

## PREFACE

Every profession has its own ethics. It is the code of honour of professional conduct which distinguishes a profession from a mere occupation. The gentlemen of the press also constitute a profession whether they are working journalists (editors or others) or persons who own or carry on the business of management of newspapers (big, medium and small) and those who manage news agencies. Speciality of this profession is their independence. How to ensure their professional conduct with their independence? The solution found was that they should be judged by their peers and the jurisdiction of their peers should be so exercised as to achieve certain objects.

The Press Council Act, 1978 was framed firstly to constitute the Press Council consisting of representatives from these sections of the press and to achieve the following objects which are made the functions of the Press Council by section 13 of the Act, namely, to preserve the freedom of the press; to maintain and improve the standard of newspapers and news agencies in India; to help newspapers and news agencies to maintain their independence; to build up a code of conduct for newspapers, news agencies and journalists in accordance with high professional standards; to ensure on the part of newspapers, news agencies and journalists the maintenance of high standards of public taste and foster a due sense of both the rights and responsibilities of citizenship; to encourage the growth of a sense of responsibility and public service among all those engaged in the profession of journalism; to keep under review any development likely to restrict the supply and dissemination of news of public interest and importance; to keep under review cases of assistance received by any newspaper or news agency in India from any foreign source; and to undertake studies of foreign newspapers.

The jurisdiction of the Press Council is invoked both by the members of the press as also the members of the general public or of the government in as much as they are all concerned with the way the press carries on itself. The jurisdiction of the Press Council to entertain, consider and decide complaints from one of them against the other is of vital importance. So far, the adjudication by the Press Council on these complaints was known only to the members of the Press Council and a few others. But the public at large as well as students of public affairs ought to know how the Press Council is functioning and what principles are being evolved by it in the discharge of its functions.

In collaboration with the Press Council of India, two distinguished scholars of the Indian Law Institute, namely, Dr. (Mrs.) Alice Jacob, Research Professor and Miss Usha Loghani, Associate Research Professor, have, therefore, studied the various complaints received by the Council and

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its decisions on these complaints. The book is the result of their study. The complaints and the decisions on them have been classified into different parts and reproduced for public opinion. The contributions of the scholars consist of the deduction of principles from these decisions. Like law, journalistic ethics ought to consist of certain principles classified according to their subject matter. This is what is attempted in this book. As a pioneer attempt in this field, the work should be welcomed as filling a *vade-mecum*.

Thanks are due to Mr. N.S. Nahar, Associate Research Professor, for seeing the book through the press.

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