



**ABRIDGED VERSION ON CODE OF ETHICS FOR
JOURNALISTS**

**Bhutan Infocomm and Media Authority
Royal Government of Bhutan
Thimphu: Bhutan**

ABRIDGED VERSION ON CODE OF ETHICS FOR JOURNALISTS

1. Ethics of Journalists

Journalists in Bhutan, as elsewhere, have a duty to maintain the highest professional and ethical standards. They shall provide independent and accurate news and information with integrity, remaining accountable for their actions, neutral in their position and keeping the national interest foremost in their minds at all times. They shall, accordingly, conduct themselves in consonance with the following principles and observe these principles both in letter and in spirit.

2. Professional Integrity

A Journalist shall:

- a. present the news with integrity and decency, avoiding real or perceived conflicts of interest, and respect the dignity and intelligence of the audience as well as the subjects of news.

3. Social Responsibility

A Journalist shall:

- a. recognize their obligation to the public and to the country;
- b. not publish any matter which offends against good taste and decency.

4. The Right to Truth

A Journalist shall:

- a. pursue the truth at all times and not publish false, inaccurate, misleading or distorted material. He shall ensure that, as far as possible, every story he writes is thoroughly researched. In particular, he shall clearly distinguish between fact, comment and conjecture. Where, despite due diligence in researching a story, he publishes an inaccurate fact, he shall ensure that a correction, and a suitable apology, is published as soon as possible after the inaccuracy has been brought to his attention.

5. Non - Discrimination

A Journalist shall:

- a. defend the independence of all journalists from those seeking influence or control over news content and gather and report news without fear or favor, and vigorously resist undue influence from any outside forces, including advertisers, sources, story subjects, powerful individuals, special interest groups and also political groups;
- b. determine news contents solely through editorial judgment and not as a result of outside influence;

- c. resist any self-interest or peer pressure that might erode journalistic duty and service to the public and to the country.

6. Sensationalism

A Journalist shall avoid sensationalism in the reporting of events and take all possible precautions to ensure that anything published by him does not have the effect of inciting people into violence or other illegal acts.

7. Protection of Sources

A journalist shall ordinarily protect the confidentiality of his sources. He may, however, reveal the identity of a source where he has obtained the consent of the source or where the law requires him to do so.

8. Respect for Privacy and Human Dignity

A journalist shall:

- a. not publish anything that is defamatory of any person or organization or invade the privacy of any person without his consent and shall respect his private and family life, home, health and correspondence.

9. Recordings of Conversations

A journalist shall not harass, intimidate or trick any person to obtain, or attempt to obtain, information or pictures. In particular, he shall not install listening devices on anyone's property or tape-record conversations with anyone without their consent, or enter anyone's property surreptitiously or using a subterfuge, except in circumstances where it can clearly and objectively be demonstrated that there is an overriding public interest in doing so. The onus of demonstrating the overriding public interest shall be on the journalist.

10. Competition and Fairness

A Journalist shall:

- a. adhere to the spirit of free competition in the Bhutanese media and shall not, at any time, monopolize or attempt to monopolize the market by using power, influence, authority, money or by any other means.

11. National Interest

A Journalist shall place the national interest and security above everything.