppressed, it is better that the press and journalists practice restraint, moderation, caution and discretion. On the part of journalists it does require thought, energy, and action. In the face of sensationalism, inaccuracies and distortions, newspapers should
strive to provide a balanced, factual and accurate report. Social responsibility of the press demands that reporting on violence should include the causes, consequences of social disorders and the underlying problems that may be responsible for the incident.

Irresponsible journalism has at times aggravated riots and communal clashes. Irresponsibility includes sensational headlines, identification of the communities involved in the riots, exaggerated threats, unverified claims etc. The example of the publication of cartoons portraying Prophet Mohammad (Bonde, 2007) in the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* is a case in point.

The press must report situations and developments and conditions through the long months or years or even decades before anything overt happens. Because nothing spectacular was going on, journalism left us largely unaware of these long periods of incubation, which set the stage for the seemingly spontaneous explosions that shock people when they erupt without apparent reason. A journalist must dig painstakingly for news where none seems to exist, by means of highly skilled, interpretive reporting. (Desai & Ninan, 1996)

The press has to be aware of and stress the ills and difficulties of sections of society, their sense of grievance, slights and indignities, the biases, paternalism and indifference to which they are subject to. As Brucker (1973) states: “If one backs off to see the whole forest of journalism’s difficulty, one sees that the task of reporting becomes more subtle, more complex all the time. It can be discouraging, as when a paper or a broadcaster takes the trouble and expense to dig into something that lies behind the excitement of the moment, only to find that most of its readers or viewers pass it by. But that’s the way it is. … Most of us seem to feel that, in this tumultuous
world, we cannot even keep track of, let alone try to understand, all that happens. Yet journalism has no alternative but to try to make the individual see at least the things that matter.

Responding to editors who say that people do not read such stories, the Kerner (1969) Commission suggests that the press must “find more ways of telling the story, for it is a story you, as journalists, must tell – honestly, realistically, and imaginatively.” It is the responsibility of the news media to tell the story. With notable exceptions, the media have not yet turned to the task with the wisdom, sensitivity, and expertise it demands. The challenge of reporting in depth and dimension is growing as society and social organisations get more and more complex. But if journalism learns that it has to anticipate the events it reports, and devotes its full resources to digging constantly under the surface for what may be going on there, it will be doing all we can ask of it (Brucker, 1973).

4.14 Sensationalism

It is not difficult to find sensationalism masquerading as news in the pages of newspapers. One of the standard definitions of journalism is the one originated by John B. Bogart, city editor of Charles A. Dana’s Sun in 1880: “When a dog bites a man, that’s not news, but when a man bites a dog, that’s news” (Bogart, 1992). The press is constantly under the temptation to sensationalise events in its reporting. Newspapers have recourse to reporting sensationaly because they are primarily driven by a desire to boost circulation and sales and thereby increase profit. Newspapers at times claim that their readers like to read such stories, and so use this argument to justify publication of sensationalism. But responsibility of the press
demand going beyond what people, or a section of the public prefer to read, to provide them what should be read. Sensational reporting and publishing seriously compromises the social responsibility of the press. Traditionally accepted Canons and Criteria of Journalism need to be reviewed and if necessary reformulated. The news elements traditionally taught in schools of journalism include prominence, proximity, timeliness, conflict, oddity etc. seem to highlight a newspaper’s preference for what is sensational and controversial.

4.15 Paparazzi Journalism

One group of media practitioners who are consistently viewed more negatively than others is the paparazzi. The term is usually used in reference to media persons who invade the privacy of celebrities (Mendelson, 2007). Paparazzi Journalism refers to pursuing celebrities and stars in hot chase or intruding into their privacy to report, capture sound bites and pictures. The word paparazzi was popularized after a film by Italian film producer Federico Fellini named La dolce vita released in 1960 (Bondanella, 1992). One of the characters in the film is a news photographer named Paparazzo played by Walter Santesso. Fellini took the name ‘paparazzi’ from an Italian dialect word for a particularly noisy, buzzing mosquito. In his school days, Fellini remembered a boy who was nicknamed "Paparazzo" (Mosquito), because of his fast talking and constant movements, a name Fellini later applied to the fictional character in La dolce vita (Bondanella, 1992). Due to the reputation of paparazzi as an annoyance, some states and countries restrict their activities by passing laws, and by staging events in which paparazzi are specifically allowed to take photographs. In Germany and France photographers need the
permission of the people in their photographs. The presence of paparazzi is not always seen as annoying; paparazzi sell their work to dozens of magazines and newspapers that publish such photos for their readers and subscribers, and many paparazzi feel that they are helping celebrities and public figures in general by increasing their visibility. Photographers often earn a lot of money for a ‘valuable’ picture. The death of Princess Diana and Dodi Al-Fayed in 1997 is attributed to a car accident while they were being pursued by paparazzi.

_Time_ magazine (McCarthy, 2005) ran a story entitled "Shooting Stars", in which Mel Bouzad, one of the top paparazzi in Los Angeles at the time, claimed to have made US$ 150,000 for a picture of Ben Affleck and Jennifer Lopez after their breakup. "If I get a picture of Britney and her baby", Bouzad pointing to the mansion-studded slopes above Sunset Boulevard, is said to have claimed, "I'll be able to buy a house in those hills." "That would go for $2 million worldwide." Paparazzi author Peter Howe told _Time_ (McCarthy, 2005) that "celebrities need a higher level of exposure than the rest of us so it is a two-way street." Some have argued that it is the paparazzi who "make" people celebrities, but very often, the celebrities attempt to act as if they hate and fear the paparazzi.

### 4.16 Celebrity Obsession

The newspapers are becoming more and more obsessed with celebrities: the film and sports personalities, models and pop singers dominate the pages of the press. Celebrities get a larger than life portrayal in the press by way of reports and photographs. Shah Rukh Khan, one of the leading Bollywood actors is often referred
to as ‘King Khan’ and Amitabh Bachaan is called the Big B. Social activists and development workers often complain that events featuring celebrities have innumerable media persons to cover them, while events related to the plight of the poor, bonded labourers, child workers, get hardly any journalists to cover them. Court cases and arrests of Bollywood stars like Sanjay Dutt and Salman Khan and their subsequent release were lapped up by Indian papers as their main menu for several days. ‘The Page Three’ phenomenon in newspapers is a sign of the glorification of celebrities.

Newspapers in Northeast India are not free from such obsession with celebrities. *The Shillong Times* under study has devoted nearly a page a day to cover news and photographs of Hollywood and Bollywood film stars, pop singers. Celebrities like Michael Jackson find frequent mention in its pages for his deeds as well as misdeeds. Most of the celebrity stories are low on social content and deal with trivia: who is courting whom, who is dining with whom, about celebrity datings, marriages, pregnancies, divorces and other issues related to the private lives of the film stars.

If there is to be a lasting and sustained effort to have a socially responsible press, both the journalists as well as the public need to be educated on the ethical principles on which the press should function.
4.17 Speed and the Compulsions of Breaking Story Vis-à-vis the Need for Accuracy

Journalism has often been called ‘literature in a hurry’: Hasty reporting can adversely affect the quality of news, responsibility and accuracy. If a journalist carries an accusation against somebody, he or she has the duty to contact that person for comment. So too a journalist should not edit what people say to make them look bad or good. A journalist should not allow oneself to be used or manipulated. News is a business and today with round the clock channels airing news headlines, the press has a tough task on hand to be ‘first and fast’ with the latest news. Competition leads to some aberrations too – hasty reporting, exaggeration or sheer sensationalism. Sometimes the headline does not justify the story. There are numerous examples every day in the press of what Edwin Newman has called ‘flagrant examples of cheap scare journalism’ (Newman, 1989).

Competition exists within the organisations and among journalists who want to hit the front page, make a name for themselves, and get ahead. But no institutional safeguards will protect the public against bad reporting. What counts in the news business in the last analysis are the competence, wisdom and honesty of the people in the news business.

According to Newman (1989). ‘news is also a matter of habit, of stereotype.’ We are in the habit of looking for it where we have usually found it, and of reacting to it and judging it in the way that we usually have. What is news on television often depends on where your reporters and camerapersons are. This probably explains the
reason why most of the news stories are centred around the urban areas and concerns the elite.

As Schmuhl (1989) has pointed out, "so much of contemporary journalism involves immediate response that the ethical formation of the individual newsperson is crucial in deciding how he or she will cover a story." Given the speed, which the new communication technology offers as well as demands, there is usually little time to consult codes or to consider the commentary generated by internal or external critics about similar situations. What the newsperson does at the moment will frequently develop out of the moral principles and standards that have been internalised over time.

Journalism being defined as 'literature in a hurry' demands of the journalists to be 'first and fast'. Speed is one of the most decisive factors today in news gathering as well as reporting. One can understand the pressures under which any working journalist functions. In the face of such pressures, journalist organisations are not always willing to set aside time and resources to provide updating programmes for journalists. Often the ethical issues, including controversies, emerging from an individual journalist’s work comes up before the editor, sometimes the individual journalists do not feel the pressure of the situation. In a highly competitive world of speed, quality of content, ethical issues and principles can take a back seat in the thinking and praxis of a working journalist who runs the daily mill of reporting his or her beat. Journalists need to learn to balance essentially important components of reporting - how to break the story quickly and at the same time be accurate with facts and ethically sound.
The Associated Press in 1965 issued guidelines (Brucker, 1973) for its reporters. It begins with Joseph Pulitzer’s three rules for reporting: 1 Accuracy 2 Accuracy 3 Accuracy, before going into the following specific guidelines:

1. **Be Precise.** Tell exactly what happened without embellishment…. Choose your words carefully. If it’s a minor disturbance, don’t call it a riot. But if a full-scale riot develops, say so.

2. **Credibility.** The source of your information is most important. We don’t rush out with rumours of impending trouble. We don’t rush out with a story about a disturbance on the basis of a single telephone call. Agitators love to give false information. Well-intentioned persons let emotions sway their better judgment. Check and double check. One should not be an alarmist reporting stories with such expressions as “tensions mounted steadily” unless they are verified.

3. **Damage.** We report what qualified and responsible officials say, but we do not state it as fact.

4. **Perspective.** We don’t reach for headlines by throwing a story out of focus with an isolated cry, or an isolated shooting.

5. **Background.** All disputes have a history and we should know enough about the town to say what it is…If the reporter finds that most of a crowd is angry, or troubled, he should say what it is angry at, or why it is troubled.” Spell it out. Don’t generalise. Get both sides of any grievance.

6. **Staffing.** Get staff to the scene at the first hint of trouble. There is no substitute for the eyes, ears, and wits of our own staffers.
4.18 Measures to Promote Ethics and Responsibility

The 'private consciences' of the individual reporters and editors have, no doubt, a decisive impact on the way the news reports are gathered and presented. However, there is a growing awareness about the need to develop a process of moral reasoning to guide the activity of news people. Many schools of journalism have courses on journalistic ethics. There are also continuing education programmes for journalists like seminars, conferences and meetings, which explore issues of media responsibility. Serious long term educational programmes can ultimately lead to making a journalist become aware of his or her responsibilities, and lead to institutional sensitivity and action (Schmuhl, 1989). Codes, internal and external criticism, news councils, and education can collectively contribute to an environment within journalism that places ultimate value on ethical responsibilities. If the public perceives that, as a result of these acts of self-regulation, media reports are more truthful, fair, balanced, and sensitive, credibility and trust will follow. As journalism becomes more professional and as the audience served by the news media becomes more sophisticated and vigilant, acts of irresponsibility will be unmasked for what they are (Schmuhl, 1989).

What the news people do is ultimately aimed at the public, from which it follows that pressure for improvement from the public could be important. One safeguard against biased and incompetent reporting, according to Newman (1989) is for the public to know more about the news business than it does. Journalism will improve if efforts are made to improve the mechanisms of feedback which have been made possible today thanks to the information technology. The public who are the
beneficiaries of the journalists’ work will perceptively discover qualitative change and improvement. This qualitative improvement is not a one-time activity but need to be adopted as a continuing process.

Pulitzer and Hearst brought in a great deal of concern for social responsibility into the press. History of the press is replete with attempts by rulers and dominant classes to control the press through censorship, regulations, licensing and other instruments of control. Resistance to efforts to regulate and control the press and growing democratic movements have helped the growth of a libertarian and socially responsible press. Freedom and responsibility became applicable to the press.

4.19 Need for a More Balanced and Inclusive Journalism

The data pertaining to the quantity of reporting bias related to gender, religion and rural-urban as shown in our study should shed light on the nature of the problem. If we want to correct the imbalance we need to ensure that there is greater representation of women in the press, in newsgathering as well as the decision making roles at the desk. Reporters also need to be offered a more in-depth education on social and religious issues. The press must strive towards reducing space for urban coverage to create room for more rural reports. There is also need for greater diversification of the themes and issues that a newspaper chooses to cover. The press needs to break out of its traditional mindset of excessive political coverage and balance it with other relevant issues such as socio-cultural and economic matters.

The media occupy a privileged position in modern society. But more than simply seeking out truth and reporting it to an otherwise ignorant populace, the press
has an active role in influencing and shaping public opinion. That is why it is so very disturbing that the press, much less the entire aggregation of media, might choose deliberately to mislead their consumers in full knowledge of the ramifications of that decision. When the press lies to its consumers, they undermine a fundamental trust. This is not to say consumers and readers should be free to forego critical thinking and swallow whatever opinion the press generates, but there is a fundamental difference between opinion mongering of the sort that goes on in the pages of a daily newspaper and the sort of abject lies that pass for "news".

As universal rights, freedom of speech, freedom of expression and freedom of the press may not be abridged by law or abolished by authoritarian governments. But they are not absolute in practice. They should be restrained by moral and legal responsibility as they may come in conflict with other rights similarly guaranteed. On the universal plane, journalists should be aware of personal rights, like right to privacy, that others are entitled to enjoy. Respect for these rights is the responsibility that should guide journalists in the exercise of their freedom. The ideal of journalism is to be responsible to the truth. Whether journalists and publications meet that ideal is often debated, but they all, accept in principle that they have a definitive responsibility to their readers in this regard.

Journalists should not acquiesce under pressure from the powers that be, nor play into the hands of vested interest parties or patrons who can manipulate the press. The press is called a watchdog. But as B G Verghese, one of India's leading journalists, has pointed out, the press "must be wary of being patted and patronised as though a lap dog" (Desai & Ninan, 1996).The chief question raised is can a beholden
press function effectively as a watchdog? As Arun Shourie wrote memorably in *The Asian Age*, a dog with a bone in his mouth cannot bark (Desai & Ninan, 1996).

Today journalists are more likely to seek freedom not from their proprietors but from state governments seeking to impose restrictive legislation, or from terrorists who issue chilling codes of conduct for them and hold them to ransom. Terrorists in conflict zones like Kashmir, Punjab and Northeast India have not only increased professional hazards for journalists, they have also fuelled new debates on whether reporters who gain the confidence of terrorists and penetrate their ranks are becoming unwitting publicists for their cause. In these states a beleaguered press walks on the tin edge of the razor (Desai & Ninan, 1996). Often it is hard to distinguish whether a militant, terrorist or outlaw is merely a source or a close allay of the journalist. The privilege of journalists not bound to disclose their sources and the relationship they have with insurgents and terrorist groups came under sharp focus when journalist Nakeeran Gopalan had access to notorious sandalwood smuggler Veerappan. The relationship between the insurgent and the journalist continues to be a much-debated issue. This issue has important bearing on journalism in Northeast India. That takes us to the question of editorial control and social responsibility, which we shall examine in the next section.
4.20 Editorial Control and Social Responsibility

Freedom of the press entails editorial independence. The editors carry out their work in accordance with the legislation and ethical guidelines for the media in each country. Some newspapers have evolved internal regulations intended to ensure its editorial integrity, protect its sources and ensure that they maintain ethical standards. According to the ethical guidelines for editors, the editor-in-chief is personally and fully liable for the newspaper's contents as well as advertisements. Though the editor reports to the company's board, it has independent charge of the editorial work on the basis of the company's articles of association and memorandum of association. The newspapers have developed special delegation routes and routines for how the work is to be carried out throughout the 24-hour media day. The objective of this is to ensure quality and integrity. Some newspapers as a policy have chosen to include "editorial control of the operations" in their annual reports.

Pulitzer (1904) defended his proposal for a school of journalism in a North American Review article in 1904 with these words: "Nothing less than the highest ideals, the most scrupulous anxiety to do right, the most accurate knowledge of the problems it has to meet, and a sincere sense of moral responsibility will save journalism from becoming subservience to business interests, seeking selfish ends, antagonistic to public welfare". Today many large corporations have become so powerful they no longer feel compelled to consider the public interest as they pursue their goals of maximizing profits." The press is not immune from such pressures. Social responsibility according to Kamath (1980) is an omnibus term that covers a wide range of activities. "Next to politics", he observes, "the mass media is the most
potent instrument of a society for economic and social transformation.” According to him, there should be cross fertilization of ideas between editors and officials. Together they have a responsibility towards the larger public in keeping it reasonably and accurately informed.