

JOURNALISTIC DEVIANCE AS ELITE DEVIANCE: A SOCIO-LEGAL STUDY OF MEDIA MISCONDUCT IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT:

The media is often called the fourth pillar of democracy due to its role in ensuring transparency by helping people to know the truth, creating public awareness, and watches the activities of the government and powerful people. But nowadays journalism in India has changed a lot by making news for monetary benefit, influence of political parties, digital media, and competition for more viewers and popularity. Many media channels now focus on sensational news, paid news, fake news, media trials, privacy violations, and selective reporting. These activities affect journalistic ethics and also create problems for democracy, constitutional values, and in administration of justice.

This research study analyses journalistic deviance as one of the type of elite class deviance where the powerful media organizations misuse their authority for monetary or any other benefit by influencing the opinion of the public by their news without taking proper responsibility. It also covers the constitutional rights of an individuals like right to privacy and right to fair trial affected by the unethical actions of media institutions.

By exploring the constitutional and legislative framework that governs journalism in India, this paper studies the balance between freedom of expression and media accountability. The study analyzes the growing problems that affects journalism in both traditional and modern media like media trials, fake news, and unethical reporting to emphasize the tension between press freedom and responsible journalism. At last, the study examines new technological problems affecting media practices in India.

Keywords: Journalistic Deviance, Media Ethics, Freedom of Speech, Media Regulation

INTRODUCTION

Journalism is called as the “Fourth pillar of democracy” because as like the other three pillars of the Government, media helps in making the Government accountable for its actions, shaping public opinion, and spreading information among people. In India, Constitution provides the freedom of the press under Article 19(1)(a) which gives the fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression.¹ Because of this, free and responsible media is very important for democracy and good governance.

Earlier, journalism mainly prioritized of reporting only the facts, truth, by upholding ethical guidelines and performs a watchdog role- holding those in power accountable to public interest. Journalists were expected only to provide correct and verified information before publishing by maintaining honesty and neutrality. But now journalism has changed a lot because of television media, digital platforms, and social media growth. Competition for Television Rating Points (TRPs), political influence on media channels, commercialization of news, and earning money through online content have changed journalism from public service into a profit-based industry. Due to this, many unethical practices have increased in the media field, leading to the problem of journalistic deviance.

The issue of journalistic deviance is very important in criminal justice and constitutional rights as Media trials and biased reporting sometimes affect the principle “Presumption of innocence until proven guilty” vested with accused. This also affects the right to fair trial of an accused under Article 21 of the Constitution.² In the same way, too much interference in the private lives of people by media raises questions about the right to privacy recognized in *Justice K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India*.³ Because of misuse of media power, there is now a conflict between freedom of the press and the Constitutional rights of the individual. This research paper studies journalistic deviance as a form of elite deviance where powerful media institutions misuse their influence and normalize unethical behaviour in society. It also analyses the

¹ INDIA CONST. art. 19(1)(a).

² INDIA CONST. art. 21.

³ *Justice K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India*, (2017) 10 S.C.C. 1 (India).

constitutional provisions, court decisions, and media regulatory bodies in balancing freedom of the press with responsibility and accountability.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:

1. To study the existing constitutional and legal framework governs the freedom of media and its accountability.
2. To study how corrupted journalism affects society, democracy, and the criminal justice system.
3. To give suggestions and reforms for evolving journalism in modern media practices.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. To what extent the existing laws and legal frameworks controls deviance in journalism?
2. How does Indian courts balance freedom of the press under Article 19(1)(a) and reasonable restrictions under Article 19(2)?
3. How do dishonest media practices affect constitutional rights like right to privacy, dignity, and fair trial under Article 21 of the Constitution of India?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses doctrinal and analytical research methods to study journalistic deviance and media accountability in India. The research is mainly based on secondary sources like constitutional provisions, laws, case laws, books, journal articles, and online sources. A socio-legal approach has also been used to understand the impact of unethical journalism in our society, and in the outcome of administration of justice.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. This study is mainly based on secondary sources like books, articles, case laws, and online materials and does not include surveys, interviews, or field study methods.

2. The study mainly discusses important forms of journalistic deviances such as fake news, media trials, paid news, and does not cover all areas of media ethics.
3. Due to fast growth of digital media, some recent developments and technologies may not be fully covered in this study.

MEANING OF JOURNALISTIC DEVIANCE

“Journalism” is the activity of collecting, verifying, and presenting news and information to the public across various medium of media platforms such as print, television, radio, and digital platforms. The word “deviance” generally means behaviour that is against ethics, legal standards and rules made by the society. In sociological and criminological studies, deviance means actions that are not accepted by society and which disturb social order and morality.⁴ In the context of journalism, deviance refers to unethical, irresponsible, or illegal activities done by journalists, media companies, or news channels while giving news and information to the public.

Journalistic deviance includes acts like spreading fake news for without verifying properly, publishing news for money, unnecessary sensational reporting by making people panic, media trials, selective reporting by hiding the truth, violation of privacy of individuals, political propaganda, hate speech, and spreading false information. All these practices go against journalistic ethics like truthfulness, fairness, neutrality, and accountability.⁵ Journalistic deviance affects society largely because media is the strongest tool that make the people aware of anything that happens in any part of the world and strongly influences public opinion, democracy, elections, and the criminal justice system. In democratic countries, journalism is expected to watch and protect public interest by giving accurate and responsible information. Journalists are expected to maintain honesty, neutrality, and social responsibility while reporting news.⁶

The idea of journalistic deviance can also be understood through the theory of elite deviance. Elite deviance means unethical or illegal actions done by powerful people or institutions who often escape from punishment because of their political, economic, or social power.⁷ Media

⁴ Marshall B. Clinard & Robert F. Meier, *Sociology of Deviant Behavior* 5 (15th ed. 2016).

⁵ P. G. Thakurta, *Media Ethics: Truth, Fairness, and Objectivity* 45 (2012).

⁶ Denis McQuail, *McQuail's Mass Communication Theory* 181 (6th ed. 2010).

⁷ David R. Simon, *Elite Deviance* 3 (10th ed. 2006).

organizations with the influence of powerful people misuse their power by spreading biased news or favoured news for particular political party, sensational reporting, selective information, and misinformation. Many times, these activities are justified in the name of press freedom and public interest even when they go against ethics and constitutional values.

Therefore, journalistic deviance is not only professional misconduct but also a serious social and institutional problem which affects constitutional values, democracy, and public trust in media institutions. Misuse of media power creates conflict between freedom of the press and accountability in a democratic society.

NATURE OF JOURNALISTIC DEVIANCE

Journalistic deviance has some special characteristics which make it different from normal professional misconduct. One important feature of journalistic deviance is that it is not only connected with an individual journalists but with media institutions.⁸

Another important characteristic is its influence on society. Misleading news, selective reporting, and sensational coverage can create fear among the public, may leads to political conflicts, communal tensions, and wrong opinions about accused persons in criminal cases.

Commercialization is also a major reason for journalistic deviance. Media organizations focus more on money, popularity, online views, and audience attention than truth and accuracy. This leads to clickbait journalism and exaggerated reporting

Digital media has further increased the problem where Social media and online news platforms spread fake news, misinformation, and manipulated content very quickly for views and likes without proper verification. At the same time, weak regulation and limited powers of the Press Council of India make it difficult to control unethical journalism.⁹

FORMS OF JOURNALISTIC DEVIANCE

⁸ David R. Simon, *Elite Deviance* 5–6 (12th ed. 2019).

⁹ Press Council Act, No. 37 of 1978, § 14, India.

Journalistic deviance happens in different forms which affect journalism's ethics, democracy, and public trust in media. Due to competition, political pressure, and profit-making, many media organizations now focus more on sensational news and popularity instead of truth and public interest. Some of the major forms of journalistic deviance prevalent in India are discussed below.

i) Fake news and misinformation:

Fake news and misinformation is where false or manipulated news is spread to influence public opinion or create sensation for any political and economic objectives. Social media and digital platforms have increased the spread of fake news very quickly due to lack of overseeing mechanisms. False narratives relating to politics by unofficial news pages, communal issues, unverified statistics of public health, and criminal incidents often spread rapidly through online platforms by unverified pages and sites, creating social panic and ideological divide.¹⁰

ii) Paid News

Paid news refers to the practice of publishing news content in exchange for money or political favours without disclosing the facts and truth to the public. In India, where media coverage has occasionally been compromised for financial agreements between political parties and media organizations, paid news developed as a major problem during election campaigns. This practice weakens public trust in media independence and democratic transparency.¹¹

iii) Media Trials

Media trials is when media organizations conduct parallel investigations and portray accused persons as guilty before trial is completed and judgements are given by courts. Sensational crime reporting, speculative discussion and debates in news channels without proofs, often interfere with the principle of presumption of innocence and the right to a fair trial under Article 21 of the Constitution.¹² Continuous and unnecessary media interference may also influence perception of

¹⁰ U.N. Educ., Sci. & Cultural Org. (UNESCO), *Journalism, Fake News & Disinformation: Handbook for Journalism Education and Training* 15–18 (2018).

¹¹ P. Sainath, *The Media's Money Game and the Threat to Democracy*, *The Hindu* (July 6, 2011).

¹² *Sahara India Real Estate Corp. Ltd. v. Sec. & Exch. Bd. of India*, (2012) 10 S.C.C. 603 (India).

the public and indirectly affects accused's rights, criminal investigations and decisions taken in such cases.¹³

iv) Sensationalism and Yellow Journalism

Sensationalism is journalism is when the news channels or any media platforms use emotional appeal, dramatic presentation, exaggeration, and shocking content over factual accuracy and responsible reporting in journalism. In order to attract public attention and increase Television Rating Points (TRPs), crime, celebrity topics, communal conflicts, and political disputes are frequently sensationalized by these medias.¹⁴ For example, the recent shortage of gas and petroleum due to ongoing war between Iran and U.S. is published in media with sensationalism which leads to panic buying of petroleum and gas cylinder by the public. Modern journalism by social media majorly focusing on entertainment and audience engagement rather than providing informative and truthful news to the public.

v) Invasion of Privacy

Invasion of privacy is another form of journalistic deviance where media interferes too much in the personal lives of individuals and victims. Sharing personal information, publishing photos without permission, taking invasive interviews, and giving too much coverage about private matters can affect a person's dignity and right to privacy.¹⁵ The Supreme Court of India in Justice *K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India, 2017* recognized privacy as a fundamental right and said that media should respect personal information and human dignity.¹⁶

vi) Political and Corporate Bias

¹³ R.K. Anand v. Registrar, Delhi High Court, (2009) 8 S.C.C. 106 (India).

¹⁴ Bob Franklin, *Key Concepts in Journalism Studies* 227–29 (2005).

¹⁵ P. G. Thakurta, *Media Ethics: Truth, Fairness, and Objectivity* 94–97 (2012).

¹⁶ *Justice K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India*, (2017) 10 S.C.C. 1 (India).

Media organizations are often influenced by political parties, business owners, and different ideologies. Because of this, media independence can be affected by pressure from politicians, business people, advertisers, and other powerful groups.¹⁷ As a result, news reporting may support political or economic interests instead of public welfare. Selective reporting, hiding opposite views, and politically motivated news reduce fairness and objectivity in journalism and turn media platforms into tools of propaganda instead of democratic accountability.¹⁸

vii) Hate Speech and Communal Polarization

Some media channels create communal problems and social divisions by spreading biased news to particular religion or community, hate speech, and provoking content against certain communities. Reporting about religion, caste, or political issues without taking any responsibilities by the media can spread hatred and disturb peace in the society which may lead to communal riots.¹⁹ In a diverse country like India, such practices affect constitutional values like secularism, equality, and social harmony.²⁰ The famous issue is Babri Masjid issue, particularly during its peak in the 1990s, by different news channels which also aggravated the issue.

viii) Plagiarism and Fabrication of News

Plagiarism in journalism is Copying news from other channels, fake interviews, edited visuals, and fabricating the original information or evidence in order to attract viewers with the fake headlines and thumbnails.

LEGAL FRAMEWORKS GOVERNING JOURNALISM IN INDIA

Constitutional Foundation:

¹⁷ Edward S. Herman & Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* 1–5 (2002).

¹⁸ *Id.* at 298–302.

¹⁹ UNESCO, *Journalism, 'Fake News' & Disinformation* 45–47 (2018).

²⁰ INDIA CONST. pmb.; INDIA CONST. arts. 14, 15, 25.

Freedom of speech and expression is an fundamental rights given by our Constitution for all individuals, as this right forms the constitutional basis for press freedom also in India.²¹ Though the Constitution does not directly mention freedom of the press, Supreme Court of India has said that it is included under **Article 19(1)(a)**, which gives freedom of speech and expression to citizens.²²

This right extends to news channels, print press, digital media, and all forms of mass communication which gives journalists and media organizations the right to publish opinions, share information, and criticize the government. In *Romesh Thappar v. State of Madras* the Supreme Court supported freedom of the press.²³

But this freedom given to press is not absolute. **Article 19(2)** allows reasonable restrictions for reasons like public order, morality, defamation, contempt of court, and security of the State.²⁴

Media trials and sensational reporting can affect the right to fair trial of accused or victim under **Article 21**, by negative coverage and rushing the investigations. In *Sahara India Real Estate Corp. Ltd. v. SEBI*, the Supreme Court said that excessive media reporting can affect judicial proceedings.²⁵

In the case, *Justice K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India*, the Supreme Court recognized privacy as a fundamental right.²⁶ Media should therefore respect the personal dignity and private information of any individuals.

STATUTORY LAWS AND LEGAL BOUNDARIES

²¹ INDIA CONST. art. 19(1)(a).

²² *Romesh Thappar v. State of Madras*, A.I.R. 1950 S.C. 124 (India).

²³ Id.

²⁴ INDIA CONST. art. 19(2).

²⁵ *Sahara India Real Estate Corp. Ltd. v. Sec. & Exch. Bd. of India*, (2012) 10 S.C.C. 603 (India).

²⁶ *Justice K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India*, (2017) 10 S.C.C. 1 (India).

□ Section 356 of BNS– Defamation

A person commits defamation if they make or publish any statement about another person with the intention to harm that person’s reputation, or knowing that it may harm their reputation.²⁷

By journalists and media organizations, defamation can happen through: Making False news reports, fake allegations, Unverified accusations, Sensational reporting, Publishing defamatory articles or videos

- The **Contempt of Courts Act of 1971** prohibits news organizations from publishing anything that undermines the judiciary or interferes with the administration of justice.²⁸
- The **Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act of 2023** regulates the processing of digital personal data. While it includes measures for the public interest, journalists must manage personal information security duties.²⁹

MEDIA-SPECIFIC REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS

i) Press Council of India (PCI)

The Press Council of India has been established under the Press Council Act, 1978 as a statutory and quasi-judicial body to support responsible journalism and protect the independence of media. The council also examines complaints related to professional misconduct and violation of journalistic ethics. The Council has created “**Norms of Journalistic Conduct**” which contain rules related to fairness, accuracy, privacy, responsible reporting, and communal harmony.³⁰

²⁷ Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, No. 45 of 2023, § 356 (India).

²⁸ Contempt of Courts Act, No. 70 of 1971, § 2(c) (India).

²⁹ Digital Personal Data Protection Act, No. 22 of 2023 (India).

³⁰ Press Council of India, *Norms of Journalistic Conduct* 1–5 (2022).

Under **Section 14 of the Press Council Act, 1978** the Council can warn, advise, or censure media organizations if they do any professional misconduct.³¹ But it does not have the power to impose fines or give strict punishment if anyone violates it.

But the problem is, the Press Council of India can only govern a print media, such as newspapers, journals, and magazines, as well as news agencies. Online platforms and television news channels are frequently beyond the direct authority of the Press Council.³²

ii) Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995

The Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995 is one of the main laws which controls television channels in India.³³ This law regulates cable TV networks and broadcasters. It controls the content shown on television and does not allow obscene, defamatory, anti-national, or violent content. News channels must follow the Programme Code and Advertisement Code. If any TV channels violating these rules, the government can take action against them.

iii) Information Technology Act, 2000

The Information Technology Act, 2000 helps to regulate digital journalism, social media, and online news platforms in India.³⁴ This law controls online content, electronic communication, and internet activities. By this it seeks to prevent fake news, misinformation, hate speech, cyber crimes, and unlawful online content.³⁵

The Information Technology Rules, 2021 also regulate online news portals, YouTube channels, and social media platforms.³⁶ These rules say that digital media should follow ethical standards and responsible reporting. Online platforms must follow morality and should avoid immoral activity that affects public interest.

³¹ Press Council Act, No. 37 of 1978, § 14 (India).

³² Arghya Sengupta & Shrutanjaya Bhardwaj, *Media Regulation in India: Challenges of Digital Journalism*, 14 NUJS L. Rev. 45, 51–53 (2021).

³³ Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, No. 7 of 1995 (India).

³⁴ Information Technology Act, No. 21 of 2000 (India).

³⁵ Apar Gupta & Udbhav Tiwari, *Regulating Online Speech in India: Free Speech and Digital Governance*, 15 Indian J.L. & Tech. 44, 49–52 (2019).

³⁶ Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, G.S.R. 139(E) (India).

MEDIA TRIALS AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Media trial means when media organizations conduct their own parallel investigations, spread speculative stories, and show accused persons as guilty before the court gives its final judgment. Through television debates, sensational reporting, public discussions, and emotional news coverage, media often influences public opinion about criminal cases before the case is completed. Such practices create serious problems that affects innocents and accused by violating their constitutional rights, fair trial principles, and journalistic ethics. (Thakurta, P. G. (2012)

In **Sahara India Real Estate Corp. Ltd. v. Securities and Exchange Board of India (2012)**, Supreme Court said that repeatative media reporting unnecessarily on a issue can affect ongoing trials of a case and disturb the administration of justice.³⁷

The Court also said that freedom of speech should be balanced with the right to fair trial. In **R.K. Anand v. Registrar, Delhi High Court (2009)**, the Court says that media have the power to influence legal proceedings.³⁸

Media trials also affect witnesses, investigators, and judges by creating public pressure in criminal cases. Continuous media coverage can influence statement of the witness by listening to unnecessary information which affect fair investigation, and create expectations among the public about punishment or conviction.³⁹

Many famous criminal cases in India show the increasing influence of media trials. The excess interference of media in Aarushi Talwar murder case and the death case of Sushant Singh Rajput showed how sensational journalism can influence public opinion before the court gives its final decision.⁴⁰ In the Sushant Singh Rajput case, many news channels conducted heat debates about drug investigations, and personal relationships without proper evidence. This is how criminal investigations are turned into entertainment for the public by media.

³⁷ Sahara India Real Estate Corp. Ltd. v. Sec. & Exch. Bd. of India, (2012) 10 S.C.C. 603 (India).

³⁸ R.K. Anand v. Registrar, Delhi High Court, (2009) 8 S.C.C. 106 (India).

³⁹ Trial by Media: Free Press Versus Fair Trial Under Criminal Jurisprudence, 5 Indian J. Legal Stud. 45, 52–55 (2018).

⁴⁰ Avani Bansal, *Media Trials in India and the Crisis of Fair Trial Rights*, 8 Indian L. Rev. 77, 81–84 (2022).

The growth of social media and digital journalism has increased the seriousness of media trials in India. Millions of individuals can be rapidly influenced by unconfirmed news, rumors, manipulated footage, and emotional material that are quickly spread on online news platforms, YouTube channels, and social media sites. Digital media does not have strict control of what to post and not, compared to conventional journalism.

DIGITAL MEDIA AND EMERGING CHALLENGES IN JOURNALISM

The growth of digital technology and access to internet has changing the history of traditional journalism in form of press, radio, television to modern form of journalism in online platforms like YouTube, social medias. In India, online news platforms, social media, YouTube journalism, and digital content creators have increased the access of information and participation among public. But digital journalism has also created many problems like fake news, misinformation, sensational reporting, and weak media regulation.

One major problem of digital media is the fast spreading of fake news and misinformation. Social media platforms doesn't have any strict restriction on posting a news, which allows unverified news and rumours to spread quickly among millions of people without proper fact-checking. False information related to politics, religion, elections, and criminal cases can create unnecessary panic, communal tension, and political conflicts in society (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017).

Another important issue is click bait journalism and sensational content. Many online platforms that provide information, focus more on shocking headlines and thumbnails to get likes and views, without following any ethical standards prescribed by laws. Competition for audience attention and advertising for money has increased particularly among the people who spread information in the name of influencers and content creators, without learning proper journalism, has further contributed to unethical journalism.

Volume 1 Issue 2 | May 2026

Another growing problem is development of artificial intelligence and deepfake technology. Fake videos, edited audio, and manipulated digital content can easily spread misinformation, affects reputation, and create political confusion.⁴¹

Online hate speech and religious segregation have also become serious problems. Some digital media platforms spread biased and inflammatory content for money in the name of promotions, to gain popularity and political influence, which can disturb social harmony in India.⁴²

A major problem in controlling digital journalistic deviance is weak regulation. In fact, The Press Council of India does not have statutory powers to control digital media and online journalism. Although the Information Technology Act, 2000 and Digital Media Ethics Code Rules, 2021 try to regulate online content, there are still concerns about balancing these regulation with freedom of speech.⁴³ Stronger digital ethics has to be followed by online platforms, fact-checking systems should be implemented, and better media regulation are needed to control modern forms of journalistic deviance in India.⁴⁴

REFORMS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Strong laws and regulations should implemented to control growing journalistic deviance in India.
- 2.. India needs a proper regulatory system for digital media and online journalism as they are evolving recently and used by many people particularly among young generation, as social media and online platforms spread fake news and misinformation very quickly.

⁴¹ Sam Gregory, *Deepfakes and the Future of Journalism*, 22 *Journalism Stud.* 147, 150–53 (2021).

⁴² Apar Gupta & Udbhav Tiwari, *Online Hate Speech and Digital Regulation in India*, 15 *Indian J.L. & Tech.* 66, 70–73 (2020).

⁴³ Information Technology Act, No. 21 of 2000 (India); Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, G.S.R. 139(E) (India).

⁴⁴ UNESCO, *Journalism, Fake News & Disinformation: Handbook for Journalism Education and Training* 52–56 (2021).

Volume 1 Issue 2 | May 2026

3. Journalists must uphold the norms and perform some practices like fact-checking any information before publishing, respecting the privacy rights of any individual or victims, avoid hate speech, and ensure responsible crime reporting.
5. Strict guidelines should be prescribed by laws to prevent media trials. Journalists should not portray a person as accused guilty before the court gives judgment.
6. Political influence, company or any business influence on news channels should be restricted. There should be transparency about media ownership, funding, and political connections to protect fair and independent journalism.
7. Laws should also control misuse of artificial intelligence and deepfake technology because fake videos and manipulated content can spread misinformation, harm people's reputation and also costs the lives of many people.
8. Courts should continue protecting freedom of speech while also preventing irresponsible journalism that affects privacy, dignity, and fair trial rights of the individuals.

CONCLUSION:

Journalistic deviance is becoming a serious social and legal problem. Media plays a very important role in our society because it creates awareness, and helps people to know what is happening in the any part of the world in a transparent way. But nowadays, due to competition, between news organizations to rank in TRP, and because of widespread of digital media, many immoral practices in journalism is keep increasing. Spreading fake news, sensational reporting,

Volume 1 Issue 2 | May 2026

and media trials are becoming common practices to earn money. These practices show how journalism is slowly becoming unethical in India.

Misuse of press freedom affects many constitutional rights of an individual like invading into their privacy, right to get fair trial. Absolutely, Freedom of speech and freedom of the press are important democratic rights, but it should not affect the constitutional rights.

Even though the Press Council provides standards for journalism, its less power not to punish and limited authority reduce its effectiveness. It is also unable to properly control modern digital media. Not all the journalists are wrong or unethical. There are many good journalists in society who work very hard bring out the truth to the public. But, Many times, they are killed before the truth comes out completely, the truths are hidden with money and power. Sometimes even their names, their work, and the issues they investigated do not known properly to the public. So, strong laws are definitely needed to protect such journalists and ensure their safety.

By this, I conclude that freedom of the press and accountability of media should be balanced. The press should have freedom, but at the same time it should use that freedom responsibly and should not misuse it. If government takes too much control over the press, many truths may not reach the public, as like other 3 pillars of democracy media is vested with freedom to bring out the truth, but such organ is being sold for money and benefits. Strong ethical standards, better regulations, strengthening existing laws like the Press Council of India, implementing fact-checking systems, bringing special laws to oversee digital media, and maintaining transparency within media institutions can help in promoting ethical journalism.

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Volume 1 Issue 2 | May 2026

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Volume 1 Issue 2 | May 2026

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