

Importance of Free Media in Democracy

- Pawan Nihure

Healthy democracy is what the today's world desires for. Media is one of the four pillars of democracy which connects the general people with the government. In addition, media is an outlet or a platform for people to share their views and ideas which promotes public decision making. Decision making without any discrimination, including views of all general people is what the principle of democracy means. New forms of media especially, the internet provides transparency and acts as bridge to connect the people, their views and opinions with the government which plays a vital role in inclusive decision making throughout the world leading to a healthy democracy.

Media is the voice of people. Democracy might not be that strong without efficient working of the media. However, the present world are limiting the function of media up to some extent. Media is only allowed to share limited amount of information which hinders the democratic principle of maintaining transparency. In the present media censorship is affecting the true role of media communication. In the present world it is believed that freedom of media is very essential factor for information distribution throughout the world. These social limitations on media are directly affecting the principle of democracy. People are not provided with enough information within a specific timeframe nowadays with high sharing of false news.

A free media is the media which is not controlled by the government or any organization for propagating political agendas and ideologies among the people. In a country with freedom of media the human and civil rights of the citizens are not violated. In fact, if any violation found the media acts as a source to connect this crime with the authority to take necessary actions against it. Democracy is believed to run on freedom of media, which means true essence of democracy which respects public decision exists only when there is freedom of sharing information and personal ideologies.

The media has grown undoubtedly over these years. It is through media that the people and the government are reminded about their functions in democracy. The information dissipated by media during the times of election helps the elections to run more smoothly. The illiterates are especially benefited by media, as they learn to abide by law and gain important information through media. Another important function of media is to identify the loopholes in democracy so that the government works to make this system of democracy more accountable, transparent and citizen friendly.

The Constitution of Nepal also provides for the Freedom of expression in media. Despite this right the journalists work in threat to dissipate the correct information. The media is like a warrior fighting with a pen to show us the bare truth and realities. However, the media and its associated institutions are influenced by the government.

Media is said to be contaminated by the political ideologies. Due to this contamination the democracy is getting weaker and weaker everyday losing its true principles. Media should be free from any sort of influence and should reveal the truth to the people and the world.

Thomas Jefferson exclaimed; "The press is the only tocsin of a nation, when it is completely silenced, all means of general effort are taken away." which is very true in today's context. Media is our voice and our voice should not be influenced by any other means. Media should act as a watch dog and a platform to bring people's voices together. Being one of the major pillars of a democracy, media should be fair and share true information to the people without any limitation imposed so that the decision made by the government is suitable to the general public. The censorship imposed on media sources should be very selective without hampering the people's right to information as it is the important component of a healthy democracy.