

## **Ethics behind Sting operations**

### **What is the issue?**

\n\n

A Kerala minister's exit after a sting operation spurs a debate on privacy v/s public interest.

\n\n

### **What is the operation about?**

\n\n

\n

- A Malayalam television channel had broadcasted an audio recording allegedly of the then Transport Minister of Kerala purportedly seeking sexual favours from a woman who had come to him for assistance.

\n

- The women side of the conversation was not put out.

\n

- Later it was found that the woman journalist with the channel had conducted the sting, suggesting this was in reality a kind of honey trap.

\n

- The CEO of the channel went on air to render an apology, presumably for misrepresenting matters.

\n

- The CEO and eight other employees from the channel have been booked under sections of the Information Technology Act and the Indian Penal Code.

\n

\n\n

### **What is the ethics behind sting operation?**

\n\n

\n

- The ethics of sting operations is among the most fiercely debated issues in journalism.

\n

- Some generally agreed guidelines are -  
 \n
- Any such operation that uses false pretences, with its necessary violation of the interviewee's trust and privacy, must serve a larger public interest that far outweighs such violation.  
 \n
- It also must be used as a last resort, when there is no other means of acquiring the information sought.  
 \n
- It must be the outcome of considerable editorial deliberation.  
 \n
- They should never be intended to entrap or induce people into committing wrongdoing or embarrassing them badly.  
 \n
- It is imperative that publications and broadcasters explain vital public interest for conducting them.  
 \n
- A sting cannot be an excuse to grab eyeballs with immodest and essentially private content, or a shortcut to make a point merely by shocking the reader or viewer.  
 \n
- Doing so risks eroding that goodwill and leaving journalists facing harsh charges.  
 \n

\n\n

\n\n

**Source: The Hindu**

\n

