THE UNBIASED AND UNFILTERED TRUTH

Manika Sarkar

It is considered that censorship is to media what lynching is to justice. Media censorship, which is one of the most common forms of censorship, entails the suppression of speech that in curtails one’s right to liberty. It is catastrophic to prohibit an artist to express himself. Social media censorship does have certain benefits but the flaws that can be detected in the process of its censorship outweighs the benefits. The practice of undermining the platform where one could freely express his/her ideas completely negates the concept of socialization and independent thinking. Mostly enforced in films, theatres and on social media platforms, this policy, which strikes at the fundamental roots of creativity and imagination, is most definitely standing as a major obstacle to progress and development.

 However, this issue has certain nuances to it. The topic of “Fake News” is always debatable. Let’s explore the causes and significance of the stories that make the headlines or breaking news, thereby having a profound influence on the masses. All news and media houses are believed to have political affiliations that determines their inclinations. Recently, a petition pertaining to this issue was filed in the Supreme Court of India with the purpose of prohibiting the registration of FIRs against media houses unless it has been sanctioned by the Press Council of India. Although this can be viewed as a strategic political move to control the masses, this definitely proves that in most cases the executive and judiciary working together adds another dimension to the plot.

The consequences of Press Censorship are manifold. While it is the prerogative of the press to uphold the truth in front of the common man, an obstruction of it is a major barrier to the active participation of people in a democracy. The crux of the matter remains that only censorship-free reporting and journalism can ensure absolute transparency at all levels. Accurate representation of global affairs would be a major safeguard against manipulation that is initiated by governments and state-controlled media around the world. Therefore, it is the cornerstone of each democratic institution such that the unbiased news exists because it plays a pivotal role in facilitating logical debate rather than deliberations that are solely based on assumptions.

Now that we are discussing this let me throw light on certain incidents that have shocked the entire world. Jamal Khashoggi was a prominent Saudi journalist who wrote a monthly column in The Washington Post criticizing the policies of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. He was assassinated at the Saudi consulate by agents of the Saudi government. There are multifarious implications with respect to Press Freedom after Jamal Khashoggi’s murder. Silencing of journalists and media houses poses a massive threat to the future of the newspaper and media industry.

Censorship has its share of advantages too. A major benefit is that censorship is instrumental in curbing the magnitude of hate speech in societies. In addition, it can also be of paramount importance in securing and safeguarding a nation from both internal threat and external aggressors. It is of utmost necessity that the mechanism is structured in such a manner that it is capable of striking a balance between regulating what is required and what is not.