ETHICS & INTEGRITY

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NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY

The last national education policy was created in 1986. During these years, the world has changed in unprecedented ways. Against this backdrop, **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020** was released. The NEP 2020 is a historic and ambitious document. With an eye on the future, it speaks to all aspects of education during our times. Various aspects of the policy have been dealt in following sections:

A. Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)

- So far, ECCE was not given due importance in any given policy document. However, it is very important aspect as the holistic development of any individual essentially starts with his or her nourishment and nurturing during the early years.

- The Policy says, over **85% of a child's cumulative brain development** occurs prior to the age of 6, indicating the critical importance of appropriate care of the brain in early years.

- Hence, the policymakers have **reimagined pre-primary education** and have envisaged to integrate this stage of a child's physical, mental & cognitive development with the extant formal schooling pattern. As a result, **10+2 model** is to be replaced by a **5+3+3+4 model** of ECCE and schooling.

- ECCE shall take place from the ages of 3 to 6 in Anganwadis, Balvatikas and play-schools. This will be followed by Classes 1 and 2 in school. These five years constitute the foundational stage of education. This will be **followed by Classes 3 to 5** (3 years), **6 to 8 (three years)** and **9 to 12 (four years)**. This proposed structure is in sync with the age ranges or developmental stages of children.

- The overarching goal is to ensure universal access to high quality ECCE across the country. A **National Curricular and Pedagogical Framework** for ECCE will be developed by the NCERT. This will focus on several important aspects of ECCE including **high quality ECCE teacher preparedness**.

- The policy plans to **bring four crucial central ministries** together for smooth integration of ECCE into school education. These ministries are: MHRD (i.e. Ministry of Education), WCD, MoH&FW and Tribal Affairs.

B. School Education

- Special emphasis has been given on **learning to be holistic, experiential, integrative, and enjoyable**. The Policy aims at real understanding and towards learning how to learn. It expressed it dissatisfaction about the persistence of rote learning, something that the **National Curriculum Framework of 2005 had tried to cure**.

- The proposed curricular and pedagogic approach underscores critical thinking and learning based on __ inquiry, discovery, discussion and analysis.

C. Curriculum Overhaul

- Policy **does not recognise stubborn distinctions between different curricular areas**, and among curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular areas. Art-and sports-integrated education will be important strands in this cross-curricular pedagogic approach.

- **Flexibility in course choices** will be another curricular advantage for students. The thought behind this curricular overhaul is to create 'holistic and well-rounded individuals equipped with the key 21 century skills.

D. Teachers' Training

- Teachers' capacity cannot be enhanced unless their pre and in-service education, service conditions, and terms of recruitment and deployment do not receive renewed focus and uplift. The policy treats these concerns in a detailed and sensitive manner.

- To attract outstanding students to teaching profession, it proposes a large number of **merit-based scholarships** for pursuing quality 4-year integrated B.Ed. programmes, with special focus on rural areas.

- It is also proposed **to strengthen Teacher Eligibility Tests** with respect to the assessment of several parameters: — *subject-content and pedagogy, classroom teaching, passion and motivation for the profession and proficiency of teaching in the local language*. These tests will therefore **include teaching demonstration and interview components**.

- In order to maximise the ability of teachers to do their jobs effectively, the excessive and arbitrary transfers will be stopped and **teachers will not be involved in assignments that have no bearing on their work**.

- Teachers' **professional autonomy** will be restored, and a **comprehensive merit-based structure** of tenure promotion, and salary structure will be developed. The policy also envisages that teacher education will be gradually moved (by 2030) to multi-disciplinary colleges and universities.

- A new and comprehensive **National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education** will be prepared by the National Council of Teacher Education by 2021, in consultation with NCERT.

E. Higher Education

- Some of the **salient problems of higher education** system in India are <u>rigid separation of disciplines, limited teacher and institutional autonomy, lack of focus on quality and relevant research and poor institutional governance</u>.

- Multi-disciplinarily, flexibility and autonomy are central to the reform proposed by the policy. The decision to **do away with the rigid separation between different disciplines** and the provision of freedom to exit and enter courses, as these will be credit-based will truly liberate learners. The policy **grants them freedom to choose** what to learn, how to learn and when to learn. Now, one can opt to study Sanskrit along with Mathematics or Music with Physics.

- The Policy's proposal to **integrate engineering courses**, at institutions such as IIT, **with the arts and the humanities** in order to move towards holistic and multidisciplinary education, would surely enthuse every thinking being.

- The principal thrust of the policy is to **curb fragmentation** of higher education through restructuring higher education institutions into large multidisciplinary universities, colleges and higher education institution clusters or knowledge hubs.

- Though all such multidisciplinary universities are envisaged to carry out 'teaching, research, and community engagement', some would develop as **teaching-intensive universities** and some as **research intensive ones**.

> The society which scorns excellence in plumbing as a humble activity and tolerates shoddiness in philosophy because it is an exalted activity will have neither good plumbing nor good philosophy: neither its pipes nor its theories will hold water - **John W Gardner in his book**, Excellence: Can We Be Equal and Excellent Too?

- In order to create a robust ecosystem for high quality research, the policy envisages the creation of a **National Research Foundation** (NRF). The Foundation's main objectives will be to identify priority areas or themes for research and coordinate with different academic institutions and funding agencies in order to 'ensure synergy of purpose.

- The policy aims to **integrate vocational education with mainstream education**. Starting with vocational exposure in the middle and secondary classes, quality vocational education will be integrated smoothly into higher education. This will ensure that **every individual learns at least one**

■ **VAJIRAM & RAVI** ■

vocation and is able to develop a sense of the dignity of labour and respect for various vocations. This will also enable us to tap our demographic dividend and address skill-deficits of the economy.

ACCOUNTABILITY IN GOVERNMENT

The recent emphasis on revolutionised democracy seeking increased accountability from the government has brought into focus its need and importance in Governance. Accountability institutions assume importance and form the core of any good governance mechanism.

What is Accountability?

- Accountability refers to the process as well as norms that make decision maker answerable to ones for whom decisions are taken i.e. the decision maker and the beneficiary. The accountability could be financial, administrative, legal or professional.

- Accountability has **an answerability component** to justify the action and **an enforcement component** that is to take action in cases where act of omission or commission is established.

- Accountability helps in improving public confidence in government performance. It facilitates a feedback mechanism between the Government and its citizens.

Who is Accountable to Whom?

- First and foremost, stakeholder in any case would be the **citizens**. The citizens are the tax payers. They have a right to know how the money has been expended by the government.

- Hence, the accountability to the citizen is most critical. It **ensures sustenance of public trust and confidence in the existing democratic system**.

- Accountability is an ongoing process. The stakeholders directly or indirectly participate in framing the vision and indicating the priorities. The schemes are framed and implemented by the government. The results of evaluation help in improving the system. At the same time, they empower the stakeholder to seek justification from the decision makers.

Accountability for What?

- On one hand, accountability necessitates transparency in decision making on the other it also presupposes that the accurate and reliable Information and data is maintained for public Scrutiny. In absence of information and facts neither the grievance of the citizens could be appreciated nor could the responsibility be imposed for act of omission or commission.

Various Steps to Ensure Accountability

- The **Right to Information Act** has introduced a huge element of transparency in the decision-making in the government as well as access to information.

- **Digitisation of various services** to the citizens has not only facilitated faster delivery of services but also provided a clear trail of transactions for any analysis by an oversight agency.

- The **Citizen's Charter** also clearly spelt out the responsibilities of various agencies of the government.

- In the budget speech in February 2020, the Finance Minister announced insertion of new **section 119 A in the Income Tax Act** namely, "**Taxpayers" Charter**". This would provide the much-needed legal backing to Citizen's Charter in India as it would follow the model of governmental accountability in the form of a vision being strengthened through legal status.

The Institutional Mechanisms

- These institutions can detect the violations and deviations from prescribed norms as well as the instances of poor administration. **External accountability** between the Government and the citizens is established through the elections. **Internal accountability** mechanisms refer to systems of checks and balances and oversight mechanisms.

- The framers of the Indian Constitution, while adhering to the principle of separation of powers between Legislature, Judiciary and Executive also provided for appropriate checks and balances for administrative objectivity and accountability.

- The institutions of **horizontal accountability** in Indian context include the institutions of CAG, the Election Commission, the Vigilance Commission, the Central Information Commission and the Ombudsman. In addition, there are a large number of Regulatory bodies including SEBI, TRAI, CERC, CPCB etc.

Conclusion and Way forward

- The concept of accountability **should not be limited to a fault-finding** perspective or blame game but should encompass the larger perspective of correcting and improving the systems.

- The focus should be on **identification of systemic errors/ failures** and suggesting improvements thereof. It also needs to be recognised that in a scenario of collective decision-making, it becomes a case of collective responsibility and accountability. The accountability mechanisms also need to **keep pace with developments of modern government structures** particularly in the era of digitisation.

- There is also a **need to sensitise the functionaries** towards their responsibilities and duties in context of the accountability frameworks. For better transparency, not only there should be a **Citizen's Charter** but also **well-defined Standard Operating Procedures** for performing a job. **Element of discretion needs to be minimised** for ensuring responsiveness, transparency, and accountability.

FIGHTING CORRUPTION

- In order to ensure right and good governance, it is necessary for the government to be open, accountable, accessible, transparent, sensitive, fair and pro-active. A government missing these traits is bound to be prone to corruption.

- According to the **fourth report of the Second Administrative Reforms Commission** on "**Ethics in Governance**", corruption is an important manifestation of the failure of the ethics and values system in society". It would therefore imply that unless proper values are nurtured and encouraged nothing much can be done to improve the conduct of human beings in public administration.

Factors Promoting Corruption

- Corruption is commonly defined as misuse of public office for private gains. **Public expenditure of enormous proportions** in emerging democracies provides a grand opportunity for both politicians and civil servants to indulge in corruption.

- The failure of executive machinery in ensuring good quality public administration is mainly because of a **feudal approach and excessive governmentalisation** of public activities.

- The second factor contributing to corruption is the **over centralised administrative** system both at the Centre and the States. It is partly due to **legacy of the colonial rule and also due to inadequate leadership** in assuring new administrative system.

Suggestions to Tackle Corruption

- One important step could be to **decentralise powers**—financial and administrative—**in favour of local self-government** so that people are not forced to go from pillar to post for redressal of grievances.

- This was intended to be achieved by the Panchayat Raj programme but was not achieved due to failure in implementing the scheme.

- **Reducing manpower** in government offices by outsourcing important public services with adequate checks and monitoring, will improve the quality of delivery of public services.

- The working of government both at the Centre and the State needs to be **made time-bound.**

- Another important field requiring urgent action is "**top-level police administration**". Lack of impartiality on part of enforcement agencies such as police and regulatory authorities has also contributed to widespread corruption.

> **Case Studies Highlighting Success of Panchayati Raj Programme**:
>
> - It is worthwhile to refer to the success stories in Surat where the local self-government was able to raise funds locally for meeting developmental activities within the district.
>
> - Also, a Panchayat in Coimbatore District (Tamil Nadu) was able to raise funds by generating wind energy to meet the needs of the village and to distribute the surplus for others

- In a recent trend that is taking place by which the **investigating authorities communicate with the media** even when investigation is still in progress, presumably to satisfy an over anxious media. Nowhere in the world do the investigating agencies keep on briefing the media on a daily basis even.

- The SC has already given guidelines to various state governments to implement police reforms especially in the field of training, posting and transfers in order to delink political influence in police administrative matters.

Conclusion

- Our fight against corruption in civil service can succeed only if we have the right persons in right positions. This can be achieved only by fine-tuning our recruitment and training system.

- Whatever the Constitution may or may not provide, the welfare of the country will depend on the way in which the country is administered. That will depend upon the men who administer it - Dr. Rajendra Prasad

PUBLIC FUNDING OF ELECTIONS

- India became a republic and chose universal adult franchise. With an overwhelmingly illiterate (85%) population and with female literacy at 7.5%, many prognosticated the failure of the experiment.

- But our leaders had a fervent and abiding faith on the robust common sense and native wisdom of the ordinary men and women and chose to empower all of them without discriminating on the basis of gender, economic status or educational attainments.

- In the last 70 years, the country having seen 17 general elections to the parliament and over 350 elections to the state assemblies,

The Progress

- By the time of the 4th Lok Sabha elections (1967), party hopping by elected representatives became a frequent phenomenon. Then came a dark period of emergency and its excesses and extension of the life of Lok Sabha but the Nation quickly overcame the hurdle.

- While democracy was restored, the many malpractices in elections like booth capturing, intimidation of voters, vote buying etc. put a question mark over our democratic credentials.

- Great strides were made in the conduct of elections by the ECI by bringing in the **Electronic Voting Machine**, which was later **supplemented by a paper trail** to make it doubly secure, the goal of a completely free and fair elections has been elusive.

Free and Fair Elections

- Over the years, the Election Commission has done a commendable job to make elections free from undue influences by ensuring **clean electoral rolls**, **increased number of polling stations** for voters' convenience, **preventive arrests** and security protocols to counter threat and intimidations to vulnerable sections of the voters, **increased security** at the polling stations to prevent booth capturing and vote-stuffing, strict implementation of the **model code of conduct** to deny advantage to the government of the day and so on.

- But elections have also to be fair. Fairness is mainly affected due to (i) **Criminalisation of politics**, and, (ii) **Runaway election expenditure**.

- Election law **precludes those convicted of offences from contesting** but <u>due to delays in criminal proceedings combined with the winnability formula adopted by parties</u>, the number of charge-sheeted Law Makers is increasing, and worse is that of those charged with heinous crimes like robbery, dacoity and rape. *In 2019 LS election 43% of the winners have Criminal cases. 29% of the winners have serious Criminal Cases*.

- The other sore point is the runaway expenditure in elections. Election law prescribes, limits to the expenditure by a candidate. But unfortunately, the rule is observed more in breach. While **there is a ceiling on candidate's expenditure**, **there is none on the party's**.

- The unscrupulous in the Print media found ways to make a fast buck **by manipulating the campaign news coverage** based on the extent of payment. The candidate pays for what appears as 'News' but which in fact is an 'advertisement', escaping enumeration as an election expenditure.

- The ECI has gone to great lengths to curb excessive expenditure. **Expenditure observers** are appointed, **acceptable cost of items of expenditure is fixed**, **videographers are employed** to cover major campaign events, the **candidate's expenditure registers** are periodically examined. All this is made public so that rival candidates can mount challenge.

- However, success in unearthing concealed or under-stated expenditures has been insignificant. Even **the only candidate disqualified for 'Paid News' was unearthed not by ECI but by the Press Council of India**.

Political Finance Issues

- Many democratic countries have legislated to regulate Party and Election Finance. In India, there is a limit on candidate's expenditure in elections and for parties to submit accounts annually to ECI.

- In India, two developments have taken place over the years. One is the **steady increase in the number of those with criminal antecedents** and second, the **steady increase in the number of legislators with deep pockets**. In 2019 LS election, 89% MPs have more than Rs. 1 Crore Assets.

Party Finances

- Party finances and their sources in our country is a grey area. The law **requires reporting details of the donations above Rs.20,000.** However, many parties claim **more than 90% of the receipts to be below the reporting limit**. Law was amended in 2003 **permitting tax exemption to corporate donations** but the corporates have been wary of revealing their identity for tear of incurring displeasure of one or the other party.

- An attempt made to allow, **Electoral Trusts to be formed** by a company to which contributions can be made by other companies, also did not lead to much transparency.

- **Electoral Bonds Scheme** also was no improvement as donor's identity is kept confidential.

- It has fed to the **demand for State Funding of political parties.** There is a justified view that political parties should be funded by the state **to break the nexus, between the Corporate and political parties**, which can undermine democracy.

- **State Funding is prevalent extensively in European countries** but there is also the acknowledgement there **that it has not ended political corruption**.

- A <u>high dependency on state resources may risk sustaining political actors</u> that are out of touch with social reality, thereby fuelling anti-party sentiments. Our Law Commissions have also concluded that **full State Funding is not feasible**, citing issues like criminalisation, lack of inner party democracy, and lack of transparency in political party funds.

Conclusion

- While much has been done successfully to make elections free, given the role of money power, the increasing number of members with serious criminal cases and the runaway election expenditure, it is an undeniable fact that fairness eludes it still.

- Unless our Law makers take corrective steps imbued with a high sense of ethics, any claim of total integrity of our election process will be misplaced.

INFORMATION SHARING IN GOVERNMENT

- To fulfil its multifarious responsibilities in an efficient and effective manner, Government needs to function collaboratively with all stakeholders. For instance, to deliver an effective education policy with intended goals, Government will need to first collate and then share information on the present status on some of quantitative as well as qualitative parameters under the above-mentioned goals.

- The inputs received from various stakeholders are collated, analysed and the proposed policy (documentation) is prepared. This is again circulated among the stakeholders and this time, feedback is taken on the proposal, education policy in this case.

- Once the policy has been formulated, the concerned authority monitors the implementation closely and conducts impact assessment at regular intervals.

- Such information sharing on a regular basis with stakeholders, would bring collaboration, transparency and mutual trust in the system and will lead to good governance.

Proactive Dissemination of Information Helps

- Governments have been aware of the need for information sharing and transparency to deliver on good governance. **Unified District Information System for Education** (U-DISE), for instance, is a 'government-led education management information system' on key school-level indicators. It generates report cards on each school every year and also publishes district and state-level data.

Case Study
• Children working as labour were brought into mainstream education in Karimnagar District, through information sharing and promoting transparency in the system.
• The District Administration started the process of **information sharing through printing pamphlets**, with village-wise details of children out-of-school, and sharing these with the village teachers, local leaders, self-help groups and local officials.

- With this information-sharing came transparency, followed by activity by the various stakeholders to contact the out-of-school children, those engaged as child labour, and motivate them to come back to school. This case study was later **part of an ILO manual on convergence strategies for eradication of child labour**.

Bridging Of Information Gap During COVID

- One powerful tool for information sharing and promoting transparency has been the RTI Act. However, during pandemic, existing modes of information dissemination were affected. As a result, several new alternatives in the form of dashboards and control room were launched.

- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, took the decision to set up a control room**. The purpose was real-time monitoring of the status of manufacturing, transportation and delivery of essential commodities to common man. The goal was to resolve these difficulties through coordination

- Invest India (India's investment facilitation national agency working with DPIIT), established a **Business Immunity Platform**, designed as a comprehensive resource to help businesses and investors get real-time updates on India'sresponsetoCOVID-19. This intervention was a boon for businesses that were looking for authentic and real- lime information and guidance during the pandemic.

Technology-led Transparency

- The **Champions of Change platform** (CoC 2.0) for aspirational districts has been introduced by NITI Aayog to '**enhance functionality of automated data-quality reports**, which would enable the DMs/DCs to take corrective action. This programme is aimed at an overall transformation of the district, using mass movement approach.

- The Government proposed to **enact Electronic Delivery of Services Bill** to make it mandatory for every government organisation to deliver public services in electronic mode after a certain cut-off date.

- India's **Global Real Estate Transparency Index** ranking — has improved by one notch to 34 in the year 2020 'as a consequence of regulatory reforms, better market data and green initiatives.

- Further, structural reforms such as the <u>Real Estate Regulation and Development Act 2016 (RERA), GST, Benami Transaction Prohibition (Amendment) Act, 2016, Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) and digitisation of land records</u> also bring greater transparency.

> **Karnataka's Bhoomi programme** used IT to provide farmers with land documents. The land records were computerised, enabling farmers to get their land records quickly from kiosks. This intervention of information sharing on land records ensured that the farmers do not face any issues related to proof of land property or lease.

International Leading Practices

- Canada has the Employment and Social Development Canada that provides open access information on how the tax-payers' money is spent.

- Denmark has a high degree of accessibility to information on public expenditures, commitment to open data systems and even a scheme for whistle-blowers within the Danish Ministry of Justice.

Conclusion

The critical factors for such sharing and transparency are as follows:

1. **Regularity**: Sharing the information at all stages and giving updates at pre-decided intervals.

2. **Stakeholder-centric**: The exact message, format, language, medium and regularity needs to be decided based on the stakeholder.

3. **Monitoring and evaluation**: Constant monitoring against the set objectives and communicating the same with all the stakeholders required.

As a way forward, a **nodal Ministry may be identified** to issue necessary guidelines in this regard, and build capacities of the various central Ministries as well as of the state governments to undertake such communication with various stakeholders.

THE RULE OF LAW

Law is not autonomous; it is deeply embedded within society and reflects the values of society. Society influences law, for law is but a reflection of the society it governs. Law is a vehicle for social engineering and orderly functioning of the society.

Functions of Law

- Law is the **means through which policies are codified** and implemented, and power is allocated and contested. Law, in combination with other social and political strategies, can be used as a device to promote transparency, accountability, and openness in the system.

- In modern states, **law serves three critical governance roles**. First, it is through law and legal institutions that **states seek to order the behaviour of individuals** and organisations; so that economic and social policies are converted into outcomes.

- Second, law defines the **structure of government** by ordering power—that is, establishing and distributing authority and power among stakeholders.

- Third, law also **serves to order contestation** by providing the substantive and procedural tools needed to promote accountability, resolve disputes peacefully and change the rules. The relationship between law, governance and development contributes significantly to the promotion of social and individual well-being.

- By law, the democratic society can manifest itself so as to protect the state values, the fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens. However, the law must be as stable as possible to help develop domains (economic, social, educational, health, financial etc.).

- The legal framework also affects the lives of poor. It has become an important dimension of **strategies for poverty alleviation**. In the struggle against discrimination, in the protection of socially weak, and in the distribution of opportunities in society, the law can make an important contribution.

Mechanism of Enforcement

- It is the Constitution that broadly defines structure and function of the government and the principles to be followed: while through the legal framework created, the system becomes operational at the local level.

- To achieve the desired outcomes, the Most conventional method is **coercive power of law and fear of sanctions**. Manufacturing companies will comply with environmental regulations if there is a high likelihood of being fined an amount greater than their profit margin gained from non-compliance.'

- Law also acts as a signpost, an expression, to guide people on **how to act when they have several options**. The expressive power of law **does not do the work of shifting a norm by itself**, but rather depends on the incentives it provides to those who already accept the new law, as well as a range of support programmes generating awareness among people, that drive the process of internalising new norm more broadly.

Law & Accountability

- Good governance **includes strict rules of accountability**. With the abandonment of *Laissez faire* and advent of modern philosophy of a "welfare" state, the administrative organ in almost all the democratic countries is performing large variety of functions.

- The increase in the powers and duties of administration has **brought it in conflict** with the individual in various walks of life.

- The administrative law acts as a means to prevent abuse of power by the executive, protecting the rights of individuals, provide easy redressal of citizens' grievances, thereby bringing transparency and accountability in government functioning.

- In India, the **Supreme Court has a significant contribution** in achieving the goal of good governance. It has emerged as "**protector of civil liberties'** by giving wide interpretation to the provisions of Fundamental Rights especially Articles 14, 19 and 21.

- Through the **instrument of Public Interest litigation**, the SC has upheld the rights of the disadvantaged and has enhanced government accountability over issues such as child and bonded labour, environmental hazards, public health, and non-discrimination etc.

Conclusion

- Law is, thus, the instrumental way which groups and individuals in society use as a means of promoting, enforcing, and protecting rights and interests.

- Effective legal system and institutions are, needed to produce government that is legitimate, effective, and widely supported by citizens,

ETHICS IN JOURNALISM

"The Sole aim of journalism should be service. The newspaper is a great power, but just as an unchained torrent of water submerges whole countryside and devastates crops, even so an uncontrolled pen serves but to destroy." – Mahatma Gandhi

- As the **fourth estate of democracy** and voice of voiceless, journalism plays a crucial role of keeping the citizens informed about the issues and ideas of public interest. Hence, journalism must be socially responsible, serve the people with devotion, and educate them while avoiding sensationalism, distortion and manipulation of facts.

- Globally an independent, free and vibrant news media is treated as a key parameter for the success of a democracy.

- Given its influential role in shaping public perception, setting the agenda for public debate and its widespread impact on the society, journalism enjoys a powerful position in a democratic society. **Napoleon Bonaparte** had once famously said, "*Four hostile newspapers are more to be feared than a thousand bayonets*."

- But this influence and power comes with great responsibility. Therefore, news media must follow the principles and norms of journalism and be transparent and accountable.

What is Journalistic Ethics

- Journalistic ethics are basically a set of principles, standards, guidelines and code of conduct prepared for professional journalists. It deals with conduct, character and behaviour of a journalist and how s/he works before, during and after the news gathering and dissemination.

- It is expected from the news media outlets and its professional journalists to not only strictly follow these principles and norms but to also **self-regulate** in alignment with them.

- However, given the **non-mandatory and voluntary nature of journalistic ethics**, there are always complaints of violations.

Evolution of Journalistic Ethics

- Violation is not a new phenomenon. Since the days of 'Yellow Journalism' and perhaps even before that, in the late 19th and early 20th century, many leading newspapers were brazenly partisan, biased, sensational, intrusive, propagandists, manipulating and distorting the facts, passing off rumours as news.

- Since quality of information and the public discourse based on it directly reflects the quality and health of a democracy, concerns were raised. Slowly a concerted campaign started to bring in ethics and principles with a set of guidelines and code of conduct for news media and journalists.

- In the US, for the first time, in 1922, the American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE) adopted a set of ethical principles. It proposed **six key principles**—-*Responsibility, Freedom of the Press, Independence, Truth and Accuracy, Impartiality and Fair Play*.

- It was around this time that ideas like objectivity, fairness, truth, accuracy, impartiality and independence started gaining credence.

- Another landmark intervention came in 1940s when **Hutchins Commission in the US** articulated in its report the principle of **Social Responsibility of the Press**. The Commission reiterated that while the freedom of press is paramount, it also has a moral obligation to consider the well-being of the general public when making its decisions and choices. The report echoed Gandhi's concerns of "an uncontrollable pen" while stressing that its 'sole aim should be service".

> **Fall of Media Mogul (Example)**
> Not long ago even the incredibly influential Media Mogul, **Rupert Murdoch**, was forced to **shut the publication of his 168-year-old tabloid, 'News of the World'**, in the UK after it was found regularly indulging in gross violation of ethical norms and standards and even breaching the law.

Indian Scenario

- One can regularly observe instances of violation of ethical norms and principles; from indulging in Paid News, spreading Fake News, engaging sensationalism and exaggerating trivial stories, running misleading headlines, breach — of privacy, distortion of facts, openly taking sides and bias in reporting.

- They are found to be engaging in one-sided media trial, lobbying for personal gains, blackmailing, — manipulating news stories etc.

- The critics of unethical conduct of news media are demanding **stringent regulation in place of 'ineffective' self- regulatory mechanism** and their voices are growing louder day by day.

- India too recognises the primacy of the **Freedom of the Press and allows for self-regulation** of news media.

Institutional Setup in India

- The Press Council of India (PCI), a statutory and quasi-judicial body. It functions as a "**watchdog of the press, for the press and by the press**". Its two broad objectives arc-safeguarding the freedom of the press and to improve its quality and standards. It works on the premise of self-regulation of print media **but has no punitive powers**.

- A similar but non-governmental body, the **News Broadcasting Standard Authority** (NBSA) oversees the news channels. Like the PCI, the NBSA too is headed by a retired Supreme Court judge and its other members comprise well-known people belonging — to civil society and editors of TV news channels. Additionally, it has the power of imposing a fine that can go up to Rs. 1 lakh against an errant channel.

- The news channels are also regulated by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (I&B) under the **Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995**.

Conclusion

- There is need for serious introspection from news media outlets and the journalists' community to take steps to minimise the flouting of ethical norms, and to improve the quality and standards of the news media in India.

- In this context, professional bodies like the Editors Guild of India, NBA, PCI etc. can take lead and initiate debate and discussion and propose remedial measures.

- In a democracy everyone is accountable to the people, and so is the media. The Indian media must develop a sense of responsibility and maturity. One hopes that the Indian news media will remember the **advice and warning of Mahatma Gandhi**.

CORPORATE ETHICS

"Real integrity is doing the right thing, knowing that nobody's going to know whether you did it or not." - Oprah Winfrey

- Human beings are born with **an innate moral compass** which gravitates towards doing good or doing what is right.

- Honesty and integrity are among the primary principles within the moral code of conduct. In the real world, where **grey area situations largely exist** and these values are put to the test.

- Due to competitive and organisational pressures, sometimes even well-meaning individuals might give in to the **temptation of taking small risks for some easy returns**.

Business Ethics

- **Business Ethics is defined** as "the application of ethical values to business behaviour". While profit remains one of the key motives of an enterprise, it is not the sole purpose of its existence.

- Major agenda being addressed within boardrooms is around good corporate governance and the associated ethical framework.

- Rising number and scale of scandals have shaken large multinationals—causing collateral damage by tarnishing reputation and brand image, plummeting sales, financial loss etc. Hence, professionally managed organisations have always striven to focus on good governance and adherence to compliance measures to pre-empt malpractices.

- **Organisations can be compliant to internal processes and fulfil all statutory laws yet be unethical**. One example of this is **Surrogate advertising.**

- Promoting alcohol consumption is banned on national television. If a company advertises an alternative product with the same brand name, it is indirectly trying to increase brand recall to the intended product. Legally, the company is not flouting any law. However, the practice is clearly unethical.

Ethical Organisation Culture - Setting the Tone

- A strong ethics framework is required to drive the culture of ethics across the board. The elements for such a framework include:

1. Ethics programme with the continued support of middle and lower level teams.

2. An ongoing dialogue across levels to address tough questions that may arise during the business ethics journey.

3. A two-way communication process, cutting across levels, to foster an environment of openness and trust.

Code of Conduct

- It specifies the general principles of behaviour which employees and other stakeholders are expected to follow. It is an **articulation of the value statement**. It is usually framed as a **mix of rules to be adhered and aspirations** towards which the organisation seeks to evolve.

- The organisation's external ecosystem such as value chain partners—often considered as an extension of the organisation itself—should also abide by the principles of the Code.

- Senior managers should practise principles of ethics in their day-to-day dealings. The **middle layer (shock absorber layer) is a pivotal entity** in the development of the organisation's ethical business culture. The middle level managers should therefore reflect, reinforce and reiterate the Code to build ethical values into the organisation's fabric.

- **Ethical dilemmas do not always have prescriptive and clear-cut answers.** Hence, an effective training programme to understand and live the Code will not will be beneficial.

Building a Check Mechanism

- The first step towards building a culture of ethics is to **review the integrity index of employees at two levels**: *the hiring process and every performance appraisal cycle.*

- The second step is to **institute a check mechanism** to help the organisation and stakeholders navigate ethical dilemmas.

- Building a **team of Ethics Counsellors** is often seen as a good practice. Unethical behaviour demands prompt action.

> **Hiring Mantra**
>
> You're looking for three things, generally, in a person. Intelligence, energy and integrity. And if they don't have the last one, don't even bother with the first two – **Warren Buffet**

> **Gifts and Hospitality**
>
> While it may be customary to exchange gifts/ offer hospitality as part of cultural practices, such exchanges sometimes mask the act of bribery or corruption. Hence organization must delve into following questions while deciding the issue:
>
> **Timing of the gift**; **Presence of obligations** (gifts exchanged in anticipation of some favour); **Value of the gift/hospitality** (is it exorbitant?); **Known to others** (is the gift accepted in an open environment?); **Disclosed to the organisation**

Create Channels to Address Concerns

- Employees and stakeholders must be encouraged to speak up against any suspected or known situations or persons where the Code has been compromised and report the dilemmas faced. **Managers must be trained** on matters of law and regulations, company's policies procedures, and the Code of Conduct.

- A channel to report and log concerns must be made available to all employees. Care must be taken to **ensure confidentiality** to protect the complainant from any act of retribution.

- **Conducting a fair and just trial** instils confidence within the stakeholders by showing the organisation's ability to 'walk the talk'

Weaponizing the Code

- Instances are observed where the company's Code of Conduct or law is **used incorrectly** to **settle scores** with colleagues or superiors. This is nothing short of weaponizing the Code/law. The most extreme example is an employee alleging sexual misconduct at the workplace to deliberately inflict harm on a colleague. Such instances need to be very carefully weighed.

- Despite few cases of misuse of the Code, employees are **made aware and sensitised** to both the expected behavioural norms in specific situations and the available reporting channels to redress grievances. This realisation also serves as a deterrent against ethical transgression.

Conclusion

- Our built-in moral compass should serve as our best guide when faced with complex ethical dilemmas in both our professional] and personal lives.

- Organisations need to set the tone at the top, and leaders need to lead by example; even as companies address ethical by providing guidance through codes and other supporting mechanisms like traming and counselling.

GANDHIAN PERSPECTIVES ON ETHICS

It is the duty of all leading men, whatever their persuasion or party, to safeguard the dignity of India –

Mahatma Gandhi

It goes to the credit of Gandhi that he evolved a philosophy and lifestyle which was permeated with ethical, moral, spiritual insights and scientific truth.

Science and Technology vs Moral and Ethical Fiber of the Individual

- Gandhiji kept on reminding humanity that there is a 'truth' beyond all what we perceive and hold to be 'truth'. By making truth as the axis of all his endeavors, Gandhi was **seeking the spirituality of truth itself which is the very basis of science**. He challenged those who believed that spirituality and science need to be at war with each other.

- Gandhi who initially held the view that **'God is Truth' reversed it later as, "Truth is God'** thereby asserting the supremacy of truth over everything.

- This also implies that there is a **greater power within every human being** in his/her consciousness. The outer world has been effectively influenced by changing what is within us.

- He was guided by the teachings of Gita and the assertion of Thoreau who wrote, *"I know of no more encouraging fact than the unquestionable ability of man to elevate his life through conscious endeavor"*.

Satyagraha: Blending of Ethical, Moral, Political, Social and Religious Concerns

- -Gandhi's seminal contribution lies in the area of **blending science and spirituality** as **revealed in the philosophy and practice of Satyagraha.** The Satyagraha seeks to integrate spiritual values, and community organisation and self-reliance with a view to empower individuals, families, group, villages, towns and cities.

- Robert Payne in his perceptive study of Gandhi remarks, *"Gandhi was continually experimenting with truth and inventing new forms of force. And just as Satyagraha was never "truth force" So if was never "non-violence" or "passive resistance", although it included them in its ever-widening orbit."*

- The ancient Vedic philosophy of "**Sarva Dharma Samabhav**" or **"Respect for all religions"** formed the basis of Gandhiji's religious humanism which was rooted in ethical, moral and spiritual considerations.

- **Spiritual living is responsible living**. Gandhi said, "*I am responsible not only for myself but for all of you just as all of you are responsible for me. When we live truly selfless life, we never think in terms of personal profit or pleasure but always in terms of global prosperity and world peace. For even these grand goals ultimately depend not on government but on selfless efforts of little people like you and me of the long run, friendly persuasion is the only effective teacher. Human beings can always grow*".

- He described the society that he was aiming as Ram Rajya- a Divine Rajya: The Kingdom of God. Truth, dharma and justice to be the dominant characteristics of such a society.

- For Gandhi **rights and duties are complementary** and a citizen who is not conscious of his duties has no right to think of his rights.

- Gandhi's Talisman –

- Gandhi's Talisman is an effective tool to solve moral dilemma and guides towards action. It says:

Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man whom you may have seen and ask yourself it the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him, Will he gain anything by it? Will it restore him to a control over his own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to Swaraj for the hungry and spiritually starving millions.

Deepening Moral Disintegration and Throwing Ethics to Winds

- **Sarvodaya was Gandhi's vision** of a just, egalitarian, morally and spiritually strong citadel of individual liberty. Social Justice and equality to all were the cornerstones of the Sarvodaya social order. **The Sarvodaya Samaj would have effectively prevented and eliminated** any form of corruption, and general decay of moral, ethical and spiritual values.

Seven Sins According to Gandhi

1. Wealth without work
2. Pleasure without conscience
3. Knowledge without character
4. Commerce without morality
5. Science without humanity
6. Religion without sacrifice, and
7. Politics without principle

In Hind Swaraj, Gandhi condemned contemporary civilization, mechanization, the extending tentacles of immorality, scant regard for spiritual roots. The book was described seditious by the British and they banned it.

Conclusion

- There was no pretension or hypocrisy about him. He never asked others to do anything which he did not do. The voluntary abdication of his highly attractive income from his legal profession and taking to a simple life and his profound conviction of equality of all men and women show the essential Gandhi who grew into a Mahatma.

- The ethical and moral standard he set for himself reveals his devotion to eternal principles and only someone like him who regulated his life and action in conformity with the universal vision of human brotherhood could describe his life, "My Life is My Message'.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM

The **ubiquitous use of the geographic information system** (GIS) across Multiple platforms and sectors makes it the new age fire that powers our systems, enables globalisation and is integrated with almost every New technology being used.

What is GIS?

- GIS is a computer system used for capturing, storing, checking and displaying data with regard to positions on the Earth's surface.

- Rooted in geography, GIS integrates numerous types of data, analyses spatial locations and organises these layers of information into maps and 3D visualisations. The underlying theme of most GIS applications has been the reduction in time and effort to accomplish tasks.

- From sending a satellite to: space to getting ice-cream delivered at home; GIS has made tasks faster and easier.

GIS and India

- With Asia-Pacitic being the fastest growing GIS market, **New India** is likely to emerge as a hub for GIS based applications.

- To fulfil the aim of the Digital India initiative to establish end-to end geo-spatial electronics delivery systems, **GIS-enabled BHARATMAPS** have been developed to enhance governance and improve planning and monitoring in New India.

- With projects like School GIS, Postal GIS, GIS powered Dashboards in Ministries of Rural and Urban Development, India is optimally utilising the power of GIS for growth and development.

- GIS is also being widely implemented and used in India for **crop and agriculture insurance**.

- The successful use of GIS in India has propelled our defence and space programmes, including — the successful launch of space missions.

Uses of GIS-Learning Aarogya Setu

- Aarogya Setu app is an excellent example for highlighting the importance of GIS in every sphere of life, especially for handling crises.

- To improve the functioning of Aarogya Setu, DST created an **Integrated Geospatial Platform** out of available geospatial datasets, standards-based services, and analytic tools to aid decision-making during the COVID-19 pandemic and help devise area specific strategies to combat the virus.

- **Identify an Issue** - Aarogya Setu uses GIS for identifying area that have high rates of transmission, enabling the government to demarcate containment zones.

- **Monitor Change and Manage Response** - The app constantly monitors the change in the number of cases at any given time across India. This ability to monitor information real time allows for timely action and response during a crisis.

- **Forecasting and Trends** - Based on transmission trends captured by Aarogya Setu, the government can predict how the virus is likely to travel across India.

- **Prioritisation** - Through the Aarogya Setu app, GoI has been able to identify containment zones, develop targeted strategies and mitigate the spread from these high-case areas to other parts of the

country. It allowed the government to also undertake large-scale sanitisation drives, ramp-up health infrastructure and develop targeted strategies for patient care.

Industrial Land Bank Mapping

- It is a **GIS mapping** for **showcasing available industrial land and utilities across India**. The system is a one stop shop for investors looking for information on existing infrastructure, resource availability and details on connectivity for a particular region in the country.

- The entire GIS mapping exercise for this portal has been undertaken in close coordination with Invest India. **Bhaskaracharya Institute for Space Applications and Geoinformatics** and Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology are to assimilate information about industrial infrastructure across the country.

- The portal provides GIS-enabled database of industrial areas including clusters, parks, nodes and zones across India to help investors identity their preferred location for investment.

- The portal allows investors to customise their search for industrial land based on plot size. connectivity, availability of materials sectoral clusters.

- It makes **investing in New India easy and just a click away for global investors**.

- Information on pollution categories, environmental clearances, land lease rates and plot level line of activity will soon be provided on the portal, giving an impetus to GoI's vision of a **National Single Window Clearance System**.

Conclusion

- GIS has enabled people across the globe to break rigid boundaries and has **given a new definition to globalisation**. GIS presents a plethora of opportunities for governance, e-commerce, disaster management, healthcare delivery and defence to name a few.

- In line with the vision of a self-reliant India, along with the announcement of the Atmanirbhar Bharat App Innovation Challenge, the country is at the cusp of rapid technological development.

- The use of GIS in this new chapter for developing a unified information infrastructure, wherein e-services can be hosted and easily accessed by every citizen across the country, will encourage inclusive growth and prosperity in New India.