
MEDIA AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

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Abstract

India has a vast political history. It has been ruled by various kings. India has undergone various changes in 20th century. India was under the colonial rule for over two centuries. In 1947, India got independence from the brutal clutches of British rule. After independence framers of the constitution has adopted to it a democratic form of government after studying various forms of government. Democracy means government of the people, by the people and for the people. Social justice assigns rights and duties in the institutions of society, which enables people to receive the basic benefits and burdens of cooperation. The relevant institutions often include taxation, social insurance, public health, public school, public services, labour law and regulation of markets, to ensure fair distribution of wealth, and equal opportunity. Media of nation can only be said to be of high standard when it is aware of its societal responsibilities and it is actively involved in it.

Key Words: Social Justice, Media, Constitution, Democracy

INTRODUCTION

India is a country with a diverse population belonging to various religions, races, castes and creed. Traditionally called as HINDUSTAN, India is homeland to people belonging to different religions like Hindus, Muslims, and Christians etc. India is the seventh largest democratic country in the world. This means India has a government which is elected by the people for themselves. The Indian Constitution was framed with utmost care that it provides various freedoms and liberties to its citizens. Part III of the Indian Constitution contains Articles 12 to 35 which enshrine fundamental rights.

Every democratic government is based on four essential pillars. The Indian Union constitutes of four pillars. They are called as Legislature, Executive, Judiciary and Media. The Indian Constitution provides framework for the first three estates. But there is no mention of media as fourth estate in Indian Constitution. All the three estates are independent of each other. They have a complete sovereignty in their field. Media being a fourth estate has a prominent role in the success of democracy. In democracy every individual has a say but everyone cannot rule. We need to elect our representatives to rule us. Legislature is involved in the law making procedures. Executive is responsible for implementation of laws made by legislature. Judiciary, being the third estate, is responsible for resolving disputes between people in the society. At the same time, it is also a guardian of fundamental rights of citizens. But it is always not possible for the judiciary to redress the disputes or differences in the society. Media acts as a bridge to seek justice.

MEANING OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

Social justice is a concept of fair and just relations between the individual and society. This is measured by the explicit and tacit terms for the distribution of wealth, opportunities for personal activity and social privileges. In Western as well as in older Asian cultures, the

concept of social justice has often referred to the process of ensuring that individuals fulfil their societal roles and receive what was their due from society. Social justice assigns rights and duties in the institutions of society, which enables people to receive the basic benefits and burdens of cooperation. The relevant institutions often include taxation, social insurance, public health, public school, public services, labour law and regulation of markets, to ensure fair distribution of wealth, and equal opportunity.

NEED FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

The aspiration for social justice, through which every working man and woman can claim freely and on the basis of equality of opportunity their fair share of the wealth which they have helped to generate, is as great today as it was when the ILO was created in 1919. The current global economy has grown to a scale unprecedented in history. Aided by new technologies, people, capital and goods are moving between countries with an ease and at a speed that have created an interdependent global economic network affecting virtually every person on the planet.

While globalization has created opportunities and benefits for many, at the same time millions of workers and employers worldwide have had to face new challenges. The globalized economy has displaced workers and enterprises to new locations, resulted in the sudden accumulation or flight of capital, and caused financial instability which in turn led to the 2008 global economic crisis. Despite the clear benefits, globalization has not ushered in an era of prosperity for all. In fact, in spite of strong economic growth that had produced millions of new jobs since the early 1990s until the 2008 crisis, income inequality also grew dramatically in most regions of the world. The personal distribution of wages has become more unequal, with a growing gap between the top 10 per cent and the bottom 10 per cent of wage earners. Moreover, nine years after the 2008 economic and social crisis, the global employment situation remains uneven: if certain advanced economies have managed to recover some of the jobs lost, other economies are still confronted with significant challenges with respect to their labour market and social prospects continue to deteriorate. From the economic point of view, indicators show that profitability and stock markets have recovered in the majority of countries. Executive pay is also on the rise, following a pause in the immediate aftermath of the crisis. Therefore, the key issue is how to translate these profits into productive investment. Over 30 million jobs are still needed to return employment to pre-crisis levels. The fact that the global crisis has had significant negative repercussions for labour markets and that recovery is proving uncertain and elusive has further highlighted the necessity of inclusive growth.

MEDIA AS A ROLE PLAYER FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

Media is the fourth pillar of democracy. It is a mirror of society and a powerful tool in implementing laws. Media, a derivative of word medium meaning carrier, reports news, provides information and analysis on issues and creates awareness among masses. The fundamental function of media, both print and mass media is to inform people, educate them and guiding the society. Newspapers satisfies the queries of public by answering the questions of what, when, where, why, how the events happened and who are participants in various happenings. Media is easily accessible by all walks of people. Media plays an active role in raising awareness on human rights, apart from other civil and political rights and helps in mobilizing people to recognize and protect human rights and bringing perpetrators to justice. By reporting and denouncing cases of human rights violations and other criminal

cases and discussing punishments according to laws, media helps in bringing down the incidences of abuse and violation.

The mass media is an important social institution which caters social and economic needs of wider social groups and it has been playing vital role in developing countries like India. Especially in the post globalization era, media has to educate people for changing their traditional attitude to suite the modern progressive needs. In the age of globalization social movements are somewhat declining, because everything is being examined in the materialist view point. It has been rightly pointed that "Movements also importantly build upon existing human and material resources."

In developing countries such resources are limited and problems are more complex. About social movement in the age of globalization it has been pointed that "The term globalization has become to dominate discourses of social, economic and cultural developments in contemporary society."

In the country like India the process of globalization has not only affected urban societies, but also it is influencing rural communities. Understanding different facets of media and social change is a most challenging phenomenon for Asia, Africa and Latin American countries. Laws are enacted for the protection of people and for the smooth functioning of the society. Laws provide a fair framework within which individuals and groups can choose their own values and codes, consistent with a similar liberty for others. Hence laws both protect the integrity of different sects of society and also promote their hormonal existence. In the absence of law and order, society will turn into an unbearable chaos. However law acquires its life and performs its intended social functions through the process of implementation and enforcements, without which it has little meaning in any given society. Implementation of law is about law-in-action and not law-in-the-books.

Many times the media has played an extremely positive role by creating a public opinion towards a thing. Recently in the campaign of social activist Anna Hazare, media played a big part in making the campaign a success. There are many other examples when the media played a great role in providing justice to the people as like in the case of Jessica Lal murder, if the media had not given the case so much of hype there were hardly any chances that the culprits would have got the sentence of life. Moreover many times certain scams were uncovered by medic through sting channel operations although the legality of these operations might be altogether different debate but still they did some social good by it.

Media of nation can only be said to be of high standard when it is aware of its societal responsibilities and it is actively involved in it. But in this regard I would rather say with great sorrow that media of our nation has failed in its duty towards the country. It is correct that the media has been successful in giving itself a professional touch according to the changing conditions of globalization, but on the other hands it could not maintain a fair functioning of its duties towards nation at large.

The truth is that even when the hype of media results in positive yields, those incidents are not a product of the consciousness of media for the society at large but instead a part of their strategy to create reputation and money. As like the case of the death of Jessica Lal was given so much hype by the government, but in rural areas everyday thousands of people are killed, many types entire families are killed but our media hardly take those incidents with that seriousness with which it takes the case of Jessica and alike. In several states many



people are dying because of hunger and malnutrition, but such things never get enough attention from the fourth pillar of our democracy. On the one hand at regional level many agitations are taking place, which are even continued from years but they get never justice from the side of media as like Sharmila is agitating from years to improve the plight of the people of North-East, but the media never give it enough attention.

Although in today's time media needs to be professional, because fund raising is very necessary for it to function properly but with the professional touch it has to focus on social issues even if they are not so profitable. In rural India many NGOs are working for the welfare for poor, removal of literacy and many other social causes, and if they would be help through media in their campaign then it can bring drastic change in the plight of the people. When the big projects are created and people are replaced without adequate compensation, media should be actively involved in showing the plight of those people to the public, but it hardly happens. Ultimately the true goal of the journalism to make good to people, and media should always keep this point in mind.

In this regard there is also a responsibility on the government that it should not unnecessarily interfere in the working of the media. The independence of media is a very necessary aspect of its fair functioning, and moreover it is guaranteed under ar. 19 of the Constitution of India, which ensures freedom to speech and expression. In the past many time the political leader had pressurized the media to achieve their own political ends, and hindered the emergence of high level journalism. Political leader are required to understand the importance of reporting by media, and they must give the journalists and editors sufficient safeguards against the criminal and unsocial elements.

MEDIA AS A MEANS TO SEEK JUSTICE:

Access to information is essential to the health of democracy. The rule of law may be further institutionalized by support for an independent media that keeps a check on the judiciary, reports on the courts, and promotes a legally enabling environment suitable for press freedom. Public interest is defined as representing a plurality of voices both through a greater number of outlets and through the diversity of views and voices reflected within one outlet. Media has always been considered the watchdog of the society. It is very important to have a free and fair media in every form of government. In a vast and diverse democracy like India, it is of utmost importance that the media functions without any form of bias and prejudice as the media also takes the role of the Opposition. Media is almost like the backbone of the Indian democracy. The roots of media can be traced back to the times of the Nationalist Movement in India. Ever since those times, media has been a crucial role in guaranteeing the citizens their rights and liberties. Besides playing these important roles, media has evolved as a much needed agent of change in the society. Over the years, media has helped to form public opinion and has been quite successful in this role. The role of media in a democracy comes into focus especially during the ongoing process of elections in India. The different types of media (television, radio, etc.) have helped the masses to be more educated and aware of their surroundings. In India, investigative journalism came into popular existence in the 1980's. The Bofor's scandal in which the then Indian Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, was accused; was the first instance when investigative journalism came into focus. This scandal later on led Gandhi's defeat in the next elections. This scandal and the type of reporting done by the media made the country take notice of a new form of journalism that was previously employed by magazines and journals. The Tehelka scam

raised a lot of uncomfortable questions about the Indian government, but it did help in the citizens in forming their opinions about the malpractices of the Indian government and the corrupt politicians. Many a times, it has been seen that due to the interference of the media, certain cases have got pushed into the limelight which in turn attracts the attention of the masses. Media employs several tactics (debates, discussions, talk shows, etc) to help bring these critical issues into the public sphere thus helping people to get their rights.

CONCLUSION

Any institution, be it legislature, executive, judiciary or bureaucracy, is liable to be abused if it exceeds its legitimate jurisdiction and functions. But sometimes these ultravires activities are blessing in disguise as is the case of judicial activism. Media trial is also an appreciable effort along with the revolutionary sting operations as it keeps a close watch over the investigations and activities of police administration and executive. But there must be a reasonable self-restriction over its arena and due emphasis should be given to the fair trial and court procedures must be respected with adequate sense of responsibility. Media should acknowledge the fact that whatever they publish has a great impact over the spectator. Therefore, it is the moral duty of media to show the truth and that too at the right time. While the print media has reached at a saturation stage where it is aware of legal guidelines and ethical limits but the electronic media is experimenting and is relying upon 'trial and error' method for what to show and more importantly what not to. The time will come when electronic media will also be well regulated by self-censored guidelines and we shall retain a completely free press.

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