

A Review of how the Concept of Social Responsibility has been challenged in Television News Bulletins in Sri Lanka

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The concept of social responsibility is directly linked to the field of mass media. Social responsibility refers to providing trustworthy and relevant news and information to the public. The use of this concept in activities pertaining to mass media has been considered at length by many critics and policy makers. It is the duty of journalists to thoroughly comprehend the rationale that is linked to mass media. The concept of social responsibility has been of immense use in the creation of both media culture and media ethics. In an era where society is founded on information, it is vital to ensure that reporting information is done with a high level of responsibility. Television is the most domesticated medium in present-day Sri Lanka. As such, it is essential that the concept of social responsibility be considered with respect to television news programs. Unfortunately, the manner employed by the media in general and television in particular with regard to news broadcasting challenges the very notion of social responsibility. This study reveals the manner in which a concern with social responsibility has failed to play an effective role in the Sri Lankan media, through an analysis of crime news being broadcast in the main news bulletins on local television. We hypothesise that these broadcasts often lead to outbreaks of violence. Interviews and case studies were used as the main methodology for this study. Through these methods we have arrived at the following conclusions. We were able to conclude that basic media ethics are challenged during the reporting of crime news resulting in impairing the idea of social responsibility. Another major conclusion is that when social responsibility disintegrates, it creates crises in the society. Further, it causes harmful effects on social transformation. Finally, we recognize that the news channels broadcasting scenes depicting violence related to crimes have a long term or short term negative impact on society.

Keywords: Social responsibility, Accountability, Crisis, Social transformation