

ASSIGNMENT No.2

Q.1 Discuss print media ethics in reporting news stories, writings editorial and other pieces of journalism.

Media is regarded as eyes and ears of a society which not only serves as a watchdog but also provides credible information regarding important and newsworthy national and international events to enrich and strengthen the social fabric. Thus the significant information through media plays a role of oxygen in social structure. If people do not know precisely what is happening around, they cannot become active citizens and play their meaningful part in the affairs of the country. It is hard to imagine of having real democracy or good governance without informed citizens. In any democratic dispensation, public opinion is required to develop freely and independently and journalists have a special responsibility in this regards. Mass media being an educator, informer, reformer, guide and a trend-setter is more accountable. Hence it should follow ethics strictly.

Ethics is a branch of philosophy and its purpose is to describe moral sentiment as well as to establish norms for good and fair behaviour. Boundaries of ethics are drawn in different dimensions in different societies. In Pakistan, the ethical dimensions are partly similar to those of other countries having different demographic, religious and social backgrounds. Media ethics kept the journalism and cultural industries with the responsibility to perform for the betterment of society.

Until 2002, the only television channels that operated in Pakistan were the state-run PTV and a couple of its specialized news and entertainment subsidiaries. Media in Pakistan purposely followed the ethical lines to disseminate the credible information.

which caused to the gradual rise in the maturity in the attitude of the people towards politics and the social responsibility. However, the last decade has witnessed a great shift in the media policy of the government due to opening of a lot of private television channels. In line with the global trends, the government also introduced the new media technologies in the country resulting in a rapid growth of broadcast media in Pakistan. With the passage of time it has become diverse and touching the topics which once were considered forbidden for public consumption.

But in the same vein, media in Pakistan has become an industry in the real sense of the word and is following its own agenda. With the opening up of the media industry, the unrestrained news channels are involved in a mad race of breaking news syndrome in order to gain the audience and popularity instead of delivering correct information to viewers. Today, prominent news channels are broadcasting uncensored violence, crime stories, live coverage of terrorist attacks while compromising media ethics.

Commercial interest of media to generate revenue never let it to observe public service message time. News channels dramatize the event to make them saleable which is against media ethics. The TV anchors are losing their credibility as they are found biased and manipulate the issue most of the time, serving their owners or other specific stakeholders for petty gains. This practice is against the norms of journalism.

Sensitive issues regarding gender are highlighted in a vulgar way. Yellow journalism and inappropriate division of time for coverage of news event and personalities through broadcast media raised the question about media ethics. Issues that are more important for society and have to be dealt with the masses such as non-availability of potable water, loadshedding, public health, infrastructure, wages, poverty, unemployment, etc. are not pursued by the media properly to a point where a solution is eventually reached.

In November 2009, a Gallup Pakistan poll found that almost one-third of all Pakistanis (31 per cent) blame media for political instability in Pakistan. These findings have two important implications: first, media are creating confusion and chaos by distracting the public from the real issues; and second, by discrediting themselves with unconfirmed reports, members of media are undermining their own profession and ultimately freedom of press.

In Pakistan, Council of Pakistan Newspapers Editors, All Pakistan Newspapers Society and Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists have developed code of ethics to follow. Similarly, Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) has developed rules to follow but implementation in this context is the weak link. Media in Pakistan is not fully mature yet.

At such stage it is very vital to prioritize the socio political health of the public through credible and newsworthy information and positive entertainment. We need to develop a code of ethics for the media so that it could serve as a watchdog in the society besides helping public form opinion about national and international issues through provision of authentic and verifiable debates.

The government always formulates a code of ethics through which it can control the media in its own favour. Press Council Ordinance and the PEMRA rules and regulations are obtrusive examples.

Similarly the code of ethics drafted by the owners and broadcasters unnecessarily defends their rights. The working journalists are not giving any importance and the audience rights not secured. All the abovementioned issues can be resolved through a code of ethics based on a broadest possible consensus among all stakeholders. This is the right time that media owners, editors, practitioners and professional journalists should pay due attention to the issue and prepare a comprehensive code. This code should be acceptable for all parties including audience. Further Pakistan's media community should adopt the international practice of defining standards that it shall always strive to attain.

The Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ) has drafted a code of ethics for Pakistani media which is based upon the belief that fair, balanced and independent journalism is essential for good governance, effective public administration and the capacity of people in Pakistan to achieve genuine democracy and peace. The code recognizes that the creation of a tolerant, peaceful and just society depends upon the freedom of citizens to have access to responsible journalism through media that respect principles of pluralism and diversity.

Q.2 How can code of ethics be practiced in news and current affair programs. Discuss.

A media revolution is transforming, fundamentally and irrevocably, the nature of journalism and its ethics. The means to publish is now in the hands of citizens, while the internet encourages new forms of journalism that are interactive and immediate.

Our media ecology is a chaotic landscape evolving at a furious pace. Professional journalists share the journalistic sphere with tweeters, bloggers, citizen journalists, and social media users.

Amid every revolution, new possibilities emerge while old practices are threatened. Today is no exception. The economics of professional journalism struggles as audiences migrate online. Shrinkage of newsrooms creates concern for the future of journalism. Yet these fears also prompt experiments in journalism, such as non-profit centers of investigative journalism.

A central question is to what extent existing media ethics is suitable for today's and tomorrow's news media that is immediate, interactive and "always on" – a journalism of amateurs and professionals. Most of the principles were developed over the past century, originating in the construction of professional, objective ethics for mass commercial newspapers in the late 19th century.

We are moving towards a mixed news media – a news media citizen and professional journalism across many media platforms. This new mixed news media requires a new mixed media ethics – guidelines that apply to amateur and professional whether they blog, Tweet, broadcast or write for newspapers. Media ethics needs to be rethought and reinvented for the media of today, not of yesteryear.

The changes challenge the foundations of media ethics. The challenge runs deeper than debates about one or another principle, such as objectivity. The challenge is greater than specific problems, such as how newsrooms can verify content from citizens. The revolution requires us to rethink assumptions. What can ethics mean for a profession that must provide instant news and analysis; where everyone with a modem is a publisher?

The media revolution has created ethical tensions on two levels.

- On the first level, there is a tension between traditional journalism and online journalism. The culture of traditional journalism, with its values of accuracy, pre-publication verification, balance, impartiality, and gate-keeping, rubs up against the culture of online journalism which emphasizes immediacy, transparency, partiality, non-professional journalists and post-publication correction.
- On the second level, there is a tension between parochial and global journalism. If journalism has global impact, what are its global responsibilities? Should media ethics reformulate its aims and norms so as to guide a journalism that is now global in reach and impact? What would that look like?

The challenge for today's media ethics can be summarized by the question: Whither ethics in a world of multi-media, global journalism? Media ethics must do more than point out these tensions. Theoretically, it must untangle the conflicts between values. It must decide which principles should be preserved or invented. Practically, it should provide new standards to guide online or offline journalism.

A lack of clarity over who is a journalist leads to definitional disputes over who is doing journalism. That leads to the question: What is journalism? Many people believe, “What is journalism?” or “Is he or she doing journalism?” is a more important question than whether who can call themselves a journalist.

At least three approaches to this question are possible – skeptical, empirical, and normative. Skeptically, one dismisses the question itself as unimportant. For example, one might say that anyone can be a journalist, and it is not worth arguing over who gets to call themselves a journalist. One is skeptical about attempts to define journalism.

Empirically, there is a more systematic and careful approach to the question. We can look at clear examples of journalism over history and note the types of activities in which journalists engaged, e.g. gathering information, editing stories, publishing news and opinion. Then we use these features to provide a definition of journalism that separates it from novel writing, storytelling, or editing information for a government database.

The normative approach insists that writers should not be called journalists unless they have highly developed skills, acquired usually through training or formal education, and unless they honor certain ethical norms.

The skills include investigative capabilities, research skills, facility with media technology of media, knowledge of how institutions work, and highly developed communication skills. The ethical norms include a commitment to accuracy, verification, truth, and so on.

The normative approach is based on an ideal view of journalism as accurately and responsibly informing the public. One defines journalism by considering the best examples of journalism and the practices of the best journalists.

A writer who has these skills and these ethical commitments is capable of publishing good (well-crafted, well-researched) and ethically responsible journalism. Persons who do not meet these normative requirements may call themselves journalists but they are not considered journalists from this normative perspective. They are irresponsible, second-rate, or incompetent writers seeking to be journalists, or pretending to be journalists.

Anonymity is accepted more readily online than in mainstream news media. Newspapers usually require the writers of letters to the editor to identify themselves. Codes of mainstream media ethics caution journalists to use anonymous sources sparingly and only if certain rules are followed. The codes warn journalists that people may use anonymity to take unfair or untrue “potshots” at other people, for self-interested reasons.

Online, many commentary and “chat” areas do not allow anonymity. Online users resist demands from web site and blogs to register and identify themselves. Anonymity is praised as allowing freedom of speech and sometimes helping to expose wrong doing. Critics say it encourages irresponsible and harmful comments. Mainstream media contradict themselves when they allow anonymity online but refuse anonymity in their newspapers and broadcast programs.

The ethical question is: When is anonymity ethically permissible and is it inconsistent for media to enforce different rules on anonymity for different media platforms? What should be the ethical guidelines for anonymity offline and online?

Reports and images circulate the globe with amazing speed via Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, blogs, cell phones, and email. Speed puts pressure on newsrooms to publish stories before they are adequately checked and verified as to the source of the story and the reliability of the alleged facts. Major news organizations too often pick up rumors online. Sometimes, the impact of publishing an online rumor is not world shaking – a false report that a hockey coach has been fired. But a media that thrives on speed and “sharing” creates the potential for great harm. For instance, news organizations might be tempted to repeat a false rumor that terrorists had taken control of the London underground, or that a nuclear power plant had just experienced a ‘meltdown’ and dangerous gases were blowing towards Chicago. These false reports could induce panic, causes accidents, prompt military action and so on.

A related problem, created by new media, is how to handle errors and corrections when reports and commentary are constantly being updated. Increasingly, journalists are blogging ‘live’ about sports games, news events, and breaking stories. Inevitably, when one works at this speed, errors are made, from misspelling words to making factual errors. Should news organizations go back and correct all of these mistakes which populate mountains of material? Or should they correct errors later and not leave a trace of the original mistake –what is called “unpublishing?”

The ethical challenge is to articulate guidelines for dealing with rumors and corrections in an online world that are consistent with the principles of accuracy, verification, and transparency.

Q. 3 Describe the different aspects of ethics in public relations.

In the US, early public relations practices introduced many ethical concerns because the press agency (J. E. Grunig & Hunt, 1984) approach prevalent then emphasized hyperbole, sensationalism, and often lacked truth. The so-called “father of public relations,” Edward Bernays, called this time period of 1850-1905 “the public be damned era” (Cutlip et al., 2006). Press agents were concerned with generating publicity at almost any cost, and this approach engendered the unethical reputation of modern-day public relations. Ethics as a consideration entered the development of modern practice in about 1906, with prominent practitioner Ivy Lee’s declaration of principles. His declaration moved the practice into “the public be informed” era with his emphasis on telling the truth and providing accurate information.

One of the earliest public relations executives to argue for the role of acting as an ethical counsel to management was John W. Hill (Heath & Bowen, 2002). Hill had a very developed philosophy of corporate responsibility and issue management, and this recent analysis found that ethics pervaded both his work as executive counsel and his books about public relations (Hill, 1958, 1963). Hill’s grasp of the interaction between ethics, issues management, and “far-reaching effects of corporate policy” (Hill, 1958, p. 16) made him

Course: Media Ethics & Laws Part – II (6604)

Semester: Autumn, 2021

not only one of the most successful practitioners of his century. John W. Hill was a progenitor of what scholars called public relations as the “corporate conscience” (Ryan & Martinson, 1983, p. 22).

As the civil unrest of the 1960s called both government and businesses to a higher level of accountability, their communication functions responded with the creation of more open, ethical, and socially responsible forms of public relations. The function of issues management (Chase, 1976) began to advise executives on ethically responsible policy decisions, and symmetrical public relations (J. E. Grunig & Hunt, 1984) began to incorporate the desires of publics for more fair and balanced decision making. Although research (Bivins, 1989; Pratt & Rentner, 1989) showed that scant attention was given to ethics in major public relations textbooks before this time, the last decade has shown an improvement. This interest in teaching and discussing public relations ethics is good news, especially for new practitioners so that they do not inadvertently limit their prospects for promotion. As newer data (discussed below) reveals, job promotion options may be constrained for practitioners who do not know ethics or feel prepared to advise on ethical dilemmas.

Despite the strides made in modern public relations toward becoming ethical advisors in management, the field holds “a tarnished history” in the words of one scholar (Parsons, 2004, p. 5). Like any young profession, the historical development of public relations shows a progression toward more self-aware and ethical models of communication. By reviewing this development, the historically negative reputation of public relations, as well as its potential for encouraging ethical communication, we can see the maturation of the profession from one engaged in simple dissemination of information to one involved in the creation of ethical communication.

Suspicion of corporations, corporate executives, and a general mistrust of business in the minds of the public grew in two waves. The first of these was the late 1960’s in which issues management was formed in reaction to these pressures as a process in which corporations could better understand, anticipate, and proactively manage issues of public concern. The second wave of heightened mistrust was in the late 1990’s to early 2000s, as a reaction to huge corporate scandals such as that of Enron. As thousands of former-Enron employees lost their retirement funds in the collapse, Enron executives maintained in the news media that they had done nothing wrong. Yet, as facts emerged, ethical transgressions of the public trust were unearthed and criminal charges against many top executives were filed; later convictions followed (for more discussion of this case, see Bowen & Heath (2005) or Sims & Brinkman (2003). The shockwaves following Enron, and other scandals of this period such as Tyco and WorldCom, resulted in new demands for ethical responsibility and corporate governance. One result was the implementation of the 2002 Sarbanes-Oxley Act (<http://www.sarbanes-oxley.com/index.php>) in which the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) required new standards of financial compliance and record keeping. From these cases and the new legislation, a renewed concern for corporate ethics, compliance, regulation, governance, transparency, and honest financial reporting procedures resulted. Many of these issues are the domain of the public relations function, and all of them are communicated about by the public relations function.

Course: Media Ethics & Laws Part – II (6604)

Semester: Autumn, 2021

Research conducted recently by the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) Research Foundation (<http://www.iabc.com/rf/>) studied public relations ethics and reported survey results from 1,827 IABC members and other professional communicators worldwide (Bowen & Heath, 2006). The study (Bowen et al., 2006) revealed a number of surprising and interesting findings in public relations ethics. Public relations practitioners around the world reported that 65% of them have regular access to the “dominant coalition” or the decision-making executive level of their organizations, or the Chief Officers level sometimes called the “C-suite”. This finding is good news that public relations managers are involved in ethical advising at the highest levels of their organizations, and often are involved in the strategic management and planning process, as well. Of that 65% who said they had access to the dominant coalition, 30 % said that they report directly to the CEO of their organization, with the remaining 35% of that group reporting to a C-level executive.

Reporting directly to the CEO is the best possible case because the top communicator does not have to rely on others to convey their advice and perspective to the CEO, who is the final decision maker. These numbers mean that public relations professionals are being heard at the highest levels of organizations, and are having input at the strategic management and planning level. Public relations professionals can have a real impact on organizational decision making and a real impact on the ethical decisions made in the C-suite. To use the words of one public relations executive in this study (Bowen et al., 2006), “We are there—where the rubber meets the road.”

With this relatively new and higher level of responsibility, public relations executives must understand far more than media relations. To advise the top level of an organization, professional communicators must become conversant with issues management, risk and crisis management, leadership, organizational culture and policy, and ethics. Decisions at the higher levels of the organizational system almost invariably include an ethical component. Do the benefits outweigh the risks if we take a product with a mixed safety record to market? Should we do business in countries where bribery or child labor is a common practice? From matters of external publics and multinational relationships to product standards or internal relationships with employee publics—all pose ethical challenges. These challenges are matters not only of policy but also of communication.

IABC grant research (Bowen et al., 2006) showed that, although a large number of public relations practitioners reported that they do advise their CEO (30%) or senior management (35%), another 35% of public relations professionals who say they have no access to the dominant coalition of their organizations. These practitioners are implementing the strategic decisions of others rather than making their own contributions in the areas of organization strategy, issues management, or – on ethics. Public relations cannot contribute to organizational effectiveness without offering input on the views of strategic publics to executive management—nor can it advise on the ethical issues and dilemmas that stand to damage organization-public relationships, diminish credibility, and tarnish reputation.

Counseling senior management on ethical decisions is happening in practice, and perhaps more widely than one might estimate. Almost half (49.9%) of the IABC (Bowen et al., 2006) sample reported that they counsel their senior management on ethical decisions, indicating the managements are realizing the value of incorporating a strategic communication perspective in their decisions, or of potentially incorporating the views, ideas, or values of publics into organizational policy. Forward-thinking organizations are already implementing this strategy, so that public relations professionals who aspire to higher management roles must now pay attention to ethics, ethical advisement, and how to analyze ethical dilemmas. Of our sample, 68% said that they felt well-prepared to counsel management on ethical dilemmas, confirming that public relations practitioners do see themselves in a “corporate conscience” role.

A few of the IABC study’s findings on ethics also warrant concern for those on an upwardly-mobile career path. The majority of participants reported that they had little if any academic training or study of ethics. 30% said they had no academic ethics study of any kind, and another 40% of the practitioners in the study said they had “a few lectures or reading on ethics,” as shown in the pie chart below. These figures mean that 70% of the professional communicators we surveyed could be ill-prepared to face an ethical dilemma if they have had no professional experience with ethics to support them.

Practitioners who advise on ethics reported that what they have learned about ethical issues comes from professional experience rather than academic study. Professional experience with ethics has to be earned over time, and younger practitioners are at a disadvantage when faced with a dilemma, often having little prior experience with such situations. These professionals might make mistakes even with the best of intentions due to unforeseen consequences or duties.

Using one of the rigorous, analytical means of ethical analysis available in moral philosophy allows decisions to be articulated to the media and others in defensible terms. Further, those who had no ethics study could be unintentionally limiting their career opportunities or their suitability to be promoted into senior management. The qualitative data in this study revealed that practitioners saw advising on ethical dilemmas as a main route to higher levels of responsibility within their organizations.

Q. 4 How can advertising affect the society? Discuss with examples.

Advertising is a form of selling a product to a certain audience which communication is intended to persuade an audience to purchase products, ideals or services whether they want or need them. While advertising can be seen as a way to inform the audience about a certain product or idea it also comes with a cost because the sellers have to find a way to show the seller interest in their product. It is not without social costs. Unsolicited commercial email and other forms of spam have become so prevalent that they are a major nuisance to internet users, as well as being a financial burden on internet service providers.^[1] Advertising increasingly invades public spaces, such as schools, which some critics argue is a form of child exploitation.^[2] Advertising frequently uses psychological pressure (for example, appealing to feelings of inadequacy) on the intended consumer,

which may be harmful. As a result of these criticisms, the advertising industry has seen low approval rates in surveys and negative cultural portrayals.^[3]

Criticism of advertising is closely linked with [criticism of media](#) and often interchangeable. Critics can refer to advertising's

- audio-visual aspects (cluttering of [public spaces](#) and airwaves)
- environmental aspects ([pollution](#), oversize packaging, [increasing consumption](#))
- political aspects ([media dependency](#), [free speech](#), [censorship](#))
- financial aspects (costs)
- ethical/moral/social aspects (sub-conscious influencing, invasion of privacy, increasing consumption and waste, [target groups](#), certain products, honesty)

As advertising has become prevalent in modern society, it is increasingly being criticized. Advertising occupies public space and more and more invades the private sphere of people. According to Georg Franck, "It is becoming harder to escape from advertising and the media. Public space is increasingly turning into a gigantic billboard for products of all kind. The aesthetical and political consequences cannot yet be foreseen."^[4] Hanno Rauterberg in the German newspaper Die Zeit calls advertising a new kind of dictatorship that cannot be escaped.^[5]

Discussing ad creep, Commercial Alert says, "There are ads in schools, airport lounges, doctors offices, movie theaters, hospitals, gas stations, elevators, convenience stores, on the Internet, on fruit, on ATMs, on garbage cans and countless other places. There are ads on beach sand and restroom walls."^[6] "One of the ironies of advertising in our times is that as commercialism increases, it makes it that much more difficult for any particular advertiser to succeed, hence pushing the advertiser to even greater efforts."^[7] Within a decade advertising in radios climbed to nearly 18 or 19 minutes per hour, on prime-time television the standard until 1982 was no more than 9.5 minutes of advertising per hour, today it is between 14 and 17 minutes. With the introduction of the shorter 15-second-spot the total amount of ads increased even more. Ads are not only placed in breaks but also into sports telecasts during the game itself. They flood the Internet, a growing market.

Other growing markets are product placements in entertainment programming and movies where it has become standard practice and virtual advertising where products get placed retroactively into rerun shows. Product billboards are virtually inserted into Major League Baseball broadcasts and in the same manner, virtual street banners or logos are projected on an entry canopy or sidewalks, for example during the arrival of celebrities at the 2001 Grammy Awards. Advertising precedes the showing of films at cinemas including lavish 'film shorts' produced by companies such as Microsoft or DaimlerChrysler. "The largest advertising agencies have begun working to co-produce programming in conjunction with the largest media firms",^[8] creating Infomercials resembling entertainment programming.

Opponents equate the growing amount of advertising with a "tidal wave" and restrictions with "damming" the flood. Kalle Lasn, one of the most outspoken critics of advertising, considers advertising "the most prevalent and toxic of the mental pollutants. From the moment your radio alarm sounds in the morning to the wee hours of late-night TV microjolts of commercial pollution flood into your brain at the rate of around 3,000 marketing messages per day. Every day an estimated 12 billion display ads, 3 million radio commercials and more than 200,000 television commercials are dumped into North America's collective unconscious".^[9] In the course of their life, the average American watches three years of advertising on television.^[10]

Video games incorporate products into their content. Special commercial patient channels in hospitals and public figures sporting temporary tattoos. A method unrecognisable as advertising is so-called guerrilla marketing which is spreading 'buzz' about a new product in target audiences. Cash-strapped U.S. cities offer police cars for advertising.^[11] Companies buy the names of sports stadiums for advertising. The Hamburg soccer Volkspark stadium first became the AOL Arena and then the HSH Nordbank Arena. The Stuttgart Neckarstadion became the Mercedes-Benz Arena, the Dortmund Westfalenstadion is the Signal Iduna Park. The former SkyDome in Toronto was renamed Rogers Centre.

Advertising has developed into a multibillion-dollar business. In 2014, 537 billion US dollars ^[19] were spent worldwide for advertising. In 2013, TV accounted for 40.1% of ad spending, compared to a combined 18.1% for internet, 16.9% for newspapers, 7.9% for magazines, 7% for outdoor, 6.9% for radio, 2.7% for mobile and 0.5% for cinema as a share of ad spending by medium. Advertising is considered to raise consumption.

Attention and attentiveness have become a new commodity for which a market developed. "The amount of attention that is absorbed by the media and redistributed in the competition for quotas and reach is not identical with the amount of attention, that is available in society. The total amount circulating in society is made up of the attention exchanged among the people themselves and the attention given to media information. Only the latter is homogenised by quantitative measuring and only the latter takes on the character of an anonymous currency."^{[4][16]} According to Franck, any surface of presentation that can guarantee a certain degree of attentiveness works as magnet for attention, for example, media which are actually meant for information and entertainment, culture and the arts, public space etc. It is this attraction which is sold to the advertising business. In Germany, the advertising industry contributes 1.5% of the gross national income. The German Advertising Association stated that in 2007, 30.78 billion Euros were spent on advertising in Germany,^[20] 26% in newspapers, 21% on television, 15% by mail and 15% in magazines. In 2002 there were 360,000 people employed in the advertising business. The Internet revenues for advertising doubled to almost 1 billion Euros from 2006 to 2007, giving it the highest growth rates.

Few consumers are aware of the fact that they are the ones paying for every cent spent for public relations, advertisements, rebates, packaging etc., since they ordinarily get included in the price calculation.

Public interest groups suggest that "access to the mental space targeted by advertisers should be taxed, in that at the present moment that space is being freely taken advantage of by advertisers with no compensation paid to the members of the public who are thus being intruded upon. This kind of tax would be a [Pigovian tax](#) in that it would act to reduce what is now increasingly seen as a public nuisance. Efforts to that end are gathering more momentum, with Arkansas and Maine considering bills to implement such a taxation. Florida enacted such a tax in 1987 but was forced to repeal it after six months, as a result of a concerted effort by national commercial interests, which withdrew planned conventions, causing major losses to the tourism industry, and cancelled advertising, causing a loss of 12 million dollars to the broadcast industry alone". ^[citation needed]

In the US, for example, advertising is tax deductible and suggestions for possible limits to the advertising tax deduction are met with fierce opposition from the business sector, not to mention suggestions for a special taxation. In other countries, advertising at least is taxed in the same manner services are taxed and in some advertising is subject to special taxation although on a very low level. In many cases the taxation refers especially to media with advertising (e.g. Austria, Italy, Greece, Netherlands, [Turkey](#), [Estonia](#)). Tax on advertising in European countries:^[91]

- Belgium: Advertising or billboard tax (taxe d'affichage or aanplakkingstaks) on public posters depending on size and kind of paper as well as on neon signs
- France: Tax on television commercials (taxe sur la publicité télévisée) based on the cost of the advertising unit
- Italy: Municipal tax on acoustic and visual kinds of advertisements within the municipality (imposta comunale sulla pubblicità) and municipal tax on signs, posters and other kinds of advertisements (diritti sulle pubbliche affissioni), the tariffs of which are under the jurisdiction of the municipalities
- Netherlands: Advertising tax (reclamebelastingen) with varying tariffs on certain advertising measures (excluding ads in newspapers and magazines) which can be levied by municipalities depending on the kind of advertising (billboards, neon signs etc.)
- Austria: Municipal announcement levies on advertising through writing, pictures or lights in public areas or publicly accessible areas with varying tariffs depending on the fee, the surface or the duration of the advertising measure as well as advertising tariffs on paid ads in printed media of usually 10% of the fee.
- Sweden: Advertising tax (reklamskatt) on ads and other kinds of advertising (billboards, film, television, advertising at fairs and exhibitions, flyers) in the range of 4% for ads in newspapers and 11% in all other cases. In the case of flyers the tariffs are based on the production costs, else on the fee
- Spain: Municipalities can tax advertising measures in their territory with a rather unimportant taxes and fees of various kinds.

Q. 5 Critically analyze the media freedom and responsibilities.

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 provides public access to information held by public authorities.

Course: Media Ethics & Laws Part – II (6604)

Semester: Autumn, 2021

It does this in two ways:

- public authorities are obliged to publish certain information about their activities; and
- members of the public are entitled to request information from public authorities.

The Act covers any recorded information that is held by a public authority in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and by UK-wide public authorities based in Scotland. Information held by Scottish public authorities is covered by Scotland's own Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

Public authorities include government departments, local authorities, the NHS, state schools and police forces. However, the Act does not necessarily cover every organisation that receives public money. For example, it does not cover some charities that receive grants and certain private sector organisations that perform public functions.

Recorded information includes printed documents, computer files, letters, emails, photographs, and sound or video recordings.

The Act does not give people access to their own personal data (information about themselves) such as their health records or credit reference file. If a member of the public wants to see information that a public authority holds about them, they should make a data protection subject access request.

The government first published proposals for freedom of information in 1997. In the white paper [Your Right to Know](#), the government explained that the aim was a more open government based on mutual trust.

"Openness is fundamental to the political health of a modern state. This White Paper marks a watershed in the relationship between the government and people of the United Kingdom. At last there is a government ready to trust the people with a legal right to information."

Public authorities spend money collected from taxpayers, and make decisions that can significantly affect many people's lives. Access to information helps the public make public authorities accountable for their actions and allows public debate to be better informed and more productive.

"Unnecessary secrecy in government leads to arrogance in governance and defective decision-making." - Your Right to Know

Access to official information can also improve public confidence and trust if government and public sector bodies are seen as being open. In a 2011 survey carried out on behalf of the Information Commissioner's Office, 81% of public bodies questioned agreed that the Act had increased the public's trust in their organisation.

The main principle behind freedom of information legislation is that people have a right to know about the activities of public authorities, unless there is a good reason for them not to. This is sometimes described as a presumption or assumption in favour of disclosure. The Act is also sometimes described as purpose and applicant blind.

This means that:

Course: Media Ethics & Laws Part – II (6604)

Semester: Autumn, 2021

- everybody has a right to access official information. Disclosure of information should be the default – in other words, information should be kept private only when there is a good reason and it is permitted by the Act;
- an applicant (requester) does not need to give you a reason for wanting the information. On the contrary, you must justify refusing them information;
- you must treat all requests for information equally, except under some circumstances relating to vexatious requests and personal data (see [When can we refuse a request?](#) for details on these). The information someone can get under the Act should not be affected by who they are. You should treat all requesters equally, whether they are journalists, local residents, public authority employees, or foreign researchers; and
- because you should treat all requesters equally, you should only disclose information under the Act if you would disclose it to anyone else who asked. In other words, you should consider any information you release under the Act as if it were being released to the world at large.

This does not prevent you voluntarily giving information to certain people outside the provisions of the Act.

The Act only covers public authorities. [Schedule 1](#) of the Act contains a list of the bodies that are classed as public authorities in this context. Some of these bodies are listed by name, such as the Health and Safety Executive or the National Gallery. Others are listed by type, for example government departments, parish councils, or maintained schools. Executive agencies are classed as part of their parent government department; for example, the DVLA is covered by the Act because it is part of the Department for Transport. However, arm's-length bodies are not considered part of the department sponsoring them, and they are listed individually in Part VI of Schedule 1.

Section 5 of the Act gives the Secretary of State the power to designate further bodies as public authorities. If in doubt, you can check the latest position at www.legislation.gov.uk.

Certain bodies are only covered for some of the information they hold, for example:

- GPs, dentists and other health practitioners only have to provide information about their NHS work;
- the BBC, Channel 4 and the Welsh channel S4C (the public service broadcasters) do not have to provide information about journalistic, literary or artistic activities; and
- some bodies that have judicial functions do not have to provide information about these functions.

In addition to the bodies listed in the Act, with effect from 1 September 2013 the definition of a public authority now also covers companies which are wholly owned:

- by the Crown;
- by the wider public sector; or
- by both the Crown and the wider public sector.

These terms are defined in more detail in the amended section 6 of FOIA.

Course: Media Ethics & Laws Part – II (6604)

Semester: Autumn, 2021

For example, some local authorities have transferred responsibility for services (eg social housing) to a private company (sometimes known as an arm's-length management organisation or ALMO), which is wholly owned by the local authority. This type of company counts as a public authority in its own right and needs to respond to requests for information. Where a company is wholly owned by a number of local authorities it is also now a public authority for the purposes of FOIA.

Individual MPs, assembly members or councillors are not covered by the Act.