**Five Core Ethics and Principles of Reporting#**

**1. Truth and Accuracy**

**Journalists cannot always guarantee ‘truth’, but getting the facts right is the cardinal principle of journalism. We should always strive for accuracy, give all the relevant facts we have and ensure that they have been checked. When we cannot corroborate information we should say so.**

**2. Independence**

**Journalists must be independent voices; we should not act, formally or informally, on behalf of special interests whether political, corporate or cultural. We should declare to our editors – or the audience – any of our political affiliations, financial arrangements or other personal information that might constitute a conflict of interest.**

**3. Fairness and Impartiality**

**Most stories have at least two sides. While there is no obligation to present every side in every piece, stories should be balanced and add context. Objectivity is not always possible, and may not always be desirable (in the face for example of brutality or inhumanity), but impartial reporting builds trust and confidence.**

**4. Humanity**

**Journalists should do no harm. What we publish or broadcast may be hurtful, but we should be aware of the impact of our words and images on the lives of others.**

**5. Accountability**

**A sure sign of professionalism and responsible journalism is the ability to hold ourselves accountable. When we commit errors we must correct them and our expressions of regret must be sincere not cynical. We listen to the concerns of our audience. We may not change what readers write or say but we will always provide remedies when we are unfair.**

**QUALITIES OF A REPORTER**
The reporter must have some desire qualities to successes or to achieve the standard position of profession. The following are the basic qualities of a reporter or rather a good reporter:

**COURAGEOUS AND CONFIDENT**

A good reporter should be courageous and confident. Without courage and confidence it is difficult for a person to be a good reporter. Timidity on the part of any reporter will get them nowhere. You need to be brave enough to write the truth, no matter what the consequences. Sometimes it’s not easy. You end up almost becoming friends with your sources over time, and then one day you may be forced to write something negative about someone who thought they were your friend. That’s just the nature of the business. Also, sometimes you have to get mean with people who try to stonewall you and hide the truth.
**SKEPTICISM**
A good journalist is one who doesn’t take things on face value. Press releases or information given to them from people pushing for a certain agenda is only a starting point for a good journalist. Good journalists question sources and are always prepared to dig around until they get facts they are satisfied with.

**TRUSTWORTHINESS/CREDIBLE**
Credibility is something that every good reporter should have. In other words, a reporter must exhibit characters and behaviors that make him or her to be believed and trusted by people. Journalists interact with people from all walks of life who are often faced with an extreme crisis in their lives. It is a good journalist’s duty to know what to ask and when in the most appropriate manner. When people trust him enough to give him confidential or private information, it is his duty as a journalist to not make that information publicly available.
**DEVELOP GOOD WRITING SKILLS**
Wherever a journalist may work, whether in Print, Radio, TV or Online, they have to write. Depending on the time constraints, a good journalist is one who writes articulately, succinctly and quickly in an interesting and relevant way that appeals to readers.
**PERSISTENCE**
Craziest thing, some people you have to write about don’t like you or don’t care about you. You have to be able to call them over and over and follow them around like a stalker sometimes to get the information you need.
**GOOD AT COMMUNICATIVE SKILLS**
The reporter has to be able to communicate with people, interpret what information they give you, and present it to others. The relationship of trust between information organs and people is the foundation for every journalist’s job. To promote and maintain of this relationship all journalists should be good at communication sectors. A journalist has to respect, cultivate and defend the right to information of all people; for these reasons he researches and diffuses every piece of information that he considers of public interest in observance of truth and with a wide accuracy of it.

**INQUISITIVE**
A good journalist is one who is nosy. Where did the money for the project come from? Why is this politician supporting this policy? Why are these construction workers not wearing their head gear? A good journalist is one who is curious and burns with the desire to know what is going on in the world.
**INTEGRITY**
A journalist cannot accept benefits, favors or tasks that impair his autonomy and his professional credibility. A journalist cannot omit facts or details essential for a complete reconstruction of events. Titles, summaries, photos and subtitles must not either distort reality or forge the contents of all articles and news. A journalist must not publish images and photos of people involved in daily episodes which are particularly terrifying or prejudicial to people’s dignity, nor may he dwell upon details of violence or brutality unless for a prominent reason of social interest. He may not intervene in reality to create artificial images.
**NEWS SENSE**
News sense is the basic quality of newsmen. News sense is essential for a reporter. He has to have news sense or nose for news to distinguish news from non-news. He is the first reader of a copy and if he has made a mistake he has to correct it. A bad copy may have the most important element of the story buried in the fourth paragraph. He should be able to compare various news values and decide where to begin his story and should not miss important details.

**CLARITY**
A reporter should have clarity of mind and expression. A person who is confused himself cannot tell a story to others. Only clarity of mind is not enough unless it is accompanied by clarity of expression. Without clarity of expression clarity of mind has no meaning. Reporter is the judge of clarity of the copy a good reporter will never allow a copy escape him unless the meaning is crystal clear**.**
**ALERTNESS**
A reporter should always be alert while dealing with his subjects. Many major news breaks in the past were possible because of alertness of sources. A reporter has to be alert while working on news-beat. Lack of alertness of a reporter can be seen by readers in the morning for he will be leaving or introducing mistakes for everybody to see.

**PUNCTUALITY**
It is a good habit. It is always better to be punctual and then wait than reach late and ask others a rival may misinform you or hide some important information. At the beat too punctuality pays. If a reporter is punctual he will be treated with respect by his co-workers. If he is late he will irritate them and spoil the working atmosphere. Besides he may have to face the problem of backlog of copy which he will have to clear under the pressure of deadline.

**DETERMINED**
A journalist knows the difficulty in finding information, especially when certain people won’t agree to be interviewed. Nevertheless, they are determined to get over the toughest hurdle and bring a difficult story out into the open. What may start off seeming to be a simple news story can require hard work and determination?
**GOOD GENERAL KNOWLEDGE**
A good journalist is one who knows something about everything. They are well-informed news junkies especially in the area of politics, current affairs and law. There are plenty of ways to improve one’s general knowledge, from watching TV quiz shows and doing the newspaper quizzes to online searches, playing board games or even using your local or school library to access things like atlases, dictionaries and encyclopedias.
**CULTIVATE ACCURACY**
A good journalist is one who double- and even triple-checks the spelling of names and gives the correct details of the events that took place. Journalists need to have an eye for detail and not be afraid to ask questions again and again to ensure accuracy.
**RESPONSIBILITY AND FAIRNESS**
A good journalist is one who is able to take personal responsibility for what they write. They must keep in mind that there will be people who will be upset because they disagree with the angle of the story or because they wanted their story to be given more importance.

**MOTIVATED AND ENTHUSIASTIC/ CURIOSITY**
Curiosity is another very important quality of any good reporter. There is the need to be curious all the time. The spirit of curiosity helps the reporter get good stories. It helps a lot if a journalist has a skill or interest in something else. For instance journalists that know a lot and have a lot of interest in a certain subject are usually valuable. A good journalist is one who does not give up easily and one who has thick skin. There will be times when a journalist won’t be able to find interesting stories to write up, or people who are willing to talk to them. Regardless, a good journalist maintains a high level of motivation whatever the situation may be.

**HIGHLY COMPETITIVE**
It is difficult to get a job in mainstream media as a journalist. The industry is highly competitive and only few get selected. Nevertheless, there are many other opportunities for journalists as long as they are determined, competitive and have the skills noted above. Just make sure you get your foot in the media door. Some ways to start his journalism career include blogging, making regular contributions to his school or university newspapers, and volunteering at community radio stations. Keep in mind that any extra experience he gets in any media field will place him one step ahead of everyone else in the industry.
**HARD WORKING**
A reporter should be able to work fast and enthusiastically on any given story. News writing especially has a lot to do with deadlines. This therefore means that a good reporter should be able to work under pressure and meet deadlines. If you can’t soak the pressure then it is going to be hard to work as a reporter. The nature of the job being such, an ‘up-and -doing” type of person proves successful in this line. Naturally, persons who prefer fixed working hours and regular routine in daily life are unsuitable for this job.
**POWER TO MAKE THE RIGHT QUESTION**
Must be good at ask the right questions at the right time. A good reporter must be able to analyze and interpret information. He should have an ability to ask critical questions to the source. A person of snobbish, uppish and patronizing temperament has little or no chance of success in this line. A shy and a reserved type of young person are totally unfit to become a successful reporter. He must possess abundant self-confidence, so as not to be over-awed by the rank or position of an individual. He should be a man of initiative and should not be easily disheartened or discouraged.
**MAINTAIN CODE OF CONDUCT**
Either way, a journalist must be fair all the time and maintain a level of objectivity in what they report. The best journalist is one who has strong ethical and moral codes of conduct that help them determine what information to write and what to leave out. Reporters are people that no media organization can do without. For example newspapers all over the world rely on their reporters for their news contents. A reporter’s job is therefore a very important one.
**SELF EDITING, CORRECTION AND CRITICISM POWER**
A good reporter should have the habit of self-editing their copy before submitting it to their editors. Reporters should be able to write well. By writing very well I mean writing clear and well-focused stories that is easy to understand by everyone. Good spellings, punctuations and grammar are also requirements. A good reporter should be able to take corrections and criticisms in the course of performing their job. Comments, opinions belong to the right of speech and of criticism and, therefore, they have to be absolutely free from any obligation.
**EYES FOR INDICATING NEWS STORY**
A good reporter should have an eye for what is newsworthy and should be able to produce new stories without being told. A good reporter should be able to gather facts in a very careful and accurate way.
**CAPABLE TO WORK WITH OTHERS AND IRREGULAR HOURS**
The work of news gathering is quite an unpredictable one. One might never know when news will break or where it will happen. It is for this reason that a reporter should be able and willing to work at irregular hours. A reporter should be a good team player and be capable of working with other reporters, photographers and even editors. He should have an ability to work under pressure to meet deadlines. The nature of the job being such, an ‘up-and -doing” type of person proves successful in this line. Naturally, persons who prefer fixed working hours and regular routine in daily life are unsuitable for this job.
The above are some of the basic qualities that reporters should have regardless of whatever medium they are working – print media or broadcast media. If they develop these qualities, will be on the way to becoming a good reporters

**FUNCTIONS OF REPORTER**
Reporters are people that no media organization can do without. A reporter’s job is therefore a very important one. The followings are the most common functions of a reporter:

**TO GATHER NEWS**
A reporter is the gatherer of news, and as such performs an important function in a newspaper establishment. As he has to gather news, he is required to be on the move most of the time usually within the area allotted to him. He has to interview persons and attend public functions and meetings, press conferences and law courts to investigate events of public interest, to collect news and to ascertain news on contemporary events.

**TO OBSERVE**
A reporter is one who observes the passing show in the widest sense of the word and pictures its detail for the benefit of the whole society. He cannot play his part successfully unless he keeps his eyes open and his mind attuned to the present, future as well as the past. He must have the observation power to select news from the open world.

**FINDING THE ANGLE**
The angle of a news story is its most vital part. A news story is based on the angle it takes. Once a reporter gets all the facts about a story, the choice of selecting the right angle begins. The reporter has to decide it quickly because the story has to be reported at the earliest. So every reporter faces this question of deciding the angle.

**TO MAKE THE NEWS REPORTS**
By reporting, we mean collection or gathering of facts about current events or background material required for a news story or feature. Reporters do it through interviews, investigations and observation. Reporters are given directions by editors to cover a particular event, known as assignments. They may be general assignments or special ones. Reporters write the news stories, which are called copies. We call a news report a news story. In a newspaper office, reporters are the ones who file stories. They may be given different assignments. These may be on politics, economics, parliament, the stock exchange, sports, courts or markets. The reporter’s job is to write the story as quickly as possible with all the facts and figures.
**TO BE AN ACTIVE LISTENER AS WELL AS ACTIVE PERSON**
A reporter can get good stories by listening to others. While traveling in a bus, the reporter overhears the conversation between two passengers. “Did you go to the town today? There was a terrible accident. A school bus overturned. Twenty children were taken to hospital.”
By listening to this, the reporter gets a clue to a story. He now has to find out more details of the accident. Which school bus was involved? How many children were injured? In which hospital where they been admitted? The reporter goes to the accident site to collect all this information. The reporter’s job does not end there. He has to inform the photographer about the accident. The next day’s newspaper should also carry some good photographs about the accident.

**COVERING EVENTS**
PM visit Rangpur and hold a meeting, “India-Pakistan cricket Test in Mumbai”, “Kumbhmela in Haridwar”, “ International Film Festival in Goa “, these are all events. Reporters cover these events for their publications, channels or news bulletins. The coverage depends upon the importance and magnitude of the event. A small local government level meeting will be covered locally, whereas a state level function will get wider coverage. If it is a national event, it will receive nationwide attention.

**GO TO PRESS CONFERENCE**
A major source of news is the press conference. Leaders of political parties hold press conferences regularly. Ministers also hold press conferences to announce various programmes and policies of the government. Business houses arrange press conferences to launch their new products. Organizations and Associations also held press briefings.
**TO ATTEND PRESS BRIEFING**
These are other major sources of news items. Various commissions and committees submit their reports to the Government which are a goldmine as far as news reporters are concerned. Statements or press briefing by leaders and businessmen also make news. The reporters should present in media briefing.
**TO MOVE INTO RESPECTIVE BEATS**
As he has to gather news, he is required to be on the move most of the time usually within the area allotted to him. He has to interview persons and attend public functions and meetings, press conferences and law courts to investigate events of public interest, to collect news and to ascertain news on contemporary events. His work changes daily; as such he should be prepared to handle any assignment and move anywhere. He should have special knack of meeting all sorts of people in all types of circumstances.
**TO CONCERN ABOUT PARLIAMENT AND ASSEMBLIES**
Parliament and state assemblies when in session generate lot of news. Questions in both the houses of parliament, proceedings, calling attentions, zero-hour mentions, debates and various acts passed by the parliament also make news. The general budget and railway budget are presented in parliament. State budgets are presented in state assemblies.

**TO HAVE LIAISON**
The reporters should have maintained liaison with different sources of news. Such as-
The police are in charge of law and order. So the police always maintain a close vigil about various activities of citizens. Reporters get details about crime, accidents etc. from police sources.
**INTERVIEWING**
Interviewing people connected with an event or incident is a very common practice used by reporters to get details. Television reporters take the opinion of people which are called reactions. Occasionally, reporters of newspapers and channels conduct long interviews with important people.
**REWRITE A NEWS STORY**
Rewriting material needs that it flows or reads better and adheres to the house style of a particular publication. Ensuring that, a story fits a particular word count by cutting or expanding materials as necessary. Checking facts and stories to ensure they are accurate, adhere to copyright laws, are not libelous or go against the publication’s policy. Plan to ensure that the right stories appear in the correct place on each page. If the reporter find any mistakes in a copy he should correct the copy. If he think that the story needs to add some information or develop the story then he should re-write the story.
**TO MAKE QUICK DECISION**
He should be able to grasp the situation quickly and reduce it into writing in the shortest time and in a readable form. But while reporting news he must be able to judge its authenticity and then report the news so collected with absolute honesty. The narrative should be attractive so that the readers should enjoy reading it. In such a circumstance, he must have an eye for the important discussions/ decisions which are to be included in the report, omitting all other unimportant/irrelevant matter.
**TO INVESTIGATE INFORMATION AND REPORT**
The investigative journalist digs beneath the surface to help readers understand what’s going on in a complex world. Reporters must write and research stories in designated areas of expertise, or “beats.” This is more common at larger news organizations, where journalists specialize in such specific topics as medicine, politics or sports. Small city and town newspaper reporters are more likely to cover a wide range of subjects. Editors assign specific topics, which reporters develop into stories from calling or personally interviewing sources. Additional fact-checking may be needed if sources don’t agree on basic details.
**WATCHDOG OF A SOCIETY**
A crucial duty of journalists is to serve the public interest by acting as a watchdog on government, business, education, health, environment, safety and other institutions. That duty is particularly important where agencies and institutions restrict the flow of information. In any other case a journalist must always respect the principle of more transparency of the sources of information, giving the readers or the audience the maximum possible attention to them.
**TO BE SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE**
A journalist has to observe the maximum caution in spreading news, names and images of accused people for minor offenses leading to mild punishments, except in cases of particular social interest. A journalist must check all information obtained by his sources, he must accept responsibility for and control the origins of what he says, and he must always safeguard the substantial truth of facts. A journalist cannot discriminate against people on grounds of race, religion, mental and physical conditions or political opinions.
**TO MAINTAIN PROFESSIONAL SECRECY**
In cases in which the sources require secrecy, a journalist has to respect the professional secrecy and has to be able to inform the reader of such circumstance. A journalist respects the right of secrecy of every person and he may not publish news about someone’s private life, unless they are transparent and relevant to the public interest, however, he must always make known his own identity and profession when he gathers such news.
The names of victims of sexual violence can be neither published, nor can a journalist give details that can lead to their identification unless it is required by the victims themselves for relevant general interest.
**TO HAVE TIME MANAGEMENT**
News is extremely time sensitive. The reader wants his news to be new. Based on the idea that news is something you didn’t know before which is significant or interesting to a group of readers, news items are basically timely or immediate. News is what new. Reporting something that has just happened or is about to happen. An afternoon raid on a minister house may warrant a live report during evening news. So the reporter must maintain time management.
**FOLLOW PRESS LAWS, ETHICS AND CODE OF CONDUCT**
Press freedom is a word that is commonly used. By this, we mean the right to publish news without any restriction or control. But this does not mean that anything about anybody can be published. There are certain rules of conduct or principles of morality which we have to follow while reporting. The reporter should check and verify that the news which he writes is correct, accurate, and factual. He should not write anything that is misleading, inaccurate, defamatory, vulgar or obscene. Media should not intervene into the privacy of individuals. Also media should not report anything that harms national interest. If a report published in the paper defames the reputation of a person, that individual can file a defamation case in the court of law. The editor, printer or publisher is liable to be punished either individually or jointly.

**CONCLUSION**
It is not going to be easy that establish one’s as an efficient reporter. It requires a lot of hard work and effort. It is achievable, thought. Just don’t give up, and take advantage of any opportunity that comes one’s way. He must not express his own views in what he writes-he must know in most sets of circumstances-but everything he writes must express his mind and its condition. He holds up a mirror and how much clouded or clear it is, depends on the truth or a twist of the truth which he makes in accordance with his nature and mental equipment.
A reporter’s mind is like a sponge, paying a good deal of attention to purely mundane things but learning something every day and cleaning his mind of matters not up to the mark. He must organise his knowledge and codify it. He must understand the principles of government in general and in some details. He must know general history, particularly the history of his area. Though he can pick up these things as he goes along his duty, it is better for him to supplement his knowledge by a planned study.
A good reporter seldom sticks to a vulnerable position for long. Usually he passes on to news agencies or gets promotion to look after other aspects of newspaper production like a news editor or a chief correspondent.