

Journalism and privacy assignment

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Abstract Since the twentieth century, famous people have been receiving public and media attention more than ever. Not only their public images and behaviors have been reported, commented, praised or criticized by mass media, their private lives also has been being under the spotlight. This brings the question whether the media should respect the privacy of celebrities, not inspecting their after-work lives for whatever purpose.

The results of the study show that people agree that the media has its right to express freely, and on some cases, it has the right to expose private lives of public figures to the public eye. Introduction Privacy is the entitled right to everyone; however, privacy is often indistinguishable from publicity when a person uses his or her personal life and private matters to attract attention and seek for influence and power. Some entertainers are of this kind. For example, a singer may begin a relationship with someone famous in order to gain media attention, and therefore make him or her easier to sell albums.

Movie stars, together with other people in the show business, often wear luxurious and languorous clothes in their off-stage lives to attract people such like fans, advertisers, producers and directors, Paris Hilton, a then-unknown heiress, is the archetype of using private matters to gain fame: In her case, they were sex tape and her family background as well as her lifestyle and personal stuff. These celebrities may not expect that their private lives will not be made public, especially for those who are making money from the news and pictures reported and taken by tabloids and paparazzi. For politician, they have the least privacy.

Politician and government officials are powerful people who make decisions and establish laws that affect every individual in the country and sometimes the world. Therefore, the public has the right to know what is going on in politicians' lives. However, some say that people should focus on the performance of a politician instead of his or her personal matters.

Nevertheless, one's personal matters affect one's performance at work.

Furthermore, a politician or an official may do something against the benefit of the public due to his or her private matters, such as spending money from taxpayers to buy a house.

On this point, the media serves as a protector for public interest. If the media does not expose private lives of politicians under the scrutiny, democracy would be damaged and corruption, among other things, might occur. Also, journalists are responsible to ensure that a public figure's persona is not opposing his or her inner self, particularly to people who deliberately make their public images appealing. If a politician or a pop star who openly said that they are against racial discrimination but in reality says ethnic slurs, or a celebrity who addressed the concern to starving reported.

On the other hand, some figures are not willing to be on the center stage, rather, they are forced. So, the media should not intrude into their private lives. For instance, a highly acclaimed football player who only wants to win the game and be a top player should not be the target of media criticism if he cheats on his wife. Yet, quite often, a public figure is seen as a role model for his or her talent and personal traits, and therefore their immorality affects a large proportion of people.

However, if a celebrity is truly mainly focus on his or her work and does try to protect his or her riveter life instead of revealing it, Journalists should respect his or her privacy. All in all, for people who make money from their personal affairs, it is unlikely that the media will not expose their private lives. Also, it is the duty of the media to examine the lives, no matter public or private, of influential people that they are not doing wrong things or are not being dishonest.

Even so, Journalists should respect the privacy of some public figures and should not interrupt their off-work lives, if they are not attempting to exploit their private lives. Rationale: One of the most frequent and cost bitter complaints about Journalists is that they invade others' personal lives and publicize things that people want to keep private. Journalists respond that their Job is to truthfully inform the public, and that Job involves reporting facts that some might not want known.

Because some in media make invasion of privacy a staple of their businesses, it is mistakenly believed by many that the practice of Journalism precludes respect for privacy. To many, the two concepts – Journalism and privacy – seem incompatible. This view underrates the purpose and practice of Journalism as the researcher understands it. Research Questions: In deciding what private information should be made public, how does one distinguish among what the public has a right to know, needs to know and wants to know? * Do people have a right to privacy? What sorts of people? In what situations? How about a personal need for privacy? Are there any useful suggestions for handling issues that arise in this highly sensitive area? Hypothesis: Journalism and privacy are compatible. Limitations: Time <https://assignbuster.com/journalism-and-privacy-assignment/>

constraints of the semester provide less time than may be ideal for a research study. Literature Reviews The strength and importance of media in a democracy is well recognized. Article 19(1)(a) of the Indian Constitution, which gives freedom of speech and expression includes within its ambit, freedom of press. The existence of a free, independent and powerful media is the cornerstone of a democracy, especially of a highly mixed society like India.

Media is not only a medium to express one's feelings, opinions and views, but it is also responsible and instrumental for building opinions and views on various topics of regional, national and international agenda. The pivotal role of the media is its ability to mobilize the thinking process of millions. Every institution is liable to be abused, and every liberty, if left unbridled, has the tendency to become a license which would lead to disorder and anarchy. This is the threshold on which we resort to sensationalist Journalism with a view to earn a competitive edge over the others. Sting operations have now become the order of the day.

They are a part of the hectic pace at which the media is evolving, carrying with every sting as much promise as risk. However, though technology cannot be thwarted but it has its limits. It cannot be denied that it is of practical importance that a precarious balance between the fundamental right to expression and the right to one's privacy be maintained. The second practice which has become more of a daily occurrence now is that of Media trials. Something which was started to show to the public at large the truth about cases has now become a practice interfering dangerously with the Justice delivery system.

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Both are tools frequented by the media. And both highlight the enormous need of what is called ‘ responsible Journalism’. (Gaur, Paragraphs. Freedom of Press visa-visa Responsible Journalism. Retrieved from [http:// www. Electronegative. Com/articles/free_pre_v. Tm](http://www.Electronegative.Com/articles/free_pre_v.Tm)) It is well known that Journalists especially newspaper reporters, come pretty low in the public's estimation. A survey conducted by the market research company Moor in February 2003 rated them even lower than government ministers, finding that “ 75% of adults would not trust a alarmists to tell them the truth”. (Copra, Rites. , Swami, Such’. Yellow Journalism.

Retrieved from [http://www. Nondenominational. Com/volume/issue_1/ article_by_Rites_and_Such. HTML](http://www.Nondenominational.Com/volume/issue_1/article_by_Rites_and_Such.HTML)) Former American President Theodore Roosevelt said: “ To educate a man in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society. ” That s Just as true in Journalism as in any other field. Journalists traffic on their good name. Once they besmirch their reputation through unethical behavior they lose the trust of their audience and go down the slippery slope to oblivion. (Victim, Kaput. (2011, December 30). The Dilemma of Media Ethics. Retrieved from [http:// eyetooth. Org/web/The-dilemma-of-media-ethics/5662-1-1-5-true. HTML](http://eyetooth.Org/web/The-dilemma-of-media-ethics/5662-1-1-5-true.HTML)) The law relating to privacy is of recent origin and it recognizes an individual's right to be let alone. This right is not restricted merely to his physical being and property but it also extends to his mind space. He possesses the right to control the flow of information with him and keep it out of the purview of the public. Before the advent of visual and electronic media the question of privacy was a subtle one as newspapers had only a limited impact given the vast majority of

illiterate population. But with the modern media finding green pastures in India the issue of privacy has gained importance.

The lack of centralization which existed prior to the internet age has changed since its onset by which now startling amounts of personal information about an individual is accessible with one tap on a button. The risk of information caching the wrong hands has become very high. There has been an unprecedented information revolution and the regulatory mechanisms existent now to control the spread of information are limited in many ways and have failed in curtailing the overstepping of the media. The laws in India have proved to be inadequate to counter these situations and it is now necessary to have an overhauling of the system. Charles, Mama. (2011, August 11). Rights of Media and Privacy Issues: Bridging the Gap. Retrieved from <http://www.Lawrenceville.Com/articles/Rights-of-Media-and-privacy-Issues-Bridging-the-Gap-3927.Asp>) or newspapers, news agencies and Journalists in accordance with high professional standards, on the basis of its adjudications of cases from time to time, built up a code of Journalistic norms. Though these codes emerged out of cases relating to print media, the fundamental principles evolved in the process are as much relevant to radio and television Journalism.

The 2005 edition of “ Norms of Journalistic Conduct” updates the Norms evolved since 1996 on the basis of adjudications and other pronouncements and cover to a large extent almost every aspect of compulsions and compunctions in Journalistic practice. An effort has been made in this edition not only to divide the norms covering similar situation under one heading for easy referencing, but also to provide a comprehensive access to subject <https://assignbuster.com/journalism-and-privacy-assignment/>

specific guidelines. Part(6) states that: Right to Privacy is an inviolable human right. However, the degree of privacy differs from person to person and from situation to situation.

The public person who functions under public gaze as an emissary/representative of the public cannot expect to be afforded the same degree of privacy as a private person. His acts and conduct as are of public interest (public interest' being distinct and separate from 'of interest to public') even if conducted in private may be brought to public knowledge through the medium of the press. The press has however, a corresponding duty to ensure that the information about such acts and conduct of public interest of the public person is obtained through fair means, is properly verified and then reported accurately.

For obtaining information in respect of acts done or conducted away from public gaze, the press is not expected to use surveillance devices. For obtaining information about private talks and discussion while the press is expected not to edger the public persons, the public persons are also expected to bring more openness in their functioning and co-operate with the press in its duty of informing the public about the acts of their representatives. It) The interviews/articles or arguments pertaining to public persons which border on events that are in public knowledge, if reported correctly, cannot be termed as intrusion into private life.

There is a very thin line between public and private life and public persons should not to be too skinned to criticism iii) Newspapers are allowed latitude in criticizing errors who are in seats of power because their conduct discloses

public interest provided their criticism is not motivated to gratify private spite of opponent/rival of public figure. (Reedy, Cassandra. Edition 2005. Norms of Journalistic Conduct. Retrieved from <http://preconscious.Nice.In/norms.HTML>) Methodology Study Design: The researcher adopted the method of survey in which the sample was given a questionnaire containing 12 questions.

Setting: Bangor Duration of the Study: The study lasted Sample Size: 50 participants, male and female, ranging from the age of 18-46 age groups, were chosen on a random basis. Data Collection Procedure: The focus of the study was to look into the relationship between privacy and the media. The researcher collected data by administering a questionnaire. However, secondary data was also collected to augment the studies. Table 1 : Showing the respondents' source of news. Type of Media Used | Frequency | Percentage | National Newspapers | 33 | 23.7% | Regional newspapers | 8 | 5.71% | Magazines | 13 | 9.28% | Online Newspapers | 15 | 10.74% | Television | 35 | | Radio | 16 | 11.43% | Internet Sites | 27 | 19.28% | Others: (Word of Mouth) | 3 | 2.14% | Total* | 140 | 100% | From the table we can see that the respondents get most of their news from newspapers, followed by television and internet sites. * As more than one answer was ticked by the respondents. Table 2: Showing the respondents' source of news about celebrities. Newspapers | 30 | 24.39% | Magazines | 12 | 10.13% | online | 119 | 115.4% | Television | 33 | 26.82% | Radio | 19 | 15.34% | Others: (Word of Mouth) | 6 | 4.88% | Total* | 123 | 100% | From the above table we can see that the respondents get most of their news about celebrities from television followed by newspapers and magazines. * As more than one answer

was ticked by the respondents. Table 3: Showing the areas which respondents regard as private in their life. | Frequency | Percentage | Areas
 Health | 14 | 4. 38% | Sexual Orientation | 18 | 5. 64% | sexual Activities | 32
 | 10. 03% | Sexual Relationships | 33 | 10. 4% Finances | 21 | 6. 58% | Family
 Relationships | 23 | 7. 21% | Friendships | 8 | 2. 50% | Traditional Mail | 12 |
 3. 76% | E-mail 123 17. 27% | Text Messages 133 1 10. 34% Conversations
 126 1 8. 15% | camera | 14 | 4. 38% | Mobile Phone 133 1 10. 34% |
 computer 121 1 6. 58% | None of the above | 2 | 0. 62% | Total* 13191100%

| Therefore, from the table we can see that sexual relationships, text messages and mobile phones are regarded as the most private areas, after which follow the rest of the areas. *As respondents wrote down more than one answer. Table 4. : Showing the areas in a celebrity's or well-known personality life which the respondents would like to know about. Health 110
 17. 81% | Sexual Orientation | 6 | 4. 68% | Sexual Activities | 4 | 3. 12% |
 Sexual Relationships | 7 | 5. 46% | Finances | 12 | 9. 37% | Family
 Relationships 116 112. 5% | Friendships | 24 | 18. 75% | work Relationships |
 20 | 15. 62% | Traditional Mail | 1 0. 78% | E-mail 12 11. 56% | Text
 Messages 12 1 1. 56% | Conversations | 3 | 2. 34% | camera 5 | 3. 96% |
 Mobile Phone | 1 Computer | 2 | 1. 56% | None of the above | 13 | 10. 5% |
 Total* 1 1281100% | Table 4. 2: Showing the areas in a celebrity's or well-

known personality life which the respondents would regard as private. Health
 114 13. 71% | Sexual Orientation | 23 | 6. 1% | sexual Activities | 28 | 10.
 07% | Sexual Relationships | 37 | 9. 81% | Finances | 21 | 5. 57% |
 Friendships | 14 | 3. 79% | Work Relationships | 11 | 2. 91% | Traditional Mail
 | 18 | 4. 77% | E-mail 128 17. 42% | Text Messages 130 1 7. 5% |
 Conversations 127 1 7. 16% | camera 128 1 7. 42% | Mobile Phone 137 1 9.

81% | computer | 28 | 7. 42% | None of the above | 1 | 0. 6% | Total* 1377

1100% | From the two tables, we can see that maximum number of respondents would want to know about friendships and work relationships, rather than personal matters such as sexual activities and sexual relationships, which they regard as private. Table 5: Showing respondents' opinions on the amount of privacy of a celebrity as compared to the average person. Amount of Privacy | Frequency | Percentage | Less | 4 | More | 18 | | The same | 28 | 156% | Total | 150 | 1100% | The respondents were asked to state reasons behind choosing one over the other. The respondents' reasons for choosing ' More' are stated below: * Their career and reputation can be at stake * Everyone wants to know about them and they might not be comfortable with it * They are always in the limelight and could be in danger or trouble * As they are celebrities, they deserve it * General public has a tendency to interfere and are more prone to be exposed * Privacy is denied to them and they are victims of Yellow Journalism The respondents' reasons for choosing ' Less' are stated below: * Stardom comes with a price to pay ND the price is ' lack of privacy * They are ' public' figures. They have chosen to become the eye-candy of the public rhea respondents' reasons for choosing ' The Same' are stated below: * They are just like any other person * Each and every individual is equal before law Table 6: Showing respondents' opinions whether a celebrity has ' struck a deal' with the press to gain publicity. ' Struck a Deal' | Frequency | Percentage | yes | NO | 110 | 120% | Don't know | 10 | 120% | From the above table we can see that there is a clear majority of respondents who gain publicity and therefore, they should accept the downside of the deal as well.

Table 7: Showing respondents' opinions on giving prior warning to the celebrity before publishing about them. Prior Warning | Frequency | Percentage | NO 115 130% | Don't know 5 | | From the table we can see that a major chunk of the sample agrees that a story or news article about a celebrity or a well-known person should only be published if the reporter or news agency has given them prior warning. Table 9: Showing respondents' opinions whether the press should report a story regardless of content. Right to Report | Frequency | Percentage | yes 119 138% | NO 128 156% | Don't know 3 | |

From the above table we can see that most subjects believe that the press should not be able to report a story unless the information is validated to be true. Table 10: Showing respondents' opinion whether associates of celebrities have a right to sell stories. Right to Sell | Frequency | Percentage | yes 15 110% | NO 130 160% | Only if it doesn't affect anyone else | 15 | 30% | From the table we can see that most number of respondents believe that any person associated with a celebrity doesn't have a right to sell a story about the celebrity to the press.

Table 11: Showing respondents' opinions whether they consider privacy injunctions as an instrument to hide behavior. Injunction as a tool | Frequency | Percentage | yes 125 150% | NO 125 150% | From the above table we can see that there is a clear divide between the respondents when it comes to considering privacy injunctions as an instrument of the rich and powerful to hide shameful behavior. The respondents were asked to state reasons for their answers and the reasons are stated below: The respondents' reasons for choosing Yes': * There is a publicity stunt hidden <https://assignbuster.com/journalism-and-privacy-assignment/>

somewhere. They are more careful as they are under the radar all the time *
It is a useful tool They are image conscious and certain situations can be
embarrassing * It has an adverse effect on young minds who follow them * It
is the right thing to do hidden * They take things for granted * They use the
press and then blame them * There is no point in hyping an issue rhea
respondents' reasons for choosing ' Not * Privacy is essential, whether an
individual is rich or poor * Shameful or not, certain issues should be kept
private * Rich can afford to ' buy innocence, even if they are not * It's up to
them to make their own decisions * There might be certain problems or
incidents that they wouldn't want people to know about

Conclusion All Journalism codes - whether for print, broadcast or new media
- have a privacy clause. Respect for privacy is not seen by the public as
incompatible with a conception that Journalists themselves draft and adopt.
As long as privacy is understood as a right of natural persons - not
governments or corporations -and as long as privacy is not read as a
synonym for secrecy, then respect for privacy and journalism, properly
understood, are compatible. To be sure, the two values - privacy and
revelation; discretion and disclosure - clash in particular circumstances.
Balances must be struck. Compromises are made. But this is common in the
daily Nor of law and Journalism, of a privacy commissioner and of an editor.

Journalists, Nor usually against the press of deadlines, daily balance values
such as privacy with the public interest in disclosure. This kind of balancing
is a fundamental part of the Nor of Journalists worthy of the name. What else
is it, if not respect for privacy? Privacy is not alien to Journalism, but rather, it
is integral to it. At its most elemental, privacy permits and sustains

individuality. A celebrity who is compelled to live every minute of his or her life among others, and whose every need, thought, desire, fancy or gratification is subject to public scrutiny, has been deprived of his or her Individuality and human dignity. Such an individual merges with the mass. His or her opinions, being public, tend never to be different.

His or her aspirations, being known, tend always to be conventionally accepted ones. His or her feelings, being openly exhibited, tend to lose their quality of unique personal warmth and to become the feelings of every man or woman. Another factor that makes privacy and journalism compatible is their joint work in lubricating the machinery of a democracy. In his landmark study, not of privacy but of freedom of expression, Thomas Emerson concluded that - A system of privacy is vital to the working of the democratic process. Democracy assumes that the individual citizen will actively and Independently participate in making decisions and in operating the institutions of the society.

An individual is capable of such a role only if he [or she] can at some point separate himself [or herself] from the pressures and conformist's of collective life. The right to privacy appears in the basic human rights instruments, alongside other rights of critical significance to the practice of Journalism. What is often selected is the role of privacy in facilitating the practical enjoyment of other rights- As Journalists go about their work of cultivating confidential sources; of charting and reporting new ideas and dissenting views that test orthodoxies; and of chronicling the formation of new political movements and parties - as they do all this, Journalists rarely reflect on the background role of enforceable rights to privacy.

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