



## Mains Practice Question

**Q.** Only by freedom and conflict of ideas can truth in the long run, be found. Examine the statement with suitable examples in the context of contemporary media ethics. (250 words)

05 Mar, 2020 GS Paper 4 Theoretical Questions

### Approach

- Define freedom and conflict of ideas
- Define media ethics
- Explain how and why current media is not following the principles of media ethics
- Conclude with way ahead

### Introduction

According to Socrates, knowledge is a source of virtue, virtue is a source of happiness, and happiness is the purpose of a good life. So a good life requires knowledge and the way to attain knowledge is dialectics ie process of logical reasoning.

In the process of dialectics, there is a conflict of ideas ie between thesis and anti-thesis, which results in synthesis (more closer to the truth). While the process of dialectics brings us closer to the truth, freedom especially freedom of speech make the process of dialectics credible.

### Body

The Freedom and conflict of ideas are very important in the field of journalism. This forms the core of media ethics which also includes the following:

- **Truth and accuracy** - Journalists cannot always guarantee 'truth', but getting the facts right is the cardinal principle of journalism.
- **Independence** - Journalists must be independent voices and they should not act, formally or informally, on behalf of special interests whether political, corporate or cultural.
- **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.
- **Humanity** - Journalists should do no harm to any human interest.
- **Accountability** - A sure sign of professionalism and responsible journalism is the ability to hold ourselves accountable.

However, the contemporary media is mostly owned by political groups or corporates, this creates a conflict of interest and thereby jeopardizes their neutrality and media ethics.

- Instead of being freed, media is being harassed by the government which can be seen in the decline in India's ranking in the World Press Freedom Index (current ranking: 140).
- Similarly against the conflict of ideas, there has been imposition of ideas. As many Media groups are tying up with particular political parties and presenting news which may polarize the society.

Freedom of the press forms an integral part of freedom of speech and expression. Therefore, it is a

necessity for sustenance of pluralistic society and vibrant democracy. Thus, it is the responsibility of the government and media to abide by media ethics.

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