



FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IN THE DIGITAL AGE

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ABSTRACT The present paper attempts to study the freedom of expression through various electronic media platforms. It considers the various challenges raised due to economic environment and ever changing notions of democracy and citizenship. It lays stress on the aspect of importance of social media on freedom of expression. It tries to focus on the main problems created when Freedom of Expression Interacts with Digital Freedom. Lastly a few recommendations for Ensuring Freedom of Press have been listed out.

KEYWORDS : Freedom of expression, digital era, social media, Freedom of speech, Lokmanya Tilak and swarajya

I. INTRODUCTION

Freedom of speech and expression is authorized to every person. Whether rich or poor, young or old, every person holds a different opinion and it's his/her right to express it. Freedom of expression and press freedom are influenced by economic and social changes in society and technological explosion isn't altering that basic principle however they are altering some existing structural arrangements and are redistributing power; however they're not eliminating general organization and control. Press usually refers to the newspaper industry. In nowadays, besides newspaper, there are numerous kinds of news-media like TV and radio broadcasting, on-line news websites and blogs, etc. the rise of digital technology and therefore the democratizing power of the web have basically challenged the traditional media. Limitation of literacy created TV media preferred among all media's. Data, news, images, entertainment made media faster and freer than ever. Viewing surpasses listening and reading i.e. radio and television media around the world. Average daily use of television for children is two to four hours. And this became a major source of information and education around the world. Which have caused serious concerns or change in mindset of today's young generation? Various social and cultured problems around as are created by this free flow of information violence, eating disorders, sexual behavior, changes in priorities of life are the fruits of this uncensored exposer. "Traditional" journalists working on new platforms, but many are not. India is a democratic country and press is called as a fourth pillar of democracy, which states the right of freedom of speech and expression. The role of media is important as a feedback, exposure and information giving mechanism in all countries [1][3].

II. Challenges Raised by Economic Environment

In a democracy, freedom of speech and expression open up channels of free discussion of issues. Freedom of speech plays a crucial role in the formation of public opinion on social, political and economic matters [4].

Significant changes occurring in society and how they affect the expressive freedoms. They need to focus on how changes in the mass media financing model are altering the abilities of news and media enterprises to carry out democratic functions, the extent to which digital expression and distribution of information contribute to and inhibit democratic functions, and how new communication infrastructures and firms that provide critical functions alter power in media systems [5].

Citizens-consumers use contemporary communication technologies for self-expression, participating in self-defined communities, and contributing to debates about developments in society. These technologies are important to the public as it pursues personhood, identity, and culture. The ascent of digital content distribution and social networks are creating powerful new arenas of communication that are governed by new power arrangements and without the traditions of democratic service that ostensibly played roles in legacy mass media because of their histories, cultures, and regulation. A shift in democratic responsibility from institutional media to amorphous digital communities is underway; however the mechanisms and consequences of that modification don't seem to be however totally understood. Media is being considered as the fourth pillar of democratic society after executive, legislature, and judiciary [5].

The new digital surroundings are dominated by consumptive behavior

during which people should consume hardware, software, and services from those corporations' dominant gateways and providing essential services. This leaves some members of society at the margins of information society. The technological structure of the new surroundings additionally creates vital new opportunities for surveillance of the general public by governments and private enterprises. These have made new mechanisms for group action and influence that didn't previously exist.

Freedom of expression and press freedom were traditionally perceived as being in the course of social responsibilities, however within the new surroundings the conceptualization of freedom seems to be narrowing to freedom to act without the alleviatory responsibilities, purposes, or necessities. The language of freedoms and their operations in law and policy are progressively targeted on individual and business communicatory rights detached from responsibilities which may accompany them.

III. Challenges Created by Ever-changing Notions of Democracy and Citizenship

There is a desire to carefully think about the impact of digitalization on the means of journalism and communication production, distribution, and consumption, similarly as on freedom of expression and freedom of the press. We'd like to know however digital technologies and their associated processes transform notions of citizenship and democracy, the roles of media and communication within the new conceptualizations of that social participation, and the way the technologies and changes necessitate reconsideration of traditional conceptualizations of expression and press freedoms that support citizenship and democracy [6].

The systemic changes within the digital age have an effect on notions of participation and therefore the roles and functions of established social and political institutions. It's changing into clear that the emerging system is ever-changing however the general public conceives participation, democracy, and citizenship. The outcomes of those changes are unclear; therefore the opportunities for new participation and therefore the threats of latest constraints on participation require attention.

IV. Preparing for the Future

Issues associated with freedoms of expression and of the press are inextricably interconnected with the political and economic foundations of society. The on-going changes to structural and power arrangements that are a part of the modern transformations of communication and society require the attention of scholars and social observers. These changes are so much reaching and alter relations among people, community, and society, have an effect on ideas of democracy, property, and labour, modify identities and cultures, and alter the functions and roles of capital, private enterprises, and nation states. The opportunities and threats that the new conditions create ought to be understood and examining them can force United States to confront and question the conventions, rights and privileges, and institutional arrangements that are in sight.

The future of freedom of expression and freedom of the press can pretty much depend upon reconsideration given to fundamental queries whose answers are usually taken for granted:

To whom is that liberty given? Against what? To what end? Under what

conditions? With what responsibilities? The long run well-being of these freedoms would require thought concerning what communication structures and conditions are necessary for those freedoms to be effectively utilized and what protections are required against continuing and rising impediments to work out those freedoms. Undertaking those processes can need that greater attention be given to the theories, approaches, and critiques emanating from political philosophy, economics, social science, public policy, and significant legal studies [7].

Well-rounded educations in media and communication can progressively need to incorporate views from those fields lest perceptions and operationalization of freedom of expression and press freedom stay affected by the social conditions and political economies of centuries past.

V. Where is Freedom of Expression Today?

Although each nation subscribes to the universal Declaration of Human Rights that through article nineteen maintains the right to freedom of expression it's safe to mention that it's not one thing that has been in practice achieved globally. The difference between the political rhetoric regarding freedom of expression and therefore the reality of the case in most countries is stark. Even within the 'west' wherever freedom of expression is one among the central tenets of the current political ideologies there seems to be a steady reduction within the freedom of expression. whereas social networking sites like Twitter and Face book create expression to a good audience much easier they need additionally LED to the prosecutions of these deemed to be abusive or offensive. The information shared in social media sites has arguably led to a rise in expressions, feelings and ideas from people who may otherwise find it hard to portray themselves as how they would like to in person and face-to-face with others [1].

Despite the emergence of social media, freedom of expression nowadays still faces an age old economic divide that seems at both domestic and international level. Money can buy larger ability to be heard. Those people that, as an example, run TV networks or own newspapers are able to express themselves in ways in which that are unavailable to the rest of us. Similarly, there's presently an excellent disparity between people who have access to the internet and people living in poorer conditions that don't. Therefore the modern debate concerning freedom of expression should not solely think about the political question of however very little or much government ought to censor its citizens however also question whether or not the disparity in freedom of expression ought to be allowed to continue. In the light of the growing use of internet and social media as a medium of exercising this right, access to this medium has also been recognized as a fundamental human right [2].

VI. Impact of Social Media on Freedom of Expression?

6.1 Lokmanya Tilak's View on Freedom of Expression through Media

Freedom of speech and expression is a fundamental right of every person. Freedom of press has played an important role in the evolution of the society. For a democratic country, where the decision of the masses is supreme, mass media is instrumental in ensuring that the people make informed decisions. Further, it is through the media that the masses are able to voice their opinions. Appreciation of the role of media in good governance is essential to societal development. Freedom of Speech and Expression should, therefore, receive generous support from all those who believe in the participation of people in the administration [13].

The emergence of social media has dramatically reshaped the ways in which during which we tend to be able to express ideas. However, the technological evolution of free expression isn't merely restricted to the emergence of Face book and Twitter. Anyone can simply established a blog and begin communication with a potential audience of over 2 billion people. In earlier decades the power to speak concepts to a large audience was dependent upon having the ability to publish. Anyone's work was so moderated through an established system with rules and pointers. The consequence of this old method of accessing concepts is that the prospect of encountering radical ideas was dramatically reduced. This can be no longer the case; instead there's a huge quantity of original and distinctive work that has not gone through a rigorous editing method. Therefore technology has allowed space for a previously unimaginable amount of freedom of expression [10].

The ease with that technology permits for freedom of expression has

brought with it an improper conflation of public and personal expression. So as to own the freedom of expression we tend to don't necessarily need to have the ability to share that expression. Writing a piece of literature that may never be read could be a kind of style. However the internet permits such style to be shared. Consequently technology has transformed freedom of expression from a largely private phenomenon into a predominantly public one.

6.2. What are the Limits of Freedom of Expression?

The limits of freedom of expression are bound along with public safety and governmental stability. Firstly there's the security of citizens. Individual's freedoms and rights sometimes conflict therefore someone's should delimited. By limiting rights society ensures that everyone has access to identical rights. Therefore the right to freedom of expression is restricted if that freedom is being used to constrain another's freedom as a result of attacks upon them.

Furthermore, governments might place restrictions on their citizens' freedom of expression in times of instability. For example, throughout times of riot or civil unrest the govt. might place restrictions on freedom of expression so as to constrain that violence. This might be for the protection of the individuals however it's going to even be justifiable to limit freedoms of some people so as to preserve the form of government that's in sight [8].

How far the boundaries of free expression ought to go is philosophically and politically unclear. If we have a tendency to argue that ideas must always be given a voice then it becomes progressively difficult to additionally argue for placing limits on free expression as we have a tendency to be merely making an attempt to search out rational reasons to discount that voice. The preservation of a political system is, in itself, not enough to warrant the imposition of limits to expression. The French and yank revolutions of 1776 and 1789 severally show that the transformation of a political system are a few things that, retrospectively, are often seen as an improbably vital moment in human history even if that process is traumatic [2].

6.3. What are the Main Problems Created when Freedom of Expression Interacts with Digital Freedom?

The emergence of recent technologies that provide the expression of us to the globe has reshaped the landscape of the broader discussion on freedom of expression. whereas several of the points of this discussion are developed and reformulated over the course of the many years, the fast rise of information technology currently means new points have emerged in a very short space of time and old points should all over again be reformulated to require account of the ever-changing world.

Among the numerous problems that surround this space are: Where is that the limit to freedom of expression and can that limit is moved?

- The economic disparity involved in 'free' expression
- The transformation of free expression into a largely public phenomenon
- The internet as a space free from governmental jurisdiction

6.4. What are the Social Responsibilities and Ethics of Media?

India is a developing country, today it has to face no of problems like Poverty. Corruption. Caste. Politicians. Bureaucracy. Diversity. Lack of Scientific Temper. Education and many more. Due to which media has to have certain social responsibilities. Worldwide there are 10 known ethics for media:

1. Media has the right of expression, information and criticism
2. Media should not violate the individual's right of privacy while performing the rights.
3. Truth and Accuracy and Transparency: Every effort must be made by media to assure that the news content is accurate, free from bias and in context, and that all sides are presented fairly.
4. Right to Government news
5. Right to protect of an individual professional succession
6. Right to rectify the inaccurate information.
7. Treat all subjects with respect and dignity. Give special consideration to vulnerable subjects and compassion to victims of crime or tragedy. Intrude on private moments of grief only when the public has an overriding and justifiable need to see.
8. External factors or individuals should not pressurize the media.
9. Reporting should be faithful and accurate and should can form to ethical standards.
10. The press should not overemphasize irrational statements of public officials and should not conceal truth.

11. Respect the integrity of the photographic moment.
12. Editing should maintain the integrity of the photographic images' content and context. Do not manipulate images or add or alter sound in any way that can mislead viewers or misrepresent subjects.
13. Do not pay sources or subjects or reward them materially for information or participation.
14. Do not intentionally sabotage the efforts of other journalists.

To sum up, we ought not to tolerate every speech, whatever it might be, for then we elevate the value of freedom of expression, and indeed, of tolerance, over other values which we deem to be of no less importance, such as human dignity and equality of concern and respect [9].

6.5. Recommendations for Ensuring Freedom of Press

The legal framework of freedom of the press in a democracy like India has been inspired by international bodies such as the United Nations, US Constitution and British Constitution. [12].

1. Growth with Freedom what should never be overlooked when thinking of the Press in the Indian context is that it is only a free Press which can help develop a body of citizens who are well informed both regarding current events and also about the problems faced by the country, and the alternatives available for tackling them. It is only such a Press that can enable a young democracy like India to survive, and also help its development in a manner where social justice is ensured and the interests of the common people served.
2. All the difficulties in the way of ensuring that the Press can have the maximum freedom to carry out its function of collecting facts about different facets of nation, analyzing them and commenting upon them so as to keep the general body of citizens in our young democracy well informed show that the Press requires some special protection. Many authorities have held that the Right to Freedom of Speech conferred by Article 19(1) of the Constitution is adequate to protect the freedom of the Press. Further, due regard has to be given to the recommendations made by the National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution (NCRWC). They have recommended the inclusion of Freedom of Press-media under Article 19(1)(a).
3. Press Needs To Improve the inadequacies of the Indian Press need not be connived at. There is no doubt that private business and those who control it, are treated by most newspapers with kid gloves. This partly is because of the ownership of many newspapers and therefore the philosophy of those who are appointed to senior journalistic positions. It is seen that the editors and journalists cannot have adequate freedom of collecting and disseminating facts and offering comments as they are under the pressure of the capitalist owners. So, the pressure of the capitalist owners should be minimized. Small sized and vernacular journalism need special attention from government.
4. Positive assistance to Independent papers at the same time, it is important that steps are taken positively to make it possible for independent papers to survive and develop. Help to them ought to be provided through general institutions meant to improve the growth of freelance entrepreneurs, together with little ones.
5. The State, ought to stop changing into the most Threat This resistance is necessary as a result of expertise everywhere the planet, further as our own experience since Independence, recommend that the State remains the source of the foremost potential threat to Press freedom. 114 International Journal of analysis
6. Information must be available at an affordable cost within specified, definite and reasonable time-limits to the readers and viewers. Free press should not violate right to privacy of an individual. Free press must be law enforcing and preventive of crime.

VII. CONCLUSION

On analyzing the current scenario, latest issues and developments of Freedom of Press, it can be concluded that although the Press is considered the watchdog of democracy, sadly, there is scant regard for this truism in a country which is, ironically, the world's largest democracy. Client oriented newspapers or free flow of knowledge can dilute the object of fourth estate of social responsibility as money should purchase the space of campaign. The Great patriot and editor Lokmanya B. G. Tilak mentioned, "We do not print newspapers as per customers liking, except for molding their opinion for welfare of mankind or statement like - 'The aim of newspapers shouldn't aim to print colourful, aimless news on glossy paper.'

Today's newspaper business is precisely opposite or alternative end of ideological base. To keep with its affirmation that freedom of expression is "one of the essential foundations of a democratic society"; the Court has clearly shown a preference for freedom of press. Lastly, it should be reiterated that the liberty of press and knowledge are fundamental to healthy working of a democracy and so, should exist with the freedom of speech and expression. Articles and news are published in the press from time to time to expose the weaknesses of the governments. The daily news in newspaper and the daily news on electronic media are most read and watched by people. The people can, therefore, be given the full scope for thought and discussion on public matter, if only the newspapers and electronic media are freely allowed to represent different points of views, including those of the opposition, without any control from the Government. Whereas social media should have some restrictions which cannot destroy the social balance, the personal and private life and sovereignty of the countries should be maintained.

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