



SPEAKS

Media and Communication

**Compiled by
R Nurullah
Ramesh Sundaram**

**Prime Point Foundation
Chennai**

PreSense Speaks| Media and Communication

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Introduction

Foreword From Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam For The First Edition PreSense100

Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam
Former President of India



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New Delhi-110011

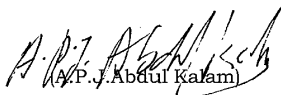
FOREWORD

I am very happy to know that the PreSense monthly ezine published by Prime Point Foundation is bringing out a book based on some of the unique articles, interviews and events published in its editions so far since from March 2006. The 100 issues of the publication have gone through an eventful journey, focusing on knowledge capture and important knowledge dissemination. I recollect my direct association with PreSense in July 2008, when I launched the cartoon character, 'Prince', created exclusively for PreSense.

I see PreSense continuing in its journey under the mentorship of Prime Point Srinivasan, maintaining its status as a must-read ezine, in the fast moving and evolving world of communication, knowledge and connectivity.

I congratulate the Editorial Team of PreSense for bringing out the 100th Edition as a Collector's Digest.

28th May 2015


(A.P.J. Abdul Kalam)

Preface to the First Edition

The eMagazine PreSense which was started in March 2006 on the suggestions of Dr APJ Abdul Kalam for positive journalism has reached the 175th edition in September 2021. This digital only eMagazine is passionately run by a group of eminent volunteers without any commercial motive and without accepting any advertisements.

Looking back, we have published high quality articles on various subjects, including current affairs in every issue. Earlier, we have published Digest of articles after 100, 110, 130 and 150th editions. We had the great honour of getting the Foreword from Dr Abdul Kalam himself for the first Digest published at the end of 100th edition.

This is the first Publication at the end of 175th edition on 'Media and Communication'. Earlier, we provided all articles in a single book. Due to the large number of important articles, we have grouped all the articles in 8 categories. We are now publishing PreSense175 in 8 volumes covering (1) Indian Heritage, (2) Spotlights from History, (3) Politics and Governance (4) Prince cartoons (5) Media and Communication (6) Science and Technology, (7) Health and (8) General and Exclusives.

I am thankful to Priyadharshni Rahul (Editor), T N Ashok (Consulting Editor), Dr R Jagannathan (Editorial Advisor) and Srinivas Gopal (Technology Advisor) who helped in compiling the select articles published in the past editions.

K. Srinivasan
Publisher and Managing Editor
PreSense
26th September 2021

Preface to the Second Edition

The first edition of compilation of articles on 'Media and Communication' published earlier in the eMagazine PreSense was released in September 2021, when we were touching 175th edition. Now that we have touched 200th edition, we have revised this book to include additional articles published in the past two years.

I am thankful to Ramesh Sundaram (Editor in Chief) and R Nurullah (Consulting Editor) for taking efforts to bring out this volume for the benefit of general public, students and journalists.

K. Srinivasan
Publisher and Managing Editor
PreSense
26th October 2023

About the Compilers

R Nurullah



R Nurullah (70) is a Senior Journalist with more than 50 years of experience with various media houses. He has authored several books in Tamil. He is a poet and a popular motivational speaker. He is one of the Founders of South Indian Numismatic Society and has done extensive research on ancient coins. He is also Archaeologist. He is actively associated with many media organisations and social welfare organisations. He can be reached at nurullahr.ts@gmail.com.

Ramesh Sundaram



Ramesh Sundaram (65), a Senior Journalist , has served the leading Indian Newspaper The Hindu, for 37 years. He is presently the Editor in Chief of the eMagazine PreSense.

With the qualification in Printing technology, he joined The Hindu in the printing section. Later after completion of his PG Diploma in journalism, the management used him both in journalism and printing side, appreciating his unique expertise both in journalism and printing technology.

He has won several awards for his writing skills. He is also a social worker. He can be reached at ramactiva1956@gmail.com

Journey of Ezine PreSense - Milestones

Dec 1999	Launch of Prime Point Foundation, Publisher of the ezine.
Feb 2006	Launch of ezine, PreSense online by Dr Y S Rajan.
Aug 2006	Integration of Podcast with the ezine contents.
Aug 2007	Introduction of Guest Editors.
Feb 2008	Second Anniversary Edition with Dr Abdul Kalam's exclusive interview. Masthead changed.
Apr 2008	First ezine to become 'Media Partner' for a global event held at London.
July 2008	Introduction of cartoons – Cartoon Character 'Prince' launched by Dr Abdul Kalam.
Sep 2008	Change in layout, introducing photographs on the cover.
Jan 2010	Ezine's new initiative 'Education Loan Task Force' (ELTF) launched to create awareness among students and parents.
May 2010	Ezine's second initiative to honour top performing Parliamentarians, with the <i>Sansad Ratna</i> Award launched. Golden Jubilee (50 th) Edition launched.
Feb 2011	Diamond Jubilee (60 th) Edition.

A hiatus after 5 years of uninterrupted journey

Apr 2012	Ezine resumed in a new format of contents. The tag line changed from 'Communicate the Communication' to 'Spreading Positive Vibrations'.
Apr 2013	Tamil Nadu Governor launched a special edition on the Indian Parliament, coinciding with the <i>Sansad Ratna</i> Awards.
Jun 2013	Platinum Jubilee (75 th) Edition launched by the youth at three places simultaneously, across the nation.
Jun 2015	100 th Edition - PreSense 100 released in print format.
Mar 2016	Ezine's third initiative 'Digital Journalists Association of India' (DiJAI) launched.
Jun 2016	Second edition of PreSense 100+ released in print format

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Dec 2017	Ezine's fourth initiative 'Digital Security Association of India' (DiSAI) launched.
Mar 2018	Third edition of Digest PreSense130 released in print format.
Aug 2019	Fourth edition of Digest PreSense150 launched in pdf format.
Sep 2021	Fifth edition of Digest PreSense175 in 6 volumes released.
Aug 2022	Part I of "Freedom Fighters of India" released
Aug 2023	Part II of the compilation of articles on "Freedom Fighters of India" released marking the 30 th publication of Prime Point Foundation
Sep 2023	Launch of eBook titled "Artificial Intelligence: Challenges and Opportunities"
Oct 2023	Launch of the 200 th edition of PreSense and launch of eBook titled "PreSense stylebook for Digital Journalists"

The Journey Continues....

Editorial Board – October 2023

Publisher and Managing Editor

K. Srinivasan (Prime Point Srinivasan), Digital Journalist

Editor in Chief

Ramesh Sundaram, Senior Journalist, Formerly The Hindu

Editor

Priyadharshni Rahul, Advocate, Supreme Court of India,
New Delhi

Consulting Editors

C, Badri, Former General Manager, Canara Bank and Indian
Overseas Bank

R Nurullah, Senior Journalist

Sakthi Prasanna, Senior Communication Professional

Cartoon Editor

Triambak Sharma, Editor, Cartoon Watch, Raipur

Associate Editors

Dipti Kumar, Senior Digital Journalist, USA

Suparna Gangal, International Video Journalist

Download all our publications free from the link

<https://www.primepointfoundation.in/p/publication.html>

Please click this link and subscribe to our Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/PrimePointFoundation/>



Prime Point Foundation and its Initiatives

Prime Point Foundation, a Non-Profit Trust and NGO was founded in December 1999 by Shri K Srinivasan (popularly known as Prime Point Srinivasan), a former Senior Banker and a Digital Journalist and Communication Professional, to promote leadership and communication skills among the youth. Very eminent persons are associated with the Foundation.

In the past 24 years, the Foundation has organised several seminars, workshops, training and interactive sessions, both offline and online, on various subjects of national interest. The Foundation manages various online discussion groups and podcasts on communication, and digital journalism.

The Foundation has formed 5 initiatives to create awareness in various domains. All these initiatives are managed independently by passionate experts. These initiatives are non-commercial, and focussed on youth.

PreSense: The eMagazine PreSense was started in March 2006 on the suggestion of Dr APJ Abdul Kalam to promote positive journalism. Till October 2023, the Foundation has published 200 editions. This is a digital-only magazine.

 **PreSense** Digests, containing select articles up to 150 editions of the eMagazine, have so far been published. Dr Abdul Kalam has written the foreword for the Digest of articles up to 100 editions. PreSense publishes the cartoon character Prince, (created by Triambak Sharma) which was launched by Dr Abdul Kalam in 2008. PreSense has published till October 2023, 34 eBooks, which are available free of cost. In addition, various compilation of articles have been released under the 'PreSense Speaks' series.

Sansad Ratna Awards: This is a flagship initiative started in 2010 to honour top performing Parliamentarians every year, based on various performance parameters, and selected by a Jury Committee of eminent Parliamentarians. Dr Abdul Kalam himself inaugurated the first edition of the Awards event in May 2010. Till 2023, the Foundation has conducted 13 editions and presented 106 Awards. IIT Madras was the supporting Partner up to the 9th Edition. 10th Edition was held at Raj Bhavan, Tamil Nadu. 11, 12 and 13th editions were held at New Delhi.



Next Gen Political Leaders (NGPL) is an off-shoot of Sansad Ratna Awards. This is a registered NGO operating since 2018.



NGPL has organised several workshops online and offline, for young political leaders and aspirants. Ministers, parliamentarians, legislators and retired constitutional authorities have participated and shared their views. NGPL will shortly be instituting Awards for young promising politicians.

Education Loan Task Force (ELTF) was started in 2010 to create awareness about education loans, among students and parents. More than 30,000 queries have been responded to, through email, and more than



5000 serious complaints have been taken up with the top management of the banks concerned, for redressal. Many policy issues have been taken up by Sansad Ratna Awardee MPs, in the Parliament for solution. ELTF does not facilitate loans.

Digital Journalists Association of India (DiJAI): DiJAI is an independent NGO founded in 2017 to create awareness about digital journalism and its implications, among the public and particularly among the journalists. DiJAI conducts several online and offline workshops and seminars, with panels of domain experts.



Media and Communication

Is Freedom of Expression Absolute?

Case Study 1: Charlie Hebdo

On 7th January 2015, the whole world was shaken by the shocking news of the massacre of 17 journalists and cartoonists of Charlie Hebdo, as well as some innocent people, by a group of Islamic terrorists in Paris. The reason was that in 2011, the magazine had carried some objectionable cartoons depicting Prophet Mohammed. It is reported that the magazine had published similar cartoons of icons of other religions, as well.

More than three million people including 40 world leaders participated in a march across France to protest against the

Charlie Hebdo issue



Support to Charlie

Against Charlie

killings. Journalists and cartoonists debated about "freedom of expression". There were also counter protest marches in several parts of the world against the magazine, Charlie Hebdo for hurting the sentiments of a religious community.

Case Study 2: A Book in South India

Around the same time in South India, another controversy cropped up. Perumal Murugan, a Tamil writer published a book, '*Mathorubaagan*' in 2010. In the novel, the author wrote about the childless married women of a particular community in a particular town in the state of Tamil Nadu in South India. He narrated how they used to have clandestine relationships with other men during the temple festival day and bear children thereafter. (Although the author had named the community and the town in his book, the same is withheld in this article.)

Perumal Murugan issue



Protest

Support

When the English translation of the book was released in 2014, the particular community raised protests and demanded the withdrawal of the book from the market. Writers and activists ganged up in defence of the author, claiming 'freedom of expression'. The entire town showed their solidarity against the author, by pulling down their shutters for a day in January 2015. Although the author was defended in the social media as well as in seminars held in the cities, none of the activists had the courage to defend the author in that particular town.

The Government formed a peace committee to address the crisis. The author later apologised for the contents and admitted that he did not possess any documentary evidence to support his claim. All his books were withdrawn from the market. In spite of these steps to resolve the situation, the topic was debated on various TV channels and other media, in their attempt to defend their freedom of expression.

How Far Does One's Liberty Go?

These two incidents have brought the issue of the freedom of expression to the forefront. Can there be an absolute freedom of expression for anyone in the world? There is a saying, "Your liberty to swing your fist ends just where my nose begins".

Does the media, the writers or anyone have the right to absolute freedom of expression because they express their views in the public domain? Is there or should there be a restriction?

Double Standards of the Media

Very unfortunately, in India, the media exhibit double standards on such sensitive issues. One of the leading newspapers published 'I am Charlie' posters, with a photograph of marchers in Paris protesting against the killing. After printing nearly 50 percent of the newspapers, the editorial board realised that such photos might hurt the sentiments of a section of a community in India. The photograph was withdrawn from the remaining issues of the newspaper. An apology was also published to state "Some copies of XXXX (name of the newspaper withheld) dated January 18, 2015, carried an image of people holding copies of the French magazine, Charlie Hebdo, featuring the cover page with the image, which might have offended a section of our readers. The image was removed mid-way through the print-run. XXXX (name of the paper) regrets and apologises for the inadvertent and accidental use of the image - Editor".

Four days prior to this incident, the same newspaper had concluded their editorial stating, "The rights under the Constitution are designed to protect the freedom of expression of writers like Perumal Murugan who may seek to question uncomfortable truths from the past. It is a pity that a range of forces conspired to silence him".

A few years ago, there was a protest in the media against Salman Rushdie, who wrote some portions in his book that hurt religious sentiments. The same media defended M. F. Hussain, the artist who portrayed a Hindu goddess in what many people regarded as distasteful and disrespectful. They justified it as freedom of expression in art.

'Faith' is always a 'Faith'

Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, etc. are called 'faiths'. Billions of people worship their respective gods or their founders. Such allegiance and belief is built and followed only on faith and it is often difficult to rationalise them scientifically. Any writing, picture or speech which portrays these faiths in poor light is likely to hurt the religious sentiments of these billions of followers. In this

scenario, nobody can claim any absolute liberty that risks hurting the feelings of a large number of people. Protesting and defending such actions selectively is also unfair and not in good taste.

The same can be said of the cartoons published by Charlie Hebdo. The Islamic people have the right to decry such cartoons and take suitable legal actions against these publications. Unfortunately, the killing of the cartoonists by the terrorists has diverted the focus from the issue. Charlie Hebdo received the sympathy and support they did not deserve. They cannot claim the publishing of such provocative cartoons as their freedom of expression.

The Indian Constitution and IPC

Article 19(1) of the Indian Constitution provides freedom of speech and expression to all citizens of India. Article 19(2) imposes reasonable restrictions on the same, on grounds of security of the state, friendly relations with foreign states, public order, decency and morality, contempt of court, defamation, incitement to an offence, and sovereignty and integrity of India.

Sections 153A, 153B, and 295-298 of the Indian Penal Code contain the restrictions on the freedom of expression. It also includes the punishment for violation.

Freedom of Expression and Misuse of this Right

We often forget the fine line between freedom and misuse of a right. While freedom of speech gives a person the right to express his opinion, he should not forget his responsibility to respect religious sentiments.

We often forget the fine line between freedom and misuse of a right.

The media too should address these issues objectively and fairly. They should not defend or protest selectively. The freedom of any

one person should not infringe upon the rights of the society in the name of creativity.

By K. Srinivasan, Editor-in-Chief

Source: January 2015 issue of PreSense

Time Management – Defining Priority of Tasks to Avert Crisis

In Time Management, there is a popular quadrant to define priority of tasks and arrange them appropriately in a planner.

Important and Urgent (1)	Important but not Urgent (2)
Not Important and Not Urgent (3)	Not Important but Urgent (4)

Box 1 Important and urgent – crisis activities

Box 2 Important but not urgent - planned activities

Box 3 Not important and not urgent - diversion activities

Box 4 Not Important but urgent - surprise activities

Another important feature is what is called the priority shift, which is a task's priority moving from one box to another. The most common shift is from "planned (Box 2) to crisis (Box 1)". The common reason for this shift is procrastination.

Time Management Case Study in Ramayana

In Kishkinda Kanda of Ramayana, Rama kills Vali and makes Sugriva the king of Kishkinda. Rama tells Sugriva to come back after the rainy season is over and help him in searching for Sita. Rama stays in a cave outside Kishkinda during that period.

Sugriva who became a king after a long time, indulged too long in sensual pleasures that he forgot to report to Rama in time. Rama got angry and told Lakshmana to go to Kishkinda and threaten Sugriva for life. When Lakshmana did the same, Sugriva apologised and fell at the feet of Rama. Rama was kind and relented. Hanuman and Nila, the commander in chief gathered a huge monkey army which reported at site.

Sugriva gave them orders and they went in search of Sita. Sugriva did not realise the priority shift i.e. the planned activity of searching for Sita after the rainy season, when postponed, became a crisis which almost cost him his life. In fact, a good time manager

can move items from box 1 (crisis) to box 2 (planned) by analysing the root cause of a crisis and making a process correction for the next time. That is to say, he defines the "when, what, who and how" so that it is dealt with before becoming a crisis next time.

By K Srinivasan, Editor in Chief

Source: September 2007 issue of PreSense

12 Tips to Draft an Effective Press Release

1. Use inverted pyramid style.
2. Confine the 'lead' to 25 words, using 5W and 1H method (where, when, why, who, what and how).
3. Provide proper caption, place and date
4. Write in third party language.
5. Remember, your immediate audience is the 'News Editor'. He should get interested in the story.
6. Avoid cliché, superlatives and advertorial materials, to please the boss or client.
7. Use quotes of competent authorities, relevant to the story.
8. Furnish contactable phone or mobile numbers of the persons, who can provide additional information.
9. Print the release on the letter head of the company. Duly signed press release may be sent through email followed by hardcopy through fax or delivery.
10. Provide duly translated press release to the regional language media,
11. Simultaneously post the release in the company's website under 'media room'.
12. Avoid sending bulky attachments to journalists, without their consent. Respect others bandwidth.

Source: October 2006 issue of PreSense

• **Miscommunication – An Interesting Procedure in the Indian Railways and the Airlines**

Two persons, the loco pilot and the assistant loco pilot operate the locomotive. Due to the huge noise in the cab (where the pilots are seated), oral communication between the two is likely to be distorted. To avoid this, Indian Railways follow a unique system. The assistant pilot would watch the signal positions and alert the main pilot.



When the assistant pilot sees the green signal about half a kilometre away, he would shout out loud like a military command, "Signal Proceed". On hearing this, the main pilot would also see the signal and shout back in a loud voice, again like a military command, "Yes Signal Proceed". They will also use the other commands like "Signal Caution", "Signal Attention", "Signal Danger" in the similar manner. In spite of the noisy environment in the loco, they are able to follow the commands correctly. It is reported that so far, no accident has occurred due to 'miscommunication'. Any accident would have occurred due to 'misinformation'.



In the airlines, there are two pilots (the commander and the co-pilot) operating the aircraft in the cockpit. When one of the pilots would be in conversation with the ATC (Air Traffic Controller), the other pilot would be monitoring the conversation.

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Even at the ATC Tower, one officer would be giving commands to the planes and another officer would be monitoring, listening through his headset, to avoid any miscommunication and misunderstanding.

When ATC says "Air India 123 Mumbai Control Climb flight level three-six-zero", the pilot from the plane would repeat the same words, while the others would monitor their conversation. To avoid any miscommunication, they use three-six-zero, instead of three hundred and sixty.

By K Srinivasan, Editor in Chief, PreSense

Source: September 2010 issue of PreSense

Lord Rama's 7 tips for Presentation

An interesting incident about the components of presentation skills is narrated in Valmiki's Ramayana, the great Indian epic.



In Ramayana, Hanuman meets Lord Rama and Lakshmana for the first time in the forests and introduces himself and his master, Sugriva. This is the first meeting of Hanuman with Lord Rama. Impressed with the way Hanuman communicated, Lord Rama admires the communication and the presentation skills of Hanuman.

In 7 *slokas*, Lord Rama explains the important aspects of communication skills of Hanuman that impressed him most. They are:

1. Hanuman spoke briefly to the point – not too long or too short. He spoke only as much as is necessary.
2. He spoke with clarity and without ambiguity.
3. He spoke without any grammatical errors.
4. He used the appropriate words that cannot be better expressed with any other word.
5. He spoke in moderate volume that is audible to the other person – not too loud or too feeble.
6. His pronunciation of words was correct. The way his pronouncing of the words sounded musical and pleasant.
7. His words touched the heart, making it effective communication.

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We can apply the above seven skills are applicable too for effective presentation. Please watch the podcast interview with Mr B S Raghavan IAS (Retd.) about the above 7 aspects.

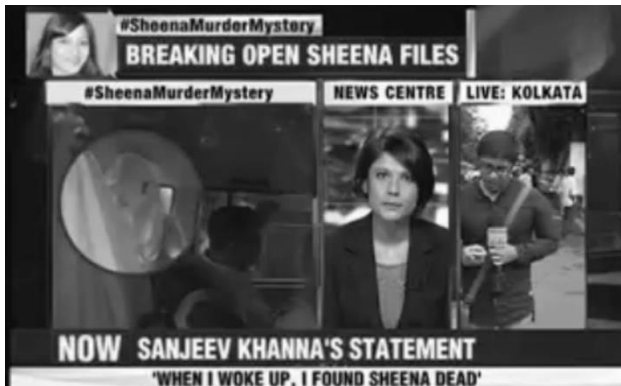
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GKPRqWsG-50>

Source: November 2010 issue of PreSense

Confusing Media Priority

Sheena Murder Mystery vs. GSLV-6 Launch

Last week (third week of August 2015), leading news headlines at prime time on the mainstream news channels screamed about the high profile and sensational "Sheena Murder" mystery. The other news headlines that followed included the capture of a terrorist, the victory of the Indian cricket team over Sri Lanka in their second test match and finally, just before fading away, came the news of the successful launch of the Geo-synchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) D6 which carried India's latest communication satellite GSAT-6. The "Sheena Murder" story continues to occupy prime time on TV even as we write this article (31st August 2015).



The "Sheena Murder" case then took over most of the main part of the "news in detail". Reporters were sending real-time sound-bites from different parts of the country where Sheena's

family members were residing. The Sheena murder mystery was the primetime news in all the main news channels. There were analyses, debates, interviews, and speculations about what could have happened and what could happen. We had panelists who were unconnected with the case, and whose contribution to the debate was by way of mere speculations and inconsiderate character assassination of the suspects.

The satellite-carrying GSLV launched in Sriharikota in the state of Andhra Pradesh in South India, is intended to end India's dependence on foreign launch vehicles for its own satellites. It was a project that took 10 years and 150 Indian industries which supplied its components – a proud moment for its scientists and

the Indian people. Yet it barely managed as brief news in the fag-end of the news prime time.

Independence and Accountability

This brings us to the issue of independence, responsibility and accountability. Our democracy is perceived to be based on four pillars namely the executive, the legislature, the judiciary and the media. Each of these pillars functions independently but is also accountable.

- The legislature enacts the law and is accountable to the voters when the representative members go to the people during election time. The legislature is also monitored by the judiciary, which has in the past overturned out-of-place decisions passed by the legislature.
- The executive implements the law and is accountable to the legislature and the judiciary.
- The judiciary interprets and upholds the law. The accountability of judiciary is now being debated especially in these days of judicial activism and discussions are underway, for major reforms to make the judiciary accountable to the other pillars and the people.
- In this backdrop, the fourth pillar that is generally accepted in modern India is the media, with its social role as the “conscience keeper”. The other pillars, namely the legislature and the executive, are monitored by the media on behalf of the people. Even judicial functions are debated in media. Currently, the media is unaccountable to anybody. It is only in case of defamation by the media can one turn to the courts for relief. Even then, the judicial process being long and cumbersome, few people turn to the courts for relief. For this very reason, the media must function under a self-governed responsibility.

News Channels

People are mainly exposed to the news that the media feeds them with. Over the years, the electronic media has taken over the print media in reaching current news to the people. It is able to provide real-time news, updated by the minute, through a variety of platforms such as debates, interviews, live coverage and spot sound bytes. News channels bring news to the living room of the common people on a 24/7 basis. The reporters of the news channels vie with one another in the field to be the first to broadcast the latest.

The media plays an important role in bringing true, unbiased and balanced information to the people. However, of late, it seems to have shifted its primary focus to topping Television Rating Points (TRPs). The media has begun building sensationalism into the prime news, or else sensational news became the prime news.

The media's sensationalised coverage of the incidence of rapes in India has damaged the image of our country at the international level. Some countries issued travel advisory to their citizens about travelling to India, as if the country was full of rapists. Statistics show that rapes occur more frequently in many other countries including the developed ones. (<http://www.more.com/news/india-rape-capital-world>; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rape_statistics). No doubt, this does not condone the act in India, but what is required is a fair and balanced portrayal of the situation by the media. Indians living in foreign countries face a tough time convincing the local people about the true and fair image about India.

During the recent pandemonium in the Houses of the Parliament, when some of the members disrupted the normal proceedings of the House, the media were up in arms, and rightfully so, pulling up the erring members and demanding that they did their job for which they were elected. Today, the media needs to be pulled up too for the way they have been dealing with news and views.

Survey: 80% People Dissatisfied with Mainstream Media

The media may argue that they are bringing to the people what they want viz. sensational news. This is not necessarily the case as a recent survey revealed. A survey was conducted by a group of individuals from top academic, professional and corporate sectors called The Indian Iris, to gauge the public perception of mainstream media. It was conducted both online (email and Facebook) and offline among over 500 respondents, mostly in the age range of 18-40 years.

(<http://www.opindia.com/2015/07/survey>).

The results show that a whopping 80 percent of the respondents expressed dissatisfaction over the quality of today's mainstream media, while 87% felt the media was biased. 70% found the prime time debates chaotic and meaningless while 23% thought the debates were more an entertainment than of any other relevance. When comparing the print media with the electronic media, the former had more loyalists with 22% finding it reliable, as against a meagre 4% for the electronic media. When the survey asked about the respondents' expectations from the future media, most of them wanted **fairness and transparency**.

Therefore, it certainly is high time the media did some introspection on why public trust has eroded to such an extent, going by the survey, and if it needs to re-focus on their primary role and responsibility. It would be a relief if the media could get back on track to doing what they are meant to do – bringing news and views that are true, balanced and unbiased.

by Susan Koshy, Editor

Source: August 2015 issue of PreSense

Spreading Rumours through WhatsApp and Other Social Media

Of late, it has become fashionable to post all and sundry information on social networking sites like Facebook and WhatsApp. In a nation with a tech-savvy Prime Minister taking selfies with other dignitaries, and encouraging his visitors to take selfies with him, this selfie mania is quite understandable. But



when it comes to posting someone else's picture or a controversial opinion or spreading rumours, or even just information without knowing the genuineness and authenticity of the news, it becomes a serious issue.

For a nation marching ahead in Digital India, e-governance and digital communication, it is a major concern.

- i) if the people are not aware of the repercussions of spreading falsehood in a social networking site, or
- ii) if the law is inefficient to curb such menaces, or
- iii) if the police is incapacitated technically or legally to handle such activities.

Earlier, there was a powerful Section 66A in the Information Technology Amendment Act, 2008 that stipulated punishment for sending offensive messages through communication services. It spoke of 'grossly offensive' messages of 'menacing character' and messages transmitted 'for the purpose of causing annoyance', knowing to be false, to deceive or mislead etc. All these expressions were best suited to define an offence of spreading falsehood, cyber stalking or even alarming the public through an electronic communication. Unfortunately, this section was repealed by the Supreme Court in an historic judgement in March 2015.

Spreading rumours and disturbing public peace continues to be a punishable offence, as per the 155-year old time-tested Indian Penal Code and the police still have the powers to book culprits who spread unfounded messages on a public post like Facebook or WhatsApp and cause public disturbance. It is better to think twice about the genuineness of a post in WhatsApp or about its necessity to be made available in a public domain. Those posting the photos of their private domestic functions should think twice before posting it on Facebook. Would they display their wedding album or the photo album of their domestic function at a railway station, and would they call the people on the street to their house to show them these photographs! Then, why post them in public domains?

Most of the media rejoiced when the Section 66A was removed by the Supreme Court in a misguided comfort that freedom of expression has been protected. The government in an overt move to project itself as a saviour of the freedom of press, did not defend the strength of the Section, and allowed it to die. Now, during the massive rains in the states of Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh and in other similar critical situations, when people resort to and spread some unfounded news through WhatsApp, the same media is now concerned that a powerful weapon in the hands of the police has been lost.

On the question of posting some indecent selfies and socially disturbing photos on the networking sites, just as the originator of the news should behave responsibly and desist from posting them, the subsequent users too, who simply forward the mail or the information, should show the responsibility and discretion of a mature netizen.

By V Rajendran, Editorial Team

Source: November 2015 issue of PreSense

Incredible India or Intolerant India? Role of Celebrities and Media in Society



During the past three months, some celebrities and writers have been accusing a section of the Indian society of being increasingly 'intolerant'. They have also returned their awards in protest. Strangely, the 'drama' of protests suddenly ceased soon after the Bihar Elections.

Some suspected that this 'drama' was stage-managed to influence the electorate against a particular political party or parties. Interestingly, one of the activists who spearheaded the '*Award Wapsi*' movement has since received an Award.

It is also suspected that some of the communication agencies were also involved in this 'operation defame', with the support of some of the Indian media.

Blemishing India's Image

What is disturbing to know is that in the course of these accusations against a specific sect, India as a nation got a beating in its image in the global society as a country with serious national issues of intolerance.

The Aamir Khan Controversy

After a temporary lull following the Bihar elections, film actor, Aamir Khan stirred the controversial issue of 'intolerance' again with his off-the-cuff comment. At a function he graced recently he said, "My wife Kiran and I have lived all our lives in India. For the

first time, she said, should we move out of India? That's a disastrous and big statement for Kiran to make to me. She fears for her child. She fears about what the atmosphere around us will be. She feels scared to open the newspapers every day. That does indicate that there is a sense of growing disquiet." This statement re-ignited a nationwide debate and displeasure among some of the Indians, including his fans, for his lack of discretion in making a public statement of such sensitivity.

The renowned Indian music composer, A R Rahman endorsed the opinion of rising intolerance in the country. A R Rahman was referring to the '*fatwa*' issued against him by an Islamic body, for composing music for a film which carried a reference to their Prophet. The Delhi Government had to cancel his public performance in September 2015 because of the threat of the *fatwa*. Unfortunately, these comments were assumed and debated by the media as targeting specific communities.

Action and Reaction

Newton's third law states "every action has an equal and opposite reaction". This scientific inference is equally applicable to human behaviour. When someone provokes, the natural tendency is to expect a 'reaction' from the other person. The Godhra and the Post-Godhra, the Kashmir Pandits' exodus, the banning of selected books, the terrorist attacks including that of 26/11, the 1984 Sikh riots, provocative statements by political leaders and celebrities, can be quoted as examples. When celebrities and renowned writers make provocative statements, they incite reactions from the masses. The media rarely debates on the legitimacy of the 'provocation', and instead blows the 'reactions' out of proportion. This leads to tension and emotional unrest in the society.

Recently, the Karnataka Government made an impromptu announcement of the decision to celebrate 'Tippu Jayanthi' without any section of the society demanding it. The State Government celebrated Tippu Jayanthi on the day of Deepavali Festival (10th November 2015), even though his date of birth was 20th November. Tippu Sultan, in spite of his reputation of having supported Hindu temples, he is also regarded negatively in several

of the districts by different communities. To add to this provocation, a renowned artiste suggested publicly that Bengaluru Airport be renamed with Tippu's name replacing its existing name of Kempe Gowda, the Father of Bengaluru. These actions and suggestions provoked the sentiments of the majority community. They took to the streets in protest and a local leader died in a scuffle with the Police. Surprisingly, these so-called 'intellectuals' and the media blamed the protestors alone for the violence and not the Government which had incited the volatile situation. This incident created more tension in Karnataka and unnecessarily created animosity among the people who were living in harmony.

'DNA' of Indians

Traditionally, Indians have been known for their high level of tolerance in the society. '*Sarva dharma, sama bhava*' (treat all faiths equally) is the essence of the Indian culture. India has tolerated even the meanest of tyrants who destroyed the Indian culture. India has never invaded any country and had never indulged in enforcing its philosophies on others. In fact, India welcomed all faiths and respected them. This tolerance is embedded in the 'DNA' of every Indian, irrespective of the faith and religion he belongs to.

Indians across the country, celebrate festivals like Deepawali (Hindus'), Christmas (Christians'), Ramzan (Muslims'), Nauruz (Parsis'), Mahavir Jayanti (Jains'). At the ground level, people of different faiths have lived in harmony with each other. This has been the culture of India over thousands of years.

When the so-called celebrities and writers decide to comment on 'intolerance' in the society, they do not realise that they are generalising on the basis of specifics. The repercussion is that the issue of 'intolerance' has been raised in the Parliament, setting aside some urgent and impending bills that needed to be tabled and decided for the benefit of the nation. Some intellectuals have even taken out a procession in Delhi against this issue, and submitted a petition to the President of India.

Role of Media

It is unfortunate that the Indian media's present trend is to focus more on their TRP ratings than national interest and professionalism. They therefore tend to sensationalise even a trivial law and order issue, exaggerating its implication. Even though every Indian enjoys freedom of expression, media and leaders should realise that freedom of speech is not 'absolute'. This freedom goes with 'responsibility and accountability'. The media and a section of the celebrities should realise the potential impact of their comments and actions, and therefore endeavour to exercise restraint and maturity in their behaviour. As role models and messengers, they should endeavour to diffuse rather than infuse tension in the society. The media should restrain from inciting emotions through provocative and subjective reporting of incidents in the country. If it must report, it should take care not to paint an emotional tone to the report. The people of national and international significance need to exercise restraint, caution and maturity, realising that what they say or do can impact an entire society and nation. Otherwise, they would be playing a dangerous game, either consciously or unconsciously, of inciting and dividing the people. They must be conscious that the nation is supreme and their fellow citizens of prime regard.

By K. Srinivasan, Editor in Chief & Susan Koshy, Editor

Source: November 2015 issue of PreSense

New Age Techno Strategic Political Communication

The 2014 General Elections witnessed a new way of political campaigning using various technology tools. The campaign model used in the western countries was tweaked to suit the Indian elections and to promote Narendra Modi. In any communication, whether it is a political campaign or corporate branding, a powerful message is sent to the audience through effective media tools, with the purpose of creating a positive or negative perception. According to S Narendra, Former Information Advisor to various Prime Ministers of India, it involves a strong strategy to successfully flight the message to the right audience through the right media, distinguishing it from the competing messages.



During the freedom movement, Mahatma Gandhi's Dandi March created a strong anti-British sentiment among the people. While Mahatma Gandhi was undertaking the Salt March in North India, Rajaji simultaneously undertook a Salt March in the south, to galvanise the entire country. In both the events, 'common salt' was the message and the 'March' was used as a 'Media' tool, to communicate the message to the people. For any successful campaign, the message should relate and appeal to the audience.

'Strategic' is a key word that represents the most critical input. A strategy is not very useful without such a critical input, an input that is a force multiplier. The strategic input can be an investment, person, alliance, a message, event or a decision.

The 1947-1990 Era

During this pre-liberalisation period, the radio and print media were mainly used. The ruling party had the opportunity of using the public sector organisations to promote the achievements of the Government through their advertisements.

During the first General Elections held in 1952, Jawaharlal Nehru and the Congress Party contested on a symbol of 'two bullocks tied to a yoke' and won massive majority. In the later days, Indira

Gandhi used the 'Cow and Calf' symbol and the Janatha Party used 'a Farmer Within a Wheel'. These symbols were in themselves powerful messages to connect with the people and appeal to them.

In 1971, Indira Gandhi used the powerful message '*Garibi Hatao*' and swept the elections. During the 1989 elections, VP Singh used the powerful message of the 'Bofors Scandal' against Rajiv Gandhi. BJP used the 'Ram Mandir' issue to increase the tally.

During this period, the political parties used conventional methods of the print media. At that time, only the All India Radio and Doordarshan were the electronic media available and mostly used by ruling party. Political campaigns were based on public meetings, personal contact with voters, wall posters, banners, notices, etc. Cinema, stage dramas, street plays and cut-outs were used by political parties in the south to promote their philosophies. MGR, Karunanidhi, Annadurai, NT Ramarao, Jayalalitha and Raj Kumar emerged from the film industry to acquire political power.

The 1990-2014 Era

After the economic liberalisation in 1991, the emergence of the television (TV) media changed the campaign strategies. Political parties started owning TV channels to promote their parties. In 1993, Sun TV was started as an entertainment channel with an agenda of promoting the DMK political party. Later on, many more parties started their own channels.

In 1996, the BSP leader, Kanshiram slapped Ashutosh (now a spokesperson of AAP), then reporter in NDTV, when he was asked some uncomfortable questions. That led to the political parties thinking in terms of engaging professional agencies for handling the media and appointing spokespersons to engage the media.

The BJP and the Congress parties began using Professional Public Relation (PR) Agencies like Good Relations India and Perfect Relations to handle media relations on their behalf. After 2004, national parties began using professional agencies in the states they were ruling (mostly in the north and the west), for election campaign.

Soon, national parties set up their own Internal Campaign Managers, to professionally handle the campaign. Arun Nehru (Congress) Arun Jaitly (BJP), Narendra Modi (BJP), Pramod Mahajan (BJP) and Jairam Ramesh (Congress) emerged as good campaign managers.

The 2004 General Elections saw the emergence of 'theme-based advertisements'. BJP heavily campaigned under the theme 'India Shining', employing the Advertising Agency Grey, reportedly spending around Rs.600 crores for the campaign. For the first time, the Indian Elections witnessed a corporate type of advertisements. Although the Congress was weak, they used the campaign '*Aap Ko Kiya Mila*' (What Did You Get). Although the economy was upbeat and BJP had spent a huge amount their campaign, they could not form the Government in 2004. Experts opine that the negative campaign run by BJP on Sonia Gandhi as a 'foreigner' coupled with the 'India Shining' campaign of BJP could not win them the elections. The common voters could not connect with the 'India Shining' theme.

Technology was used only to a limited extent in the 2004 General Elections. BJP projected Vajpayee as PM Candidate. For the first time in the Indian elections, a candidate was projected as a PM candidate.

After 2004, Political Communication Strategists emerged in a small way to support individual leaders at the regional level.

In the 2009 General Elections, both BJP and Congress used technology tools like the social media, SMS / telephone campaign, etc. Advani and Dr Manmohan Singh were projected as PM candidates of BJP and Congress respectively. BJP was the major user of technology tools. BJP lost the elections.

Till 2009, there was no 'paid media' concept. Political parties appointed advertising agencies to plan and place their advertisements.

The 2014 (Post Modi) Era

Narendra Modi (BJP) used technology tools like the social media, 3D hologram, mobile phones, smart phones, etc in Gujarat Assembly Elections in 2012.

Political Techno Strategies were used in the 2014 General Elections. Professionals like Prashant Kishore supported the BJP campaign. A more professional approach towards the campaign, like survey, big data analytics, and micro-management of the campaign through technology were used. New technologies like Augmented Reality (QR code) and Virtual Reality (like hologram) were also used.

The campaign branded Narendra Modi as PM candidate. Slogans like '*Acche Din*' (Good Days/Times) and '*Aap ki Bar Modi Sarkar*' (This Time, It's Modi's Government) attracted voters nationwide. They involved the youth through the social media. The campaign was supplemented by a large number of road shows (public meetings) in different states. The Congress could not match the technology-driven campaign of BJP. BJP and its alliance parties won the election with a big margin, leaving the Congress disappointed.

The same model was used in other state elections held subsequently in Maharashtra, Haryana, Uttarakhand, Bihar and Delhi. The BJP lost in Delhi and Bihar, indicating that creating 'hype' alone might not be enough to win elections and that it should be coupled with field work. This new type of campaign will be adopted in the 2016 Assembly Elections. Some of the regional political parties have begun employing the expertise of professionals for their campaigns.

After 2009, media houses were encouraging 'sponsored news' or 'paid news' to propagate positive and success stories. Although the Election Commission and the Press Council of India have banned the 'paid news' concept, excepting a few media houses, many others have been promoting this concept for earning revenue. Ironically, the same media houses shout about 'values and ethics', while they go about to the extent of

publishing/telecasting sponsored 'opinion polls' in favour of one party or the other.

Traditional Vs Modern Campaign

In the traditional campaign, the political leaders and workers had personal interaction with the voters. After the introduction of the technology campaign, personal interactions were lost. Since 80% of the voters are not connected with technology tools, traditional campaign model requires to be supplemented. The technology tools are useful for creating a 'brand image'.

In the traditional model, the leaders emerged from the grass root level with knowledge about the nuances of various problems. Vajpayee, Advani, Karunanidhi, MGR, NTR, Kamaraj, Pranab Kumar Mukherjee, Narasimha Rao, Bansilal, Mulayam Singh Yadav, Lallu Prasad Yadav, Mayavati, Mamta Banerjee and Sharath Pawar are examples of such leaders who had emerged from the grass root. But in the technology model, leaders are emerging from the social media, eg. Arvind Kejriwal, and Narendra Modi as PM candidate).

Hype is created through intensive campaigns using the social media and other technology tools, the projected leader runs the risk of losing his image when the campaign ceases. In other words, the leaders or the brand created out of this hype is unable to stand on their own but rely on a virtual standing. For this reason, a fair mix of both traditional and technology strategies is necessary.

Hype is created through intensive campaigns using the social media and other technology tools, the projected leader runs the risk of losing his image when the campaign ceases.

Presently, political parties suffer from a bad culture of hooliganism, rowdyism, etc. In future, it is hoped that a balance can be

maintained in the political culture, with the emergence of new-age educated leaders.

By K Srinivasan, Editor in Chief

Source: January 2016 issue of PreSense

Snippet About Oscar Award



The Academy Awards or popularly known as the Oscars is a group of artistic and technical honors given annually by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS) to recognize excellence in cinematic achievements in the United States film industry as assessed by the Academy's voting membership. The winners under the various categories are awarded a copy of a statuette, officially called the Academy

Award of Merit, which has become commonly known by its nickname "Oscar." The awards, was first presented in 1929 at the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel

The awards ceremony was first broadcast on radio in 1930 and televised for the first time in 1953. It is now seen live in more than 200 countries and can be streamed live online. The Academy Awards ceremony is the oldest entertainment awards ceremony. Its equivalents - the Emmy Awards for television, the Tony Awards for theatre, and the Grammy Awards for music and recording – are modeled after the Academy Awards.

A total of 3,048 Oscars have been awarded since the inception of the Award through its 88 editions. The statuette, made of gold-plated britannium (a specific type of pewter alloy, composed of tin,

antimony and copper) stands on a black metal base. It is 13.5 in (34.3 cm) tall and weighs 8.5 lb (3.856 kg). It depicts a knight rendered in Art Deco style, holding a crusader's sword, on a reel of film with five spokes. The five spokes represent the original branches of the Academy: Actors, Writers, Directors, Producers, and Technicians.

As of 2016, eleven Indians have been nominated for a total of fourteen Oscars, five Indians of whom have won a total of six Oscars. Three Indian films have been nominated in the Best Foreign Language Film category. As of 2016, at least one film has been submitted by 118 countries.

Sukruti Narayanan, Editorial Team

Source : February 2017 issue of PreSense

Evolution of Advertising

The world of advertising is a billion-dollar global industry today. However, it evolved from very humble beginnings, the history of which dates as far back as 4000 B.C. when people used symbols marked on goods to identify them with the sellers. The evolution of advertising is an interesting sequence of events starting from the age of the sign language to the present world of abbreviations and taglines. Incidentally, the word "advertising" comes from the Latin word, *Advertere* to mean "turn towards".

The stages of evolution can mainly be classified into the Pre-Industrial Age and the Post-Industrial Age. The advancements in the advertising industry was manifold and a hundred times more rapid during the period after the 1900s as against the period before the 1900s.

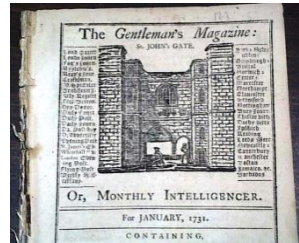


Printing Press invented in 1440

In the pre-industrial age, people were obviously unaware of the concept of mass production as there was no machine involved. People worked on the barter system, i.e. exchange of one good for another instead of exchange of goods over money. "Word of mouth" was the means to "spread the good news" about a product. In order to differentiate among the goods like cattle, grain or any type of goods possessed, people used to mark them with a symbol, otherwise called branding. Since the common people did not know how to read or write, they recognised symbols and understood the 'town criers' (people carrying messages from one place to

another and announcing them). Paintings on walls and carvings on stones were other common forms of advertisement.

When paper was invented by the Chinese in 105 A.D., it was mainly used to pad articles such as bronze mirrors, until the advent of the paper mill in Europe in 1275 A.D. In 1440, a German named Johannes Gutenberg invented the Printing Press which gained popularity. But it took over three decades before the first "Poster Ad" was brought to the world. These Ads were placed on church doors in London. By the middle of the 17th Century (1650), the first newspaper Ad appeared, which offered "reward for finding 12 stolen horses".



First Magazine published in London in 1731

In the beginning of the 18th century, the Boston Newsletter asked its readers to place Ads for real estate, ships or goods for sale. In 1731, the first general-interest magazine was published in London. At that time, advertisers just played with headlines to garner attention.



First paid advertisement in 1836

The 1800s resulted in the onset of the Industrial Revolution where animals were replaced by machines and goods were manufactured in large quantities. In order to differentiate identical looking mass-produced goods, people resorted to advertising to promote their brands. In 1836, the French newspaper, *La Presse* was the first to include paid advertisement in its pages. The same was soon followed in magazines too. This led to the opening of the first advertising agency in Philadelphia, USA by Volney B Palmer in 1850. As modes of transportation advanced, the advertising world saw billboard Ads and transit Ads emerge. A commission-

based Ad agency was started 1869 by Francis Wayland Ayer. And with this, advertising took a professional leap into a world bombarded by Ads, billboards, sound bites, byte slots and so on.

In India, advertising started well before the 18th century with hawkers calling out their wares, right from the days when cities and markets first began. The advertising world has since evolved in a big way so that the Indian advertising arena scores high among its global competitors.

By Sukruti Narayanan, Editorial Team Member

Source: July 2017 issue of PreSense

Evolution of Advertising - The Branding Boom Era

The evolution of advertising during the pre-Industrialisation period was discussed in the previous edition of this e-magazine (PreSense July 2017). The changes that occurred in the 1900s were dynamic when compared to the evolution that took place over the preceding period of 700 years (between 1200 A.D to 1900 A.D).

Industrialisation resulted in mass production of goods which were similar in nature. This forced merchants to think of ways to project their products as the unique one. They chose advertising as the medium to reach out to people *en masse*. The idea of branding and attractive packaging began to play a key role in sale of goods.

Creativity in branding expanded from print designs in newspapers to aerial advertising of the products, using air balloons; for example, balloons displaying the baby formula brand by Mellin's Food in 1902.

There was progressive advancement every year in technology and this worked in favour of improving branding. In 1903, the Commercial Pacific Cable Company laid the Pacific Telegraph Cable. Nobody thought then that this would help in tele-marketing. The domestic electricity was standardised in 1910, and this created a market for household appliances. Within a decade, America's first radio station, KDKA was launched in Pittsburgh in 1920. This became a medium for branding, and the advertising industry turned out to be nearly a \$3-billion industry by then. In 2016, the global advertising spend was over \$500 billion.

By 1940, television (TV) sets were manufactured in the United States of America, Britain and Germany. After World War II, the sale of TV sets began to boom and the first TV commercial was by Bulova Clocks. (picture)



First Television advertisement

This opened advertising to a different level and creativity played a vital role in drawing attention. Creative teams in the ad world collaborated with artists and copy writers to make interesting film clips.

In 1975, the video cassette recorder (VCR) became popular among the masses. The viewers could watch their favourite programmes without being interrupted by advertisements. The personal computer (PC), introduced by IBM in 1980s, shook the ad world as the attention shifted from TVs to PCs. In the 2000s, mobile phones were the talk of the decade and it emerged as a vital gadget over the decade. This resulted in integrated marketing becoming important in order to increase sales. With the advent of the Internet, which had over 400 million users in the 2000s, the digital age was born. The “wealth of information created a poverty of attention”. This made the concept of brand positioning critical.

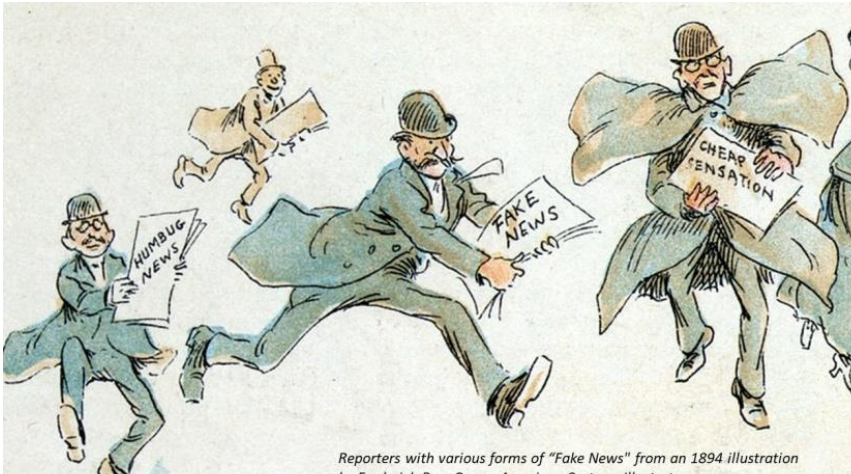
There was a paradigm shift from exploiting the traditional ad space to an information overload on the Internet and this resulted in the development of many ad-free channels and applications. Spamming became a very serious problem and people started blocking online ads. The social media tools like FaceBook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, Pinterest, SnapChat and many other applications became a medium to reach the target audience currently.

Today, the scenario is such that companies pay consumers to grab their attention and they have gone to the extent of creating sponsored programmes for the viewers. Now, customers find their brand rather than *vice versa*.

By Sukruti Narayanan, Editorial Team Member

Source: August 2017 edition of PreSense

Fake News – At What Cost?



Reporters with various forms of "Fake News" from an 1894 illustration by Frederick Burr Opper, American Cartoon Illustrator

The country and the world itself seems to be reeling under the threat of fake news which is making its rounds, often without the consumer's knowledge about the manipulation. What is fake news?

Fake news is deliberately fabricated information, spread through traditional or digital media with the malicious intention to mislead. Fake news differs from incorrect news which is inadvertent. In case of incorrect news, we usually see an immediate corrigendum and an apology. Fake news on the other hand, is distributed with the intention to deliberately mislead and misinform. The intentions are often for profit through increased eyeballs to the sensational news or to malign one's reputation.

Types of Fake News

There are several types of fake news:

- **Satire** is information that is obviously misinterpreted for the amusement of the readers/viewers/listeners. It is the least harmful of fake news as both the consumer as well as the broadcaster are aware of the intent to amuse rather

than to deceive. An example is the stand-up comedy, or the satirical television shows.

- **False connection** is where the accompanying headline or photo does not connect with the main news content. Since headlines capture the curiosity, interest and attention of the consumer, a sensational but incorrect caption for example, drives the consumer to read/view the contents, resulting in more eyeballs.
- **Misleading content** is information reproduced selectively so as to distort the message to suit the agenda of the broadcaster (either to sensationalise or to malign). For example, someone's quote is misinterpreted by the reporter to distort the intent of the quote.
- **False context** is where genuine information is reported in a false context. In a recent incident where some politicians took up a protest by fasting and boycotting a popular cricket match, a mischievous social medium propagated an archived and unrelated photograph of one of the politicians snacking at the cricket stadium.
- **Imposter content** is fake information with its source falsely credited to genuine sources.
- **Manipulative content** is morphed or doctored content, especially photographs, to give false credibility to the fake news.
- **Fabricated news** is 100% deliberately manipulated information, with the absolute intention to deceive and harm.

Threat of Fake News

The risk of fake news circulation and the threat of damage that it can cause is real-time now with the emergence of the digital era. During the 'print media only' era, the publication had almost an entire day to verify and corroborate the information sourced. Today, with information and updates streaming on a 24/7 cycle, verification and authentication is a tough challenge. Besides, with the access of the internet and its technology to the common man, anyone and everyone has become a citizen journalist.

It is interesting that some fake news, especially the imposter content types, have positive objectives. For example, some valuable and wise advice is incorrectly attributed to revered personalities like Dr Kalam so that they are noticed and possibly imbibed in life for good practice. No doubt, this does not condone the mischief behind the act of propagating fake news.

Dealing with Fake News

Spotting fake news is neither easy nor fool-proof. But there are suggestive ways:

- The source of the news and the author if available is a reliable point for verification of genuineness.
- Using one's discretion and intelligence, one can evaluate the news content.
- Verifying the contents with multiple other sources helps in checking its genuineness.

The society is increasingly aware of the menace and notoriety of fake news. But it is difficult to curb it without compromising on the freedom of expression, a fundamental right in democracy. Speaking to Shri Vinoba Bhoopathy, advocate and spokesperson of the political party, *Pattali Makkal Katchi* (PMK), he referred to Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution of India which guarantees the right to freedom of speech and expression to all its citizens. "This freedom is one of the fundamental principles in any mature democracy and this includes the freedom of press," he said. "To ensure that this constitutional right is upheld without any bias, it is important that the State or any arm or agency of the State of the country should not have any control over the media. Any compromise in this safeguard would lead to a potential threat of degradation of democracy." Shri Bhoopathy recalled the plight of the Fourth Pillar (the press) during the Emergency Rule in India in the mid-1970s, when the freedom of the press was severely curtailed. The democracy of the country was then at stake.

It was in this backdrop that the media put up a strong objection when a recent circular about fake news, was issued by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India. The

circular had stated that in case a journalist was accused of creating or propagating fake news, his accreditation with the Press Information Bureau would be suspended pending an inquiry by regulatory bodies of the media. Severe penalty was spelt out in case of confirmation of the allegation. This circular was suspected to be a precursor to an Emergency-type curtailment of the freedom of expression, which was subsequently vetoed by the people of India in the elections, by voting against the ruling government.

Article 19(2) of the Constitution of India does provide for "reasonable restrictions on the provisions of Article 19(1)(a)". It specifies that the freedom spelt out in Article 19(1)(a) is not absolute but puts a limitation on the power of the legislature to restrict the freedom. There is ground for restriction on the freedom of speech and expression in case of any threat to:

- the sovereignty and integrity of India
- security of the State
- friendly relations with foreign nations
- public order
- decency or morality
- contempt of court
- defamation
- incitement to an offence
- sedition

Bhoopathy asserted that in case of propagation of fake news, there is sufficient teeth in legal recourse for redressal and punitive action.

Shri Vinoth Poovalingam, web news portal management expert from New Delhi said that there are fake news detecting software and agencies that can scrutinise the contents for authenticity and genuineness, using 'Clipbins' and 'Rolls' for tracing and sourcing the news under scrutiny. Similarly, image-processing software can detect morphed and doctored



images. Unfortunately, these actions can be used in post-mortem analysis only and not pre-emptively. The results can be used for catching the criminal after the crime, and also as reference for assessing and evaluating the credibility of the sites and links that had promoted the news. Poovalingam believes that such a system of evaluation through analytical assessment of the media platforms, can help in rating these platforms and websites and media houses in scales of credibility, somewhat like the ISO standards or the CIBIL credit ratings.

Bhoopathy believed that an inherent self-regulatory mechanism is the sustainable solution to this menace. The question is what can motivate the media to adhere to self-regulatory standards. Although transparency in the ownership pattern of the media houses can help in dealing with the big houses that might appear skewed in their views, in most cases of fake news, it is the little known and small media sites that are notorious. It is difficult to keep a track on them or curb them on time.

A senior journalist from New Delhi was of the opinion that fake news in most cases was a point of view that could be in divergence with a popular assumption. He also felt that these were inherent features in a democracy and it was up to the individual to exercise discretion in believing or disbelieving these points of view, sometimes labelled as fake news.

In conclusion, it is pertinent to point out that just as Article 19(1)(a) gives the right of expression to every citizen, including all media, the provisions of Article 19(2) are equally applicable to every citizen including the print, broadcast and internet media. Every

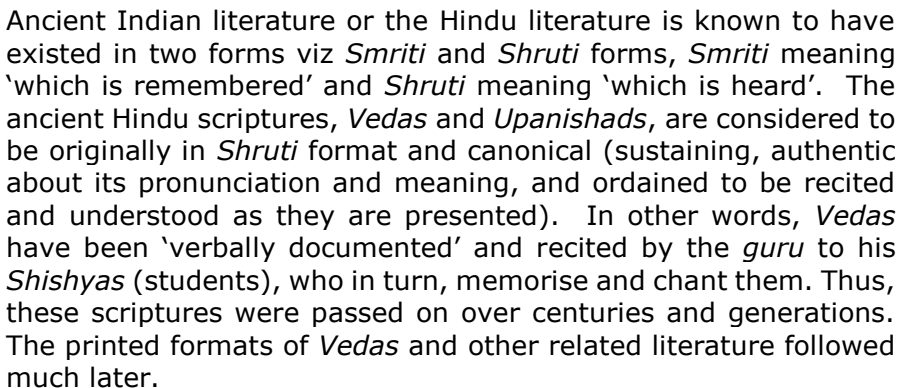
It is pertinent to point out that just as Article 19(1)(a) gives the right of expression to every citizen, including all media, the provisions of Article 19(2) are equally applicable to every citizen including the print, broadcast and internet media.

citizen – all inclusive – must remember that every right comes with corresponding responsibility.

The Editorial Team of your e-magazine, PreSense has on board a cyber law and cyber security expert to take care of the adherence to the cyber laws applicable to digital journalism, ensuring ethical responsibility. As in any other profession, the journalist – professional or citizen – is bound by the moral and ethical standards demanded of him.

By Susan Koshy, Editor-in-Chief

Source: April 2018 issue of PreSense



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and dating back to several centuries BCE, are still found in many ancient South Indian villages, especially in the southern parts of Tamil Nadu State, and parts of Nepal too. They contain treasures of information on astrology, astronomy, administration, governance, and many such social subjects, passed down from ancient scholars and sages.

The First Print Medium

Printing in its present format, is an invention of the 15th century. As a tool for news propagation, it is believed that the first printed weekly newspaper called '*Relation*', was published in 1605 in Antwerp in Europe, as a collection of distinguished and mostly positive news. The print media has had a great influence in the political administration of nations, sometimes even instrumental in the falling of some governments and rising of some parties, resulting in a paradigm shift of public perception.

In India, especially during the Freedom Struggle, the print media and the broadcasting medium (viz. the radio) served as tools to convey the views of the leaders of the Freedom Struggle to the general public. The two factors for the success of the print media were the content (to ensure readership interest) and advertisements (to ensure revenue generation). Increase in readership ensured increase in advertisements.

The Emergence of e-Newspaper

In the digital world and electronic era today, with digital money replacing cash, commerce giving way to e-commerce and all the world going the 'e-way', it is no wonder that print newspapers were facing the threat of closure, with the taking over by e-newspapers and digital journalism. Laptops and mobiles with high speed internet connections are gradually replacing the conventional print media.

Today, if someone says that 'sipping a cup of coffee in the morning and reading the newspaper, delivered by the newspaper boy, is the first item in the day's agenda', he would be relegated to an outdated generation. With speedy and easy tools of communication to reach the 'last mile' (the reader), the e-newspaper is now accessible through an app on the reader's

mobile. The economic viability and commercial feasibility is another reason why print media is on the wane.

Status of the Newspaper in India



In India, however, the situation is interestingly different. According to an Indian Readership Survey (IRS) conducted by MRUC (Media Research Users Council) and RSCI (Readership Studies Council of India), vide its Report dated 19th January 2018, new readers of newspaper during 2017, have increased to more than 110 million, almost 40% rise since the last IRS

of 2014.

The increase is said to be mostly in the rural and urban areas, thanks to increase in literacy in these sectors. Advertisements in newspapers too are on the rise. The report adds that only 4% readers prefer reading news online. Interestingly, FICCI (The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry) has projected a growth rate of around 8% for the print media in India for the next two decades.

It is a welcome trend that books and book fairs continue to draw large crowds in most parts in India. Books are still considered elegant gifts. As a matter of principle, your eMagazine, PreSense and its associated entities are proud to present only books as compliments to its dignitaries and guests at all their events, as against the customary shawl, bouquet or other mementos.

Therefore, digital news portals are not yet a threat to the print media in India, Currently, e-newspaper is complementary to the print media, with better visual effects in the form of high-resolution images and video supplements.

For a discerning and conservative readership that India prides itself of, the printed newspaper is still not passé and is still sought after, for its credibility and reading pleasure, even though it is at the cost of speed and instant news....somewhat like experiencing homemade food with its emotional satiety, as against fast food, as a convenient alternative in our lifestyle on the fast track!

by V Rajendan, Editor

Source : Oct 2018 issue of PreSense

Doordarshan to Celebrate 60th Birthday in 2019

Doordarshan's Inception & Journey

Television (TV), a great home entertainer, made its entry in India, around 60 years ago, on 15th September 1959 with an experimental transmission from Delhi. A make-shift studio, a low power transmitter and just 21 community television sets, virtually changed the concept of entertainment and news coverage in the country, happening 12 years after its independence.



The State-owned All India Radio (AIR), a precursor to Doordarshan, provided it engineering and programme professionals to kick off a big revolution in broadcasting history in India. An hour-long daily transmission of news bulletin launched Doordarshan in the first major effort of expansion in 1965. In less than seven years, in 1972, television services were extended to the second city – Mumbai. There was further progress in quick succession so that within three years, ie. by 1975, television stations were set up in Calcutta, Chennai, Srinagar, Amritsar and Lucknow for transmission of Doordarshan.



During 1975-76, the Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) brought television programmes through a borrowed satellite to 2400 villages in the most inaccessible areas. The television services were then de-linked from radio in 1976, and each unit of AIR and DD was placed under the management of two separate Director Generals in the capital. Doordarshan became an independent entity as a National Broadcaster.

In 1982, just before the Asian Games were held in the country, Doordarshan switched from a Black & White broadcaster to colour transmission, ushering in a boom of colour TV manufacturers into the country. This was primarily due to the pioneering efforts of the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and her trusted Information and Broadcasting Minister Vasant Sathe, who made it his lifetime zeal.

Doordarshan soon became a Public Broadcast Terrestrial Television Channel, run by Prasar Bharati, a board formed by the Government of India. It is claimed to be one of the largest broadcasting organisations in the world in terms of the infrastructure of studios and transmitters. Prasar Bharati (Broadcasting Corporation of India), established on 23rd November, 1997 is India's national public broadcaster. It is a board, nominated by the Government of India. It comprises Doordarshan Television (DD) and All India Radio (AIR).



Recording a programme

Following the demand for autonomy of the government-owned broadcaster in line with those in many other countries, the Parliament granted autonomy to Prasar Bharati in 1990, although its official enactment had to wait until 15th September, 1997.

In 1995, Indian Television made history by agreeing to a US \$1.5 million annual fee and 50% of advertising revenue, when it exceeds US\$1.5 million, to allow US-based CNN (Cable News Network) to broadcast twenty-four hours a day via an Indian satellite.

Doordarshan's Content of Entertainment Programmes

The state-owned Doordarshan (DD) offers a bouquet of national, regional, and local services for its domestic viewers. The migration of Doordarshan from Black & White transmission to a colour one, kicked off with the live telecast of the Independence Day broadcast of the Prime Minister's message on 15th August, 1982, followed by the Asian Games. The 1980s saw Doordarshan breaking new ground in entertainment with US-styled soap operas with serials as *Hum Log* (1984), *Buniyaad* (1986-87) and mythological dramas like *Ramayana* (1987-88) and *Mahabharata* (1988-89), catching the fancy of the Indian citizens. Millions were glued to these programmes on Doordarshan. Other popular programmes such as a weekly telecast of Hindi film songs dubbed *Chitrahaar* and *Rangoli* followed by crime thrillers like *Karamchand*, *Byomkesh Bakshi* and *Janki Jasoos* changed the face of not only television, but also entertainment in Doordarshan's programming history. All these serials had an underlying positive message, upholding tradition and moral values, and strengthening the fabric of Indian culture. From the mid-1990s, the cable TV brought about a home entertainment revolution.



Shahrukh Khan in Fauji (1988)

In its chequered history, Doordarshan was the first to present engrossing family social dramas with *Waghley Ki Duniya*, *Yeh Jo Hain Zindagi*, *Nukkad*, *Rajni*, *Shanti*, and the list goes on. Alope Nath and Kanwaljeet became big film stars after *Buniyaad*. Super Star Shahrukh Khan started his acting career humbly in Doordarshan, enacting a soldier's role in the TV series *Fauji* (1988). He went on to doing more roles on TV before embarking on a successful movie career with Bollywood. DD changed his life and fortunes.

Today, more than 90% of the Indian population have access to 49 Doordarshan programmes through a network of nearly 1400 terrestrial transmitters. Over 46 Doordarshan studios produce these programmes. Doordarshan operates 19 channels - two All India channels, 11 Regional Languages Satellite Channels (RLSC), 4 State Networks, an International Channel, a Sports Channel and two channels (DD-RS & DD-LS) for live broadcast of parliamentary proceeding, making it the biggest state-owned broadcaster in the world.

On DD-1 national programmes, regional programmes and local programmes are carried on a time-sharing basis. The DD news channel was launched on 3rd November 2003, replacing the DD Metro Entertainment channel that provided a 24-hour news service. The Regional Languages Satellite Channels have two components viz. the Regional Service for the particular state, relayed by all terrestrial transmitters in the state, and additional programmes in the regional language on prime time and non-prime time, available only through cable operators.



Popular news readers of

The sports channel is exclusively devoted to the broadcasting of sporting events of national and international importance. DD broke new ground by telecasting rural sports like *kho-kho* and *kabaddi*, which no private broadcaster dared to telecast for fear of not raking in enough revenue.

With the advent of private TV networks, Doordarshan came under criticism for its alleged low-quality programmes and sometimes even poor quality telecast and presentation. Also, as DD was conceived as a 'No-Profit-No-Loss' organisation, unlike private channels, the state-owned broadcaster did not have and get the requisite push and motivation from its authorities for better programming.

DD's Challenges and Opportunities

Doordarshan was then exposed to competition, struggling to compete with a network of privately-owned quality entertainment channels powered by commercials, and the latest technology. Doordarshan went on a war-footing to recover lost ground, but like most state-owned entities, it soon became lacklustre in comparison to the glitz and glamour of its competitors from the private domain, viz Zee, Sony and Star Plus.

However, in spite of all these challenges, Doordarshan still retains its position as the most trusted and unbiased broadcaster of news and clean entertainment. Viewers prefer to listen to DD News for authenticity in a world of news broadcasting, now rocked by fake news through the electronic media. In this regard, one is reminded of AIR's 9 o'clock news bulletin and its programme, Spotlight. Doordarshan retains the premier position with its credible news and views and analysis by experts, even as successive governments with different editorial policies come and go.

DD has carved a distinct identity in sixty years, despite the changing face of TV broadcasting in India. DD hopes to achieve greater heights in its 60th foundation year.

By T N Ashok, Consulting Editor

Source : Feb 2019 issue of PreSense

Doordarshan (DD) Which Touched Indian Households

"DD - operationally profitable, globally one of the largest TV networks, equipped with the most modern technology with nearly 200 million viewers"

– DD Director-General, Supriya Sahu IAS

(As Doordarshan gears up to celebrate its 60th birthday this year, Doordarshan's Director-General Ms Supriya Sahu IAS, spoke to our Consulting Editor, T.N. Ashok about the growth, challenges and future outlook of DD).

Excerpts from the Interview:

India is emerging as a major leader in TV broadcasting with a humongous viewership. Can you trace the journey of Doordarshan from a small TV station in the 50s to a large TV network today that caters to millions of viewers across the nation?

Supriya Sahu: Today, Doordarshan is one of the largest broadcasters in Asia and in terms of our broadcast capability, it is comparable with United States, China or any other country. Doordarshan always stood for credible content, based only on factual and correct information, for generations of viewers from the beginning till today. We have delivered meaningful programmes that have changed and impacted the lives of people positively, and also championed national progress. It has helped build national



Ms Supriya Sahu IAS,

consciousness, and promoted economic empowerment of the country.

We broadcast in more than 18 languages and make programmes in hundreds of local dialects. Most of our regional channels have doubled their viewership. A loss-making DD is now profitable. It has generated operational profits in the last two years.

- DD Free Dish, India's only open access Direct-To-Home (DTH) service provided free of cost, is servicing nearly 33 million households and is expected to reach 46 million by 2020 (*Ref: E&Y Report, 2017*). With just a one-time investment of Rs.2000/- for installing DD Free Dish, there is no subscription cost for life thereafter. DD Free Dish offers an interesting bouquet of 80 channels with a combination of news, sports, entertainment, music, movies and infotainment. DD Free Dish is popular with people who are not able to afford the expensive bouquets of private channels.
- DD News has created a niche for itself as it stands out against the cacophony of the private channels. In an era of hypersensation, DD News still retains its credibility, such that if you want to watch news as it should be, you just need to tune in to DD News.
- In December, 2018, using modern technology, DD launched 'DD Roshni' – an education channel on the DTT (Digital Terrestrial Television) Network in Bangalore City.
- Doordarshan has been an active member of the Asia-Pacific Broadcast Union (ABU) and pioneered the first ABU Dance Festival in 2017, hosted in partnership with the Government of Telangana and with the participation of 14 international teams from 9 countries. The second ABU Dance Festival was held in New Delhi during March 9th-17th, 2019 with 120 dancers from 12 countries showcasing 20 dance forms. This was telecast live on all the flagship channels of ABU countries.
- In addition to these prestigious assignments, Doordarshan has also undertaken several co-production projects including 'Future

Schools Project' with EBS (Educational Broadcasting System), Korea.

- Our programmes are finding resonance with our viewers. An example is DD Science, a high-quality science programme.
- In the 'free to air' space, there is no content for children, which private channels offer. DD presents "Galli Galli Sim Sim", in line with the famous international children's programme, Sesame Street.
- Another feat is the Mahila Kisan Awards, where we brought 104 women farmers to our studios, and televised stories about them in the form of a reality show. DD recognised them, awarded them, and highlighted their stories to inspire other farmers.
- For the younger generation, we launched a Rock Band Show, showcasing upcoming bands from smaller places.
- In the last three years of our tenure, we have built up a strong social media presence. All the channels are on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube, and we are on Instagram. That is something that has connected us to the young viewers and the next-gen citizens in a big way.

In its 60-year journey, how has DD been able to upgrade technologies that give the network a competitive edge over others?

Supriya Sahu: DD has a state-of-the-art technology for upgrading its broadcast infrastructure.

- Our studios have the latest HD (High Definition) cameras. We acquired about 300 HD cameras, upscaling the capability of 67 studio centres.
- One of DD's biggest strengths is live broadcast from India's remotest parts. Apart from large and complex broadcasting events of national importance like the Republic Day, Independence Day etc, we have huge in-house professional

expertise in live broadcast coverage of news, sports, and entertainment. This is one of the corner stones of DD's broadcast capabilities.

- We have 30 Outside Broadcast Vans and 96 DSNG (Digital Satellite News Gathering) vans spread across the country for quick deployment. We also have backpack cameras for news coverage.
- DD is the earliest broadcaster to ride on ISRO satellites GSAT-15 and GSAT-17, for digital transmission – one at Mumbai and the other at Delhi. Today, most of our live telecasts are in HD format, and this includes the news bulletin and the coverage of international events. We have 24 channels in our kitty, and they are all on satellite and on cable and DTH.

What is the outlook for Doordarshan for the future?

Supriya Sahu: Our programming is primarily in the nature of public broadcasts. We need to make programmes which are good for the community, impactful, thought-provoking and targeted at nation building. It should touch the lives of the people in a positive way. So, with sufficient government funding, we do not need to worry about TRPs (Television Rating Points). A holistic outlook for each of the channels should help a comprehensive content overhauling.

Thanks to the Rs 200 crore (Rs 2 billion) funding by the government to revamp the content, and with the support of the board of Prasar Bharati and under our current Chairman, I think the future path for DD is now laid out well.

by T N Ashok, Consulting Editor

Source : March 2019 issue of PreSense

Need for a National Media Policy

The Indian Constitution provides for the “right to freedom of speech and expression” under Article 19(1)a, subject to reasonable restrictions mentioned in sub clause (2). The Indian Constitution provides this freedom of speech and expression to every citizen equally, which includes all the media.

After the emergence of technology, many people in India have the mistaken notion that the ‘freedom’ given by the Constitution is absolute. This is incorrect. In the past, we have seen some writers, artists and journalists claiming this freedom as “absolute”. Reasonable restrictions are provided for, in the Constitution.

Emergence of the New Media

In the earlier days, we had only the Government-controlled broadcasting media (All India Radio, Doordarshan) and select print media newspapers and magazines. With the development of technology, many more television channels have emerged. 200 television channels with a viewership of 20 million in early 2000 have now grown to 900-plus authorised channels with a viewership of 900 million. This does not include the unaccounted cable channels across the country.

In the past decade, the emergence of internet technology has changed the entire communication model. Today, every person in the world with a mobile device has become a ‘journalist’ and is capable of disseminating information to millions of people. This phenomenon has posed challenges to the governments across the world. Fake news and false information spread quickly, throwing more challenges. Many times, even the mainline media like television and print media carry information generated by the internet media.

Many democratic countries do not yet have an effective regulation mechanism for the media, even though every country has a ‘self-regulatory’ mechanism in place. Countries like Nepal, Norway, the European Union and Sri Lanka are now moving towards industry-led regulation with statutory powers.

Regulatory Mechanism in India

In India, content and carriage of any media is governed by the Indian Telegraph Act 1885. In the course of 130 years, the Indian Government has made several laws to regulate the print media, cinema, television and internet. All these regulations deal with the technology (platform or carriage) and not the contents. India does not have a statutory regulatory mechanism for delivery of contents, excepting for the print media. There are self-regulatory mechanisms set up by the industry bodies themselves.

The Press Council of India, a statutory body set up by the Government of India, regulates the contents of the print media. It functions only as an advisory body and does not have teeth. Broadcast industry bodies like Indian Broadcasters Foundation, News Broadcasters Association and News Broadcasters Federation have set up their own self-regulating bodies for their members and brought out codes for contents. The Internet and Mobile Association of India is a self-regulating body for “online curated contents”. Media like YouTube and other social media tools are outside the purview of any regulatory mechanism. Nobody has control over the inappropriate contents delivered through such media.

The Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI), is a self-regulating body in advertising, ensuring the protection of the interest of consumers.

All these self-regulating bodies do not have the statutory powers to punish any erring media. Media experts say that world over such self-regulatory bodies have failed for various reasons. They say that unless these bodies have legally-backed statutory powers, they may not be able to function effectively.

The Inter Ministerial Committee (IMC) set up by the Ministry of

Present Position of Convergence of Media

Sector/ Year	2017	2018	2019 (Estimate)	2021 (Estimate)	CAGR 2019-2021
Television	660	740	815	955	8.8%
Print	303	306	317	338	3.4%
Filmed Entertainment	156	175	194	236	10.6%
Digital Media	119	169	223	354	28.0%
Animation and VFX	67	79	93	128	17.4%
Live Events	65	75	86	112	14.0%
Online Gaming	30	49	68	120	35.4%
Out of Home Media	34	37	41	49	9.2%
Radio	29	31	34	39	8.0%
Music	13	14	16	19	10.8%
	1476	1675	1887	2350	12%

Note: All figures are gross of taxes (INR in billion) for the respective calendar years

Data courtesy : FICCI

Information and Broadcasting can examine any complaint against any channel, with the authority to stop the broadcast.

The Government of India has set up the Electronic Media Monitoring Centre (EMMC) in 2008. They monitor the contents of all the TV channels and the radio. No data is available about any action taken by them for any violation.

The media and the entertainment industries are the most vibrant industries in India, generating huge revenue and employment opportunities. They are the cultural ambassadors for the country's values and stories for many foreign countries as well. As per the FICCI-EY 2019 report, the Indian media and entertainment sector is pegged to grow to INR2.35 trillion by 2021 (US\$33.6 billion), after witnessing a growth of 13% in 2018 to reach INR1.67 trillion (US\$23.9 billion). As per this study, online gaming and digital media will be growing fast in the coming years in India. How India is going to regulate the content then is to be debated.

Need for an Integrated Authority and Policy

All the professionals in India (except media persons), like advocates, doctors, chartered accountants, cost accountants and company secretaries have their own legally backed regulatory mechanism operated by their own respective industries. Because of this, these professions are highly respected and they have

progressed considerably. We have policies for the telecom, education, banking, and various other segments. It is high time that we think of a Media Policy too that can take the media industry to the next level.

Many senior journalists feel that due to the lack of a proper media policy and regulation, the media industry is suffering in spite of its great potentiality. Many journalists have lost their jobs in the recent days. The media industry should be able to function like any other professional industry with a proper policy and regulation in place.

During the past decade, due to socio political changes, the media industry has migrated from 'Institutions' to 'Individuals'. Besides, many of the rules framed during the British days are not in line with current trends. When we talk about media policy or regulation, it does not mean "censorship" as was implied and implemented during the Emergency. If India needs to protect the 'freedom of speech and expression' provided in the Indian Constitution, the Government has to convert the industry-operated self-regulatory mechanism into legally backed statutory bodies. The mechanism can be operated by the industry itself with more statutory powers to punish the violators. This would help not only to enhance the quality of the contents but also help in the growth of the Industry. India is already the third largest media market in the world, next to USA and China, with high potentiality to grow.

The Government of India can set up a Committee under the chairmanship of a retired Supreme Court judge with experts from different media and fields, to codify the 'draft policy' relating to convergence of platforms, ownership and delivery of contents. The Committee can study the policies framed by other democratic countries. The draft policy can be further debated by the public and industry before adoption.

by K. Srinivasan, Publisher and Managing Editor
Source : July 2019 issue of PreSense

When News Reporting Turns Into Reality Shows

The last weekend was a doleful one for most of the Indian regional news channel viewers especially in the south as they were subjected to the live non-stop coverage of the rescue operation to bring out an infant child caught in the bottom of an 88-foot bore well pit he had slipped into. After an 82-hour ordeal, the mission ended tragically as the rescuers brought out the decomposed remains of the child. The 82-hour ordeal was an extremely stressful and depressing one for the family of the victim, the rescuers, the onlookers both at the site and on the TV screens and for the supervisors and reporters, particularly during *Diwali*.

However, the focus of this editorial is not on the operation or even the accident but the live non-stop coverage for more than 80 hours that almost all the regional news channels did. The channels have apparently capitalised on the emotional strains of the viewers, to keep them glued to the live non-stop coverage – the similar emotional strain with which viewers get glued to soap operas and reality shows.

This is not criticism. This is intense concern about how the media in their attempt to win eyeballs, have turned insensitive and inconsiderate to the people involved, and to the situation. They fail to realise that during the operation, rescuers are working in a tense situation and the media peering over their shoulders is helping little. Instead, their presence is a hindrance to their optimum performance.

The media always attracts more people than necessary. This impedes the operation in process. We observe from previous media live non-stop coverages of crisis situations that people become overtly emotional, aggressively expressive and interfering when they are aware of cameras on the roll. This does not help the rescuers who are already under acute stress to rescue the trapped infant. Then we have parallel panel discussions to discuss, dissect the reasons for the calamity, point random fingers without understanding the ground reality, and to top them all, draw

politicians to ground zero to distract the authorities and rescuers in their work.

While the role of the media in bringing truth and news to the homes of viewers is appreciated, the media should constantly check to see that they do not infringe the lines of privacy or cross over from reporting to bulldozing for the sake of eyeballs. The live non-stop media coverage of the 26/11 terror attacks in Mumbai is an example of how the media unconsciously and unintentionally helped the terrorists in their terror operation by giving real-time updates about what, how and where our uniformed men were stationed and dealing with the crisis.

One is reminded of a 1998 Hollywood movie, *The Truman Show*, where the life of Truman is tracked on television on real-time basis, right from the time he was born till adulthood, infringing his privacy, space, freedom and emotional balance for the sake of bringing home to the viewers a reality show about his life. While the storyline might be fantasy, it does trigger a check about how far we might go for the sake of news, views and TRPs (Television Rating Points).

by Susan Koshy, Editor-in-Chief

Source : October 2019 issue of PreSense

Freedom of Speech is Not Absolute

The 17th Edition of the series, 'Dialogue with Experts', organised by your eMagazine PreSense and DiJAI (Digital Journalists of India) under Prime Point Foundation, had Mr Rahul Shyam Bhandari, Advocate on Record, Supreme Court of India, explaining about the often-misconstrued rights under Freedom of Speech and Expression as outlined in the Constitution of India. A report on the topic as discussed by Mr Bhandari, is brought out below.



Freedom of speech and expression, contained in Article 19(1) of the Constitution of India, is the most precious of all fundamental rights guaranteed to every citizen of India. 'Fundamental Rights' represents the basic structure of our Constitution, covered from Article 12 to 35 in Part III of the Constitution of India. Essentially, these rights are conferred to the citizens, and cannot be taken away by any Legislation. The Constitution of India is considered a 'living' document, which has catered to the needs of the citizens from generation to generation.

Article 19 provides 6 fundamental rights, and one amongst them is Article 19(1)(a) – Freedom of Speech and Expression. Undoubtedly, freedom of speech and expression is the mother of all liberties. This right has four broad social purposes to serve, which are:

1. Promotion of rule of self-governance,
2. Discovery of truth,
3. Strengthening the participation process in decision making,
4. Societal tolerance and self-restraint.

Freedom of the press is included within this right itself.

A famous judge of the US Supreme Court, Justice Holmes remarked that “free expression does not mean free thought for those who would agree with us, but freedom for the thought we hate”. This means the value of a dissenting opinion is equally critical for any society. Interestingly, this right also includes the right to silence.

No country across the globe accepts freedom of speech and expression as absolute. Although the 1st Amendment to the US Constitution says that Congress shall make no law abridging freedom of speech and expression, and there are no specified restrictions like in India, in practice, the right is not absolute even there and from time to time, the Courts have been applying some restrictions. The same situation prevails in UK where there is freedom of expression, but that is again subject to specific restrictions, laid down by their law.

In India, ‘Freedom of Speech and Expression’ is controlled by 8 restrictions, viz.:

- Sovereignty and Integrity of India which is enforced to restrict activities that threaten the sovereignty of the country, such as alliance with foreign states to wage war, burning of the national flag *etc.*,
- Security of State, which means no state can tolerate activities that threaten the stability of an organised government by unlawful or unconstitutional means, giving aid to an enemy country, obstructing war activities *etc.*,
- Friendly Relations with Foreign States, based on the lines of International Principles/Conventions and mutual respect,
- Public Order, as minimum requirement in any organised society, and therefore to curtail any activity/ association that causes a state of disorder. Examples are restricted use of sound amplifiers in public places, curbing hate speech, fake news *etc.*,

- Decency or Morality, so as to control activities that undermine public morals, such as child abuse, provocative publications *etc.*,
- Contempt of Court, enforced to secure public respect and confidence in the judicial process. Maintenance of dignity of courts is one of the cardinal principles of any democratic set up. A fair criticism is permissible but not scandalisation.
- Defamation, so that freedom of speech and expression does not entitle you to hurt others' reputation in the public sphere. Right to reputation is a fundamental right, implicitly specified in Article 21.
- Incitement to an Offence, *viz.* an act to persuade others to commit a crime; abetment or instigating a person to commit an offence.

These restrictions are subject to judicial review. Any democratic set up is expected to impose these restrictions only in a rare and exceptional case when the order of the state is under threat. One must not forget that this freedom is not absolute and should be exercised, keeping in mind the eight restrictions, which operate in the interest of the society.

Article 19(2) limits the Freedom of Speech with reasonable restrictions.

In the last few years, social media, like Twitter and Facebook, has become the platform for freedom of speech and expression. Even during the lockdown, people used this right exponentially. But in the light of some recent incidents, it can be inferred that social media is no longer a neutral platform. Incidents like those of Cambridge Analytica, to the issue of regular data mining, polarisation, hate speech, and fake news have become a matter of grave concern. There is no control over the information on social media. Unlike the print and the electronic media, social media is not yet regulated by an external authority. Hence, they do not own any accountability for the content posted. For platforms like Netflix

and Amazon, there is no accountability in the form of censorship of content, unlike the case of cinema-house screened movies.

The Supreme Court of India is considering the issue of accountability for social media. On the other hand, freedom of the press has always been kept at a pinnacle as an agency to promote healthy constructive democracy, till fake news became a serious threat. All these issues are pitted against Freedom of Speech and Expression. Therefore, fundamental rights are also subject to restrictions. Had there been no restraint, rights and freedom could threaten to become synonymous with anarchy and disorder. T

he complete interview can be watched in the link:

<https://youtu.be/fEsd3RYfX3o> .

by Priyadharshni Rahul, Deputy Editor

Source: Jan 2021 issue of PreSense

Regulations for Social Media and OTT Platforms: A Review

Background

The Digital India Programme has now become a movement which has empowered many Indians to use the technology platforms for

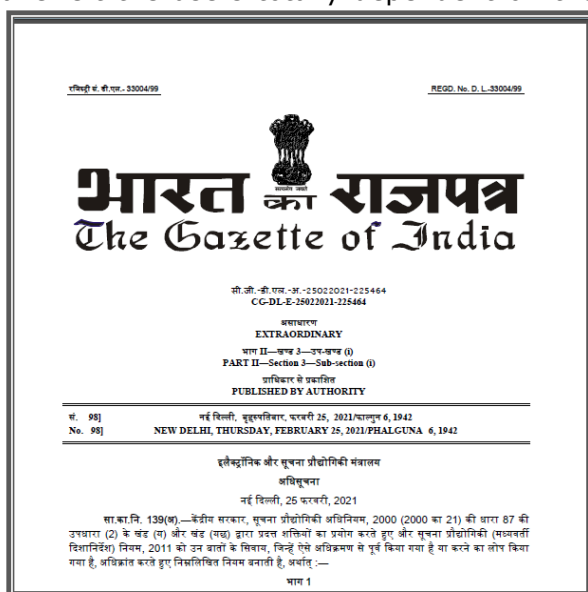


communication, ecommerce, banking, etc. in a significant manner. According to the Government of India Press Release, the Indian user base of social media platforms like WhatsApp (53 Crore users), YouTube (44.8 crores), Facebook (41 crores), Instagram (21 crores) and Twitter (1.75 crores), is on the increase daily. These social media platforms have enabled common Indians to showcase their creativity, ask questions, be informed and freely share their views, including criticism of the Government and its functionaries.

India is the world's largest open Internet society and the Indian Government has allowed all international social media and Internet companies to operate here, subject to the condition that they have to be accountable to the Indian Constitution and Indian laws. While social media has empowered Indians in many ways, it has also thrown up various challenges like fake news, frequent abuse by sharing morphed images of women and children, misuse to

settle corporate rivalry, use of abusive language, defamatory and obscene contents and blatant disrespect to religious sentiments, etc. Criminals and anti-national elements have started misusing the social media extensively, to generate unwanted emotions and create disturbance in the society.

It was found that currently there is no robust complaint mechanism wherein the ordinary users of social media and OTT platforms can register their complaint and get it redressed within a defined timeline. Lack of transparency and absence of robust grievance redress mechanism have left the users totally dependent on the whims and fancies of social media platforms. Often, it has been seen that a user who has spent his time, energy and money in developing a social media profile, is left with no remedies in case that profile is restricted or removed by the platform without giving any opportunity to be heard. Serious concerns have been expressed in various platforms like Civil Society, Judicial Orders, Parliament, Parliament Committees, etc.



In order to address these issues, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, after various public discussions, on 25th February 2021 issued guidelines known as Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 under Sec 87 of IT act 2000.

The New Guidelines

Diligence to be Followed by Intermediaries: All intermediaries, be they network providers, telecom providers or OTT platforms, or social networking sites, have to comply with the concept of due diligence. Although the concept of due diligence has already been discussed in the original IT Act, it was not clear and was subject to interpretations to be read with other sections of the IT Act. Now, these rules throw more clarity on this.

Grievance Redress Mechanism is an altogether new feature now. All intermediaries are now mandated to have grievance redress mechanism in place, and resolve user complaints. Right now, there are thousands of users of social networking sites like Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter, who have faced some form of victimisation in such platforms, like their account getting hacked and misused, with the victims not knowing the procedure to lodge a complaint. These rules address this issue.

Ensuring Online Safety and Dignity of Users, especially Women Users: Intermediaries shall remove or disable access within 24 hours of receipt of complaints of contents that expose the private areas of individuals, show such individuals in full or partial nudity or in sexual act or is in the nature of impersonation including morphed images etc. Such a complaint can be filed either by the individual or by any other person on his/her behalf.

Categories of Social Media

Social media intermediaries are now categorised into two types viz. (1) social media intermediaries and (2) significant social media intermediaries. Depending upon the volume of usage, the Government will fix a threshold and classify what is to be brought under 'significant social media'. Presumably, giant intermediaries such as Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp will come under this. The significant social media intermediaries will have to comply with some additional rules like having a Chief Compliance Officer responsible for ensuring compliance with the Act and Rules, a Nodal Contact Person for 24x7 coordination and a Resident Grievance Officer. All these three should be residents of India with

their contact details clearly publicised. The Government has now mandated this by these rules.

In the case of OTT platforms, there is a self-classification system of categorising the OTT content (films, short films, feature films or any story) as suitable for those under 7, or 13, or 13 plus age, or 17, and finally the adult content. There are three levels of regulatory mechanisms: (i) a self-regulatory mechanism (ii) self-regulation by a body of publishers (something like the Press Council of India for the print media) and (iii) oversight mechanism, to be formulated by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

The Legal Battle

Some online media news portals have filed a case in the Supreme Court. They argue, inter alia, that the IT Rules, 2021 go far beyond the remit of the parent Act and seek to regulate digital news media by imposing a 'Code of Ethics', with all manner of stipulations as 'half-truths', 'good taste', 'decency' etc., and vest the power of interference ultimately with the Central Government

Those who oppose these rules should also keep in mind that in the name of 'freedom of speech and expression', they should not get protection for the wrong persons, leaving the genuine helpless citizens to suffer.

as the chief regulator, at the highest of three tiers. They contend that the Central Government has framed these rules under section 87 of the IT Act (i.e. the rule-making powers of the Government, to carry

out the provisions of the Act) and since these portals are not intermediaries, nor are these the provisions or objective of the Act, these rules cannot be framed under this Act in this manner. They add that these rules travel beyond the terms of the IT Act, which is limited to 'intermediaries' or 'agency of the Government', and that too on grounds relating to security interests of the State.

The rules now provide for tracking the originator of the message or newsfeed with the objective that any legally objectionable news can be traced and be blocked by the OTT platform and the creator may be punished, as may be required as per law. During the course of the legal proceedings, an affidavit was filed by Dr V Kamakoti, a senior professor from IIT-Madras and a member of the Prime Minister's Scientific Advisory Committee, on the question of traceability of messages to the originator. It was stated in the affidavit that such traceability is possible by adding an originator information with each message, which will be displayed during the decryption. Services like WhatsApp, which vociferously claim 'end-to-end encryption', raise objection to such a technology and scenario. Now, WhatsApp, Signal, Telegram and others assert that they may have to cope with the issue of breaking the privacy of end-to-end encryption and tracking the originator. The Supreme Court is currently adjudicating on the issue of how the intermediaries can trace the originators of a message shared on their respective platforms.

In the entire discussion on this subject, a distinction is being sought between original content and curated content, justifiably, to fix the responsibility of the stake holders. Curating a content means finding such a content that will suit your audience catering to their likes and tastes, and which is not created by you. Netflix, Amazon Prime, etc come in this category, where they air feature films, short films and such videos, like distributors or theatre owners of feature films. From the guidelines or control perspective, such firms only air the films, not owning the responsibility for the content in such films. If it were a feature film to be released in theatres, there is the Film Censor Board which certifies it before release in cinema houses. In this case, there is no such certification. On the other hand, media news houses or WhatsApp groups and any social networking groups create the content and air the news. Thus, they are the 'owners' or 'creators' of the posts and hence are undeniably responsible. Information security professionals argue that controls should naturally be applicable for both these categories

viz. the curative contents and the normal contents like WhatsApp posts and newsfeeds.

Atul Kumar Tiwari,
Additional
Secretary, Ministry
of Information and
Broadcasting (MIB)
reportedly said,
"OTT (Over-The-
Top video
streaming industry)
is a strange animal
but our self-



regulation model will only apply to curated content on streaming platforms (like Netflix, Amazon, Hotstar and others) while user-generated content and social media would be the reserve of the IT Ministry". Subsequently on 9th November 2020, the President of India issued a notification under Article 77(3) of the Constitution, amending the Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules, 1961 which granted MIB the power to regulate online news platforms and OTT platforms.

Clarification by Government

The Government has clarified that it respected freedom of expression and is committed to it. It only wants accountability for the social networking media and the firms which have a huge user-base running into crores in India, like Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter etc. The Central Government has made it clear that if they want to do business here, they will have to abide by the laws of the land.

It has been repeatedly asserted, including in many Supreme Court judgments, that freedom of expression is not an unfettered one and is always subject to reasonable restrictions. Viewed in that context, these rules are a significant step in that direction.

We are not sure how effective the implementation is going to be, and how much legal hurdles these rules would face in the days to come, besides the technological issues. As expected, there are

protests that these rules are draconian and are an onslaught into the freedom of expression. Besides the technological difficulties envisaged in tracing the originator, there are also objections on the legal technicalities of these rules, that the IT Act was mainly passed with the objective of recognising electronic records, and passing such kind of rules does not come under the purview of the IT Act. All these points are to be debated in the apex court. Perhaps in the arguments that come up during the trial, much more clarity may emerge and the Supreme Court in all its wisdom, may interpret and pass the verdict with the larger interests of the nation, in its avowed commitment to protect the sovereignty, and try to bring in some control in the otherwise uncontrolled beast called the 'Internet'.

Observation by Supreme Court

On 25th February 2021, while passing orders in a different case, Hon'ble Supreme Court had mentioned about these Rules, as follows:

Quote

A perusal of the Rules indicate that the Rules are more and more in the form of guidelines and have no effective mechanism for either screening or taking appropriate action for those who violate the guidelines.

Unquote

For this remark, Mr. Tushar Mehta, the learned Solicitor General submitted that the Government shall consider and take appropriate steps for regulation or legislation as may be found fit by the Government, and the same shall be placed before the Court.

**“Freedom of speech
is the most abused
right at present” -
Shri Bobde, Chief
Justice of India**

Conclusion

After all, every industry, society, entity or set-up needs some kind of monitoring or control and the government cannot be expected to be a mute spectator if any arm of governance and administration including of course, the media, is misused to destabilise the sovereignty, cultural fabric or the social harmony in the nation. Inefficiency in administration is not a virtue, and a government has to be capable even if it is not 'good' to everyone!

Those who oppose these rules should also keep in mind that in the name of 'freedom of speech and expression', they should not get protection for the wrong persons, leaving the genuine helpless citizens to suffer. A day before his retirement, Chief Justice of India, Sharad Bobde in an exclusive interview, observed, "*Freedom of speech is the most abused right at present.*"

by K Srinivasan, Publisher & Managing Editor & V Rajendran, Editor

Source: April 2021 issue of PreSense

Media and Politicians Should Not Create Panic Among People, for Their Self Interest



There is a perception in the minds of people that more people die out of panic than from Covid. Whether this statement is right or wrong, today, many of the print, television and social media create panic in

the minds of the people, by spreading fearful information about Covid and deaths, rather than create confidence in the minds of the people to overcome this challenge. Recently, all the channels, including regional and national media, telecast the burning of dead bodies and funeral processions. Many, especially children and elderly people, became mentally disturbed. Shamefully, some of the senior journalists defend this action as modern journalism and freedom of speech. A new coinage, 'vulture journalism' is floating around on the social media platforms for the first time.

Another serious matter of concern is the behaviour of some of our political leaders. They too indulge in 'vulture politics', making politics out of the agony of the people and dead bodies, in order to gain political mileage. They spread wrong information on the various aspects of Covid management, without realising that their political statements might create more panic in the minds of the common men. These statements are religiously carried by the media. Recently, statements against vaccination by some senior political leaders, have created doubts in the minds of the common men. Now, the same leaders contradict themselves by promoting vaccination.

Sadly, the media houses depute their reporters and cameramen to hospitals and burial grounds, putting them to heavy risk in this pandemic time. Many government offices hold their press

conferences physically, inviting a large number of TV and print reporters, when they could have organised these press briefings through video conferencing.

A recent study reveals that more than 200 such reporters have died of Covid in India. In Tamil Nadu alone, more than 20 such reporters have died while on duty, in the past ten days. This reflects the greediness of the media owners to provide news even against accepted norms of restrictions, thus risking the lives of their own young reporters. Sadly, another study reveals that news channels have lost viewership to the extent of 50-80% and their revenue is also affected substantially. The news channels have not yet realised that because of their gory and repelling news flow, viewers are shifting to other entertainment channels during this lockdown period.

While the private channels conduct discussions through Zoom or Google Meet Live, Doordarshan, the Government-owned channel invites people to their studios, causing risk to the guests. It is preferable if Doordarshan conducts only virtual discussions during this period to avoid risk to the guests and to their own staff.

Even fake news and alarming information is spread through social media, creating panic among the people. At the time of writing this Editorial, social media platforms like Twitter, WhatsApp and Facebook are yet to comply with the regulations given by the Government of India. The Government of India has so far been hesitating to take action against the erring social media platforms, and insist that they follow the rules in India.

Nowhere in the world do the domestic media spread fake news against their own nation, denigrating their own country. In India, many of the media and political leaders 'misuse' the Constitutional provision of 'freedom of speech and expression' to spread false information about our own country, and this is picked by international media to disgrace our nation globally.

Media owners, reporters, political leaders and social media users should rise above such pettiness, and create an environment to develop confidence among people. Government of India should

also be bold enough to deal with these mischief makers, who seek refuge under 'freedom of speech', with an iron hand.

by K Srinivasan, Publisher and Managing Editor

Source: June 2021 issue of PreSense

Print Media Will Fade Away in Future Due to Emergence of Social Media – Maxim Behar



In a freewheeling conversation through Zoom with Priyadharshni Rahul, Deputy Editor, PreSense, Maxim Behar, President of the World Communication Forum Association (WCFA), Davos, Switzerland, discussed broadly on Public Relations, Advertisements, Social Media, Print Media, Education, Skills of women, Public Affairs, etc. He also outlined the importance of social media in the era of modern communication. He predicted advertisers in future would prefer social media than print media, which may lead to the fading away of print media. Maxim Behar has authored many books, including the most popular titles, 'The global PR Revolution' and 'The morning After'. Excerpts:

Priya: Is Global Communication just a philosophy or a reality, given the multilingual and multicultural scenario of our world?

Maxim: First of all communication is business, nothing else. To my understanding communication is very dynamic that is developing and changing very fast. Global communication exists because of social media. Even the talks and conversation in a small

community becomes global communication in a couple of minutes. There are four billion users in the social media. This means there are four billion people expressing their views. This means that there are four billion Editors in Chief all over the world. Lots of local information is exchanged globally.

Priya: You have a unique combination of expertise in peace study and public affairs. India being the largest democracy of the world, still public affairs is not defined in the way it is defined in Western countries. Can you give an insight about public affairs for developing countries like India?

Maxim: I simply love India. I always appreciate how India conducts its Democracy, people, culture. I also feel sorry for the corona attack in India. I know Indians are strong and they will come out of this challenge with more strength.

Public Affairs should be absolutely transparent, ethical and a good functioning entity between the society and its Government. I am very cautious about using the word 'lobbying' because it's perceived with suspicion. Public affairs pushes ones Government to act in favour of the people, transparently, ethically and efficiently. We have seen many Ministries acting transparently and ethically doing nothing and public don't wish to come on streets to talk about it. Through Social Media people force the Governments to act efficiently. If the Governments are not doing anything, they can be sent home. If they are doing well, they can be given further opportunity. At the end of the day, people all over the world want to live in peace and a better life.

2021 has provided lot of opportunities to get knowledge through internet and social media. Even Nobel Prize winners are available through social media and zoom. We can communicate with anyone globally who has the knowledge which was not thought of ten years ago. Internet connects knowledge. If we have the knowledge, then the combination of ethics, transparency and hard work can take any nation to great success.

Priya: You are the founding member and the present President of World communication Forum Association; can you say something about your work?

Maxim: World communication Forum Association is based at Davos, Switzerland. We are doing events for nearly a decade. When global Presidents and Prime Ministers meet at World Economic Forum, we have separate meetings with them as a follow up with World Communication Forum. It is a great community of high level professionals and friends across the world. We have members all over the world. We discuss serious business issues. The Last World Communication Summit held at Davos was attended by more than 450 professionals globally. We plan to launch Davos Communication Academy shortly. India has 3 Members in the Global Executive Board. India is the only country that has three members in the Global Executive Board.

Priya: You have been talking about political communication, with more focus to youngsters. We also have an initiative called Next Gen Political Leaders (NGPL) to groom young political leaders in India. How important is communication in political arena?

Maxim: This is the most important thing. It is very important for Politicians and Political advisors to be very good in communication and should take sensible advices to action. Earlier, when a politician gives an interview to a print media, it becomes one-way communication. Now with social media growing, every political statement appears online, hundred thousand persons give their opinions in minutes. It is two way communication, only in this way you can understand your people and get feedbacks. Politicians and their Advisors should be more careful when they reply and react on social media, especially in a country like India that has a huge population.

Priya: You are from Print Media. With the growth of internet and digital media, will print media survive?

Maxim: I spent around 20 years in print media. I was the Editor in chief for a big news paper. When I left the job and started my

business, it was the beginning of internet. In 1990's, when internet appeared, even before the social media, it was absolutely clear that print media would fade away. People used to disagree with me. I used to tell them that it was a reality. Especially after social media, print media would disappear, not because of bad journalism, but because of financial problems. Advertisers would like to advertise in social media, since they have targeted audience. Advertisers can also chose the target like gender, age group, location, etc. In the Print media, advertisers cannot get the exact number of readers who saw the advertisement. The Editors can give only the circulation information. First time in the history, media is measurable. In the social media, advertisers get the exact details of every reader and the impact is measurable exactly. Though Print media may have good journalism, Advertisers won't go there.

Priya: What is the responsibility of media in handling the emotions of the people during Covid situation. In the social media, many create panic and it is chaotic. How to bring social media in main stream?

Maxim: People trust social media. Fake news is read by more people than the genuine messages. People listen to a Taxi driver who writes in an interesting manner, than the Minister or any intelligent person who writes officially in a language most often not understood by people. There are millions of advantages and certain disadvantages with social media. The major challenge is the 'Fake news'. The Governments should have clear vision to handle the fake news. We should fight the 'fake news pandemic'. Another biggest disadvantage is the anonymous postings that social media platforms permit. If the users are transparent and ethical, social media can bring more benefit. Nowadays, platforms like face book, Twitter and LinkedIn are also fighting against fake news and that's a good development to curb fake news.

A century ago, when Henry Ford introduced Gasoline car, people commented that it would not survive for a long time. People then were using horse cart. With the gasoline car, they had to replace the cart with tyre, engine, gasoline, etc. They scared the engine

may blast. Hence they all felt that it would not survive. Today we don't ride horse carts, we drive automobile cars.

I compare this with social media. Lot of people criticize social media as dangerous that it generates fake news, destroy brands, spread lies, etc. Still it will survive. It has to be tamed.

Priya: We have seen you receiving the global awards with your women colleagues behind you. Was that a purposeful message? Your views on women in communication?

Maxim: My Company has 98% women employees. I do not look at the gender, education, nativity of the candidates for employment. When I interview the candidates, I only watch the 'Spark in the eyes'. That means his/her ambition to develop career, knowledge, work in a new company, etc. In Public Relations business, women make much better team than men. In my experience, I found women more ambitious, knowledgeable and consistent to show achievement. Women have more efficient communication skills.

Priya: What are your expectations from youngsters?

Maxim: It is difficult to define who is a youngster. These days, a teenager is much more capable than a 50 year old person. Speed of taking decision is crucial than to find whether someone is young or old. I have given three principles to my office, called 'Three S' viz. (1) Speed of taking decision (2) Simplicity and (3) Self confidence.

I always say, 'worst decision' is better than a 'no decision'. Every minute you need to take decision. You can correct your decision later. Speed of communication, speed of answering your emails and social media and speed of everything.

Simplicity means prioritise your tasks. Make it simple, like when you post something in social media, it should be short and clear. Readers should understand. All capable people should have self confidence. They should know what they should achieve and how to achieve.

Priya: Can you say something about International Communication Consultancy organization (ICCO) which you founded?

Maxim: It is the largest Public Relations Community in the world. I am in the Board for 13 years. I was the President. I am the Chair for International Growth now to bring more countries on board. This is a community of high level experts of more than 70 countries. The current President of ICCO is an Indian. We impose professional standards to all the members. There is a debate as to what will rule in future, whether Public Relations or Advertising or Digital. I say Public Relations will be the future as we are the masters of content creators and the best story tellers.

Priya: Is Accreditation important for communication professionals?

Maxim: It is being discussed for a long time, whether PR professionals need to be accredited like doctors and lawyers. I feel it is better to leave it to the market. Communication expert need not be accredited. Our clients have to accredit us. If the person or company does not possess sufficient knowledge or capability, they will be out of market. We should leave it to open market and to clients.

Priya: Will there be any accreditation board in future?

Maxim: I can expect. It has a huge market. We should see how it works and how our clients look at that. Clients can prefer non accredited persons and companies as well. Our business should be done carefully, as we can influence the society and media, we can't afford to do anything the wrong way.

Priya: You have started a college for communication studies. Tell us about this.

Maxim: Education is the base of our business. Same way, business is also the base for the education. It is a win win situation. Business is moving 100 miles per hour speed, whereas education is moving only 30 miles per hour. Problem is a big gap

between the practice and education. More practitioners should come to Universities and share their knowledge. Students also should come to business and get knowledge. Knowledge is found in the companies and not merely in the Universities.

Priya: During ABCI Award function, you promised to focus on India. Has there been any advancement?

Maxim: India is deeply in my heart. I got the Communicator of the decade award from ABCI. India can be useful for global community with her rich culture and expertise. I have visited India 2 or 3 times after receiving the award. I have spoken in some Universities. I have also invited Indian experts to our country. Our first meeting with Prime Point Foundation can bring us together. You can contact me through social media.

Priya: Your advice to Indian Professionals.

Maxim: Don't waste your time in unnecessary and stupid conversations. Be pragmatic. Communicate with proper people; learn proper lessons; be successful in proper way; be ethical and transparent. Everything will fall in place.

The full interview can be watched at

<https://youtu.be/t6e2Nk6hbww>

He can be reached through <https://www.facebook.com/maxbehar>

Source: June 2021 issue of PreSense

You Too Can Become a Mobile Journalist

Emergence of Mobile Journalism



With the emergence of technology, every person holding a smart phone can be a journalist and can create news content, which other mainline media may find it difficult. Mobile journalism means creating news content through a mobile using camera, mike, editing tools and delivering through social media platforms. That means the entire operation is done using a smart phone. Any person with a good smart phone can produce news or features.

In the Television Media, the channels engage their reporters at various centres and provide them with Camera and Live bag which are highly expensive. Though TV Media releases the news items immediately, the reporters do not have their choice of selecting the news content. They need to take permission from their Editors. If a citizen wants a news item to be covered in TV or Print media, he has to approach the Editors. In the case of Independent Mobile Journalist, he/she can decide the news content on the spot and create visual or audio and upload in their personal channels instantaneously. Thus, internet and Digital Media have changed the way we produce contents. It has led to the emergence of new

word 'MoJo', meaning Mobile Journalist. Although MoJo in English means full of energy.

Global trend

Presently, everybody uses Smart Phones and Social Media Platforms. According to the latest Reuter report, more than 60% of the users, especially youngsters access the information only through mobile devices. Further the report says that in 2013, mobile phones were contributing 27% as source of news. Now in 2021, it has gone up to 42%. On the other hand, in print media, the source of news which was at 47% in 2013 has come down to 16% in 2021, During the same time, in TV the contribution of source of news which was at 72% has come down to 52% now. Thus, source of news has come down in TV and Print media and has gone up in Social Media, all because of mobile usage across the globe.

Mobile journalism is growing globally including in India. After the Covid pandemic situation, mobile usage has gone up in large numbers. Social media profile is going to be the visiting card to everyone in future. Presently, awareness is slowly picking up. People are showing interest to learn more about mobile journalism. The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industries of India, estimates 869 million mobile users in India by 2022. That's around 84% of India's population.

Even the TV Channels have started engaging their reporters at different places and request them to send the news feeds of content directly through mobile devices and its applications. The reporters capture the events visually and upload



to the control room of the TV Channel. Sometimes, the visuals sent by the reporters are directly streamed live by the channels from the mobile. This has cut down the cost of hiring cameras and live bags. The reporters are given credit and compensation.

Some Independent Mobile Journalists like the author of this article, stream live interviews in the YouTube channels using mobile and live streaming software like 'Stream Yard' or 'Zoom'. They capture the visuals of the news content of their choice, say events, festivals, ceremonies, etc. through Mobile and edit the visuals, add voice over, text, etc. before uploading to their Social Media Platforms like YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc. The contents are delivered to multiple platforms. Audio podcasts are also created using mobile applications. KineMaster is one of the popular video editing software in Mobile and Anchor is the most popular Podcasting application in Mobile. Nowadays Podcasts are becoming very popular in their outreach to viewers and listeners.

Monetization

If the Independent Mobile Journalist can create interesting contents and upload in social media platforms like YouTube and Facebook, it can attract large number of subscribers. YouTube provides Advertisements, if the Channel crosses 4000 hours. Google will share the revenue with the owner of the channel. Also, the owner can insert advertisements manually and earn revenue.

Tools that are needed



Ten years ago, if anybody wanted to become a journalist, he/she had to complete a course in mass communication to seek employment. Today,

anybody can become a full time or part time mobile journalist. All that they need is a good Smart Phone with a good camera. An external collar mike and a Tripod can be used for better quality visuals and audio. Editing softwares are either free or nominally priced. For uploading the content, internet facility is needed. Now the readers can enjoy creating contents and uploading in their channels. While uploading the



contents, one has to follow the rules and the laws as applicable to that country.

By Hema Rakesh, Digital News Editor and TV Anchor

Hema Rakesh can be reached at cynthiahema@gmail.com

(Hema Rakesh is the Digital News Editor of Tamilthisai.com. With nearly 15 years of Media experience in both Television and digital media, she is one of the popular TV anchors and news presenters in leading Tamil channels. She hosts the events involving Prime Minister and Chief Ministers. She conducts training programme online for Mobile Journalism)

Source: August 2021 issue of PreSense

Trends in Media & Journalism: Traditional vs Digital



In a recent interview held with Dr K Ramachandra Murthy, Senior Journalist, and Ms Sneha Gore, Journalist turned Journalism Educator, the profession of journalism as evolved over the years, was discussed. The seasoned panellists shared their experiences and stories as journalists. We bring you a synopsis of the conversation.

The detailed interview can be watched in the following link:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tAEwwdGwmrk> .

Traditional Working Style

Traditionally, journalism was confined to the print media where the editor of the newspaper personally wrote the editorial, and there was a full-fledged team of reporters who filed news for the daily newspaper, which was released the following morning. Editors remained in the office from late morning till the early hours of the following day to oversee the publication of the newspaper. There was little time for socialising. Journalists of the earlier era were known for their fearlessness in reporting facts. The bold stand and reporting by at least some of the journalists during the Emergency Rule in India is still laudable.

Emerged Working Style

With the emergence of political influence on journalists, the neutrality in reporting was compromised, as journalists and later on even the editors, developed proximity with the politicians. Editorial writers took over the writing of editorials from the editors. The editor's presence in the office was till late evenings, after which many were found in the company of politicians. The current trend is that media houses are affiliated to political parties, so that news reporting is influenced and biased in their policies and outlook. The quality of writing and reporting took a beating. Media became divided on cash lines and political lines.

Traditional Fact-based Reporting vs Modern Breaking News-based Reporting

The traditional focus on facts over news has also changed to the current trend of news over facts, due to the emphasis on speed reporting. Speed reporting runs the risk of wrong reporting, to be apologised for, later – an unhealthy trend that adversely affects the credibility of the news provider. It also compromises the sacrosanctity of journalism and its discipline. This is a continuing trend as breaking news is mainly from Twitter, from where even the web editions of the print media source most of the breaking news. This compromise on fact-driven journalism to breaking news-driven journalism has necessitated the development of fact-checking training modules, such as the one initiated by Google News. During the traditional era of print media, this aspect of fact-checking was inherent in the profession. This is a trait that the journalists of today need to learn to develop – stand up for what is right and against what is wrong, for the social good. Today, social media heads in news-break, followed by the television, and print media being last in the order.

Who is a Journalist?



The identity of today's journalist has become complex. In the era of the print media, the distinction between the common man and the journalist was clear. The journalist then had access to news first and it was his job to bring it to the common man who could access it from the newspaper, the radio or the television. Today, this

distinction between the common man and the journalist has become unclear, with the democratisation of information that the Internet has brought about. Any blogger, Facebook user or smartphone user is a potential journalist since he can disseminate information. He can propagate fake news as is happening with Whatsapp. Therefore, any common man is a potential competitor for the journalist. Another matter of concern is how to identify what is news. It has become a challenge for the journalist to navigate along ideological lines about what is news, that is good or worthwhile for society.

Almost every social media user posts individualised viewpoints on a spectrum of topics on such platforms as Twitter and Whatsapp. Journalists too have become biased, reporting viewpoints in place of facts. Journalists are divided based on their political affiliations and not on ideologies. Neutrality is no longer practised. Earlier, news was facts and the editorial was a viewpoint but today, news itself is a viewpoint.

Future of Journalism

Undoubtedly, the future lies with social media. As against the traditional habit of reading one newspaper, today's reader accesses multiple platforms for news, especially from social media.

It is important for the journalist to remember that everyone, including governments and politicians, have both good and not-so-good sides to their behaviour. Not all do all bad, and not all do all good. Therefore, while reporting, it is important for the journalist to have a balanced assessment of what he is reporting in order to report facts and the truth. A journalist's personal opinion should not colour his approach to his profession, and he should not be influenced by bias. This approach of avoiding both the extreme ends of the spectrum while reporting, is a major challenge worldwide.

The Young Journalist

The young professionals in the journalistic arena are a pessimistic lot, mainly because of the kind of content they are exposed to, and consume. These contents are usually skewed and paints the world in colours of bias. These contents are accessed mainly from social media, as print media is almost lost in the midst of social media. Journalists can safeguard their reputation and their credibility through their balanced and unbiased reporting, adhering to facts and the truth. This is called media ethics.

Etiquette in Journalism

Aggression in journalism is acceptable, provided it is sensible and unbiased. It is commendable for acquiring facts, and pursuing with people to obtain the truth because it facilitates in getting to the crunch of the matter and the truth. However, there is a thin line between aggression and activism. Shouting guest speakers down on televised debates, for example, is far from aggressive journalism. It is poor media etiquette.

Media Policy and Monitoring

While there is a need for a media policy, the question is who will monitor them – the readers, the owners (of the media) or the government. It is difficult to monitor and moderate because of the democracy of social media. It is also important for the media policy to be constantly and regularly updated to accommodate changing trends. For example, the Over-The-Top (OTT) streaming media

service has recently been brought under the purview of the media policy, and this move is commendable. However, the media policy was last amended in 1995 when the Act was amended to include the cable TV network. Thereafter, there has been no significant amendment or change to keep in line with the changes that have evolved.

One could conclude that journalism has evolved over the years from a conventional, time-bound, limited-edition circulation of news to an open-sourced, real-time, virtual platform of information, often circulated with views. The current trend of journalism is here to stay and traditional journalists must keep pace with the change to stay afloat in the profession. The current journalists however, have much to learn, imbibe and practise in order to bring some credibility and quality to the form of reporting that is happening today.

by Susan Koshy, Editor-in-Chief

Source: Jan 2021 issue of PreSense

How to Become a Professional Anchor? An Exclusive interview with Hema Rakesh

With the phenomenal growth of TV Channels and YouTube Channels, suddenly there is a demand for professional anchors in the media industry. These channels hunt for anchors and pay good remuneration. In an exclusive interview with *PreSense*, the popular Tamil TV anchor *Hema Rakesh* explains the basic qualities that are needed to become an anchor. She has also shared some of her interesting experiences and the challenges she faced. She has served many leading Tamil Channels for nearly 10 years and her TV shows are very popular among the Tamil audience across the globe. Presently, she is conducting training on Mobile Journalism and for aspiring anchors. Excerpts:



PreSense: What made you to become a TV anchor?

Hema: Right from the school days, I have developed leadership and speaking skills. I was actively involved in various activities in my school and college days and used to take the initiative to lead. That gave me inspiration to join any TV channel as an anchor. I have served nearly 10 years as a TV anchor in leading channels and my shows were rated very high for their quality and contents.

PreSense: How do you assess the opportunities for anchors in the media market?

Hema: Three decades ago, we had only Doordarshan and All India Radio in the broadcasting segment. We had only limited anchors across the country. Now, we have hundreds of national and regional TV and FM channels, besides lakhs of YouTube channels providing content to audience. Digital media is growing day by day. During Covid time, it has grown rapidly. This has resulted in manifold increase in demand for professional anchors across the country.

PreSense: What are the basic qualities that are required for any person aspiring to be an anchor in Radio, TV and YouTube channels?

Hema: Any person aspiring to become an anchor should have the following three important basic qualities: First, he/she should have the command and fluency over the language, whether it is regional language or English. The audience should understand their pronunciation and the message clearly. Nowadays, aspiring people think that just talking stylishly is enough. This is totally wrong. They should speak in such a manner with proper modulation and communicate properly so that the audience understands them clearly. Secondly, clarity of thought is important. The anchor should first understand what he/she speaks before the mic. They should not use jargons and unwanted words hurting the sentiments of public or the guests. Thirdly, the body language of the anchor is very important, if he/she is on screen. The gestures, facial expression, dress, eye contact and posture are most important on camera. Though the audience of YouTube channels do not expect such high professional standards of TV anchors, it is always better that the anchor sets a good benchmark.

PreSense: What are the important aspects while interviewing Guests?

Hema: In TV channels, anchors interview the Guests on different domains like education, politics, agriculture, service, industry, entertainment, etc. Nowadays, all the TV channels go for live interviews for many of their shows, to attract viewers. I have already indicated three important basic qualities required for the anchors. Besides, when the anchor interviews a Guest, he/she should do homework about the focus of the interview, background and the expertise of the Guest, Government and Industry guidelines, if any for the subject, etc. The anchor has to ask brilliant questions to get the maximum information out of the Guest.

The anchor should not confront the Guest on camera, if it is a non-political interview. Anchor should not expect the Guest to tell the answer what he/she wants. Guest should have the freedom to air his views. On the contrary, in the case of political interviews, the

anchor can confront with the Guest on some issues if he/she has authoritative information.

Notwithstanding this, the anchor should never hurt the feelings of the Guest. Generally, audience is highly sensitive about language, caste, religion, nation, etc. Anchor should be careful while dealing with such sensitive matters, so that no group is hurt by the conversation. Wrong handling may lead to public turmoil and legal problems.

Unless the anchor prepares beforehand, he/she cannot bring out the best out of the Guest within the stipulated time.

PreSense: What are the challenges in anchoring?

Hema: I have done independent shows live when I was in a leading Tamil channel. My shows were highly popular. I had one show called "Ullathu Ullapadiye" (meaning As is). I conducted this show daily for nearly 3 years. We used to take up problems of the people across Tamil Nadu. I used to interact live with reporters in the field and also with the local people live on the various issues. The problems of the people should be brought out within the stipulated 25 minutes. I used to spend nearly three hours on preparation before the show. I used to talk to reporters beforehand to understand the problems in the area and also with few local people identified by the reporter. I used graphics and script to highlight the problems. This was one of the highly rated shows in Tamil Nadu.

The challenge is that sometimes, the guests in the field may not turn up on time due to traffic or any other reason. Before the camera, they may become nervous and may not be able to come out with their problems when the show was live. In such cases, I used to manage the gap with already prepared graphics and narration without the audience getting to know of the problems at our end. The anchor should have presence of mind when he/she is on live.

PreSense: Can you share some of your experiences in Breaking News?

Hema: Every channel is interested in breaking any national or regional happenings to their audience first. There is a tough competition among the TV channels. I was always known as 'Breaking News Anchor' in my channel. Whenever some serious breaking news developed, I was called to run the show. This was because, I was keeping myself updated with all subjects, including current affairs and could manage any difficult situation smoothly. Once, I was breaking the news of fire in Coimbatore. I was the first to break the news even before the fire engines reached the spot. Generally, I was conversant with the procedures when the fire breaks out. Three departments viz. Fire, Revenue and Police are involved in such situations. Our reporter reached the spot only 10 minutes later to provide visuals. In the meanwhile, I started announcing that fire engines were on the way. I did not want to create panic among the people. Since it was a prominent place, usually crowd gathers. Hence, even before Police taking control, I appealed to the general public not to crowd the area and to cooperate with the Government officials. My handling the situation for 10 minutes before the camera and other fire engines arrived, helped the authorities to keep the situation under control. Our Channel was appreciated for the professional handling of the situation without creating panic.

In another thrilling incident, one young person climbed up the Mobile Tower and threatened to commit suicide near Erode. Even before the Police arrived, our reporter connected the person on the mobile tower over phone and put him through on live. I started negotiating with him to come down and assured him to resolve all his problems on behalf of our channel. The entire conversation was telecast live through our channel. Finally, after 25 minutes, he agreed to come down based on my assurance. With the help of Police, he was brought down and his problems were resolved. In such situations, the anchor should not get emotional and he/she should handle the situation calmly with presence of mind. The anchor should not create panic among the public also. The anchors get new exciting experiences day in and day out.

PreSense: Which is the toughest for an anchor to handle a programme or event live?

Hema: Though all the shows involving entertainment, politics, economy, education, etc need preparation and homework, generally handling the funeral of VVIPs live is very challenging. I have anchored 13 such live programmes, covering the funeral of Dr Jayalalitha, Dr Karunanidhi, Bal Thackery, Director K Balachandar, Dr Abdul Kalam, Vajpayee and popular actor Manorama and others. They were all mass leaders with great following. During the show, the facial expression is very important. The anchor cannot even show a smiling face during the entire show. For a person like me who is always known for 'ever smiling' face, it used to be very challenging. When Dr Karunanidhi, Former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu passed away, I was on camera for 27 hours continuously, taking some break for food and rest room. Since many national and international personalities visited to pay homage, I was asked by the Channel to handle this show. In the mid-night I had to take the interviews with foreign diplomats who visited India to pay homage to the departed leader. During such time, the audience will be more than the normal time. Even a small mistake committed will have a serious impact on the channel.

PreSense: Any specific advice to aspiring anchors?

Hema: Now, due to the growth of TV channels, FM's and YouTube channels, there are more opportunities for professional anchors. The aspiring anchors should develop the language skills in their mother tongue and in English. They should always update their knowledge. They should also watch the programmes anchored by other prominent anchors and learn from them. Then only they can stand out among the crowd. It is only a myth that youngsters only can anchor the shows. In many of the national and international channels, experienced anchors above the age group of 40 only handle the important shows. Hence, only talents and attitude are important and not the age.

Hema Rakesh can be reached at: hemarakeshanchor@gmail.com
(Interview was recorded by Nandini Alagar of our Editorial team over phone) – Source: October 2021 edition of PreSense

Role of Media in Indian Freedom Struggle

In the present days, within few seconds, information is passed on globally with technology and media tools. During the freedom struggle, such facilities were not available. Even the Radio was owned by the Government. In spite of all the constraints, the messages were distributed across the country with the support of various print media and films, braving the rules by the British regime.

It carried the fervor of patriotism and freedom to all the four corners of the country. A person in southernmost tip of India was able to know the thoughts of great leaders of the freedom movement in north India through the newspapers only. Ironically the English language was a uniting factor behind the people joining the freedom movement.

Regional and English Newspapers



An Irishman James Augustus Hickey started in Calcutta what is perceived as first Asian and Indian Newspaper in January 1780. He boldly exposed the misdeeds of East India Officials and was even jailed for it. Thus Hicky's Gazette in tabloid form

became the first English newspaper published in India to write against British tyranny.

There were also three contemporary newspapers of that period namely Doorbeen, Samachar Sudhavarashan and Sultan-ul-Akbar that were suppressed for their anti-British stance. The English newspapers like Hindustan Times, The Times of India, The Statesman, The Hindu and The Indian Express carried the views of the leaders of Freedom movement leaders to all parts of the country. The regional language newspapers like Anand Bazar Patrika, Mathrubhoomi, Dinamani, Swadesamitran also spread the freedom movement in their respective regions.

Gandhiji effectively used the newspapers like Navjivan and Young India to spread his messages on Indian freedom. Nethaji Subhas Chandra Bose launched a radio in March 1942 named Azad Hind Radio (Freedom for India) from Germany to enthuse Indian people to fight for their country's independence. In 1821 itself Raj Ram Mohan Roy used his newspaper Sambad Kaumudi to propagate socialist reforms and independence fervor. He is for all purposes founder of Indian nationalist press.

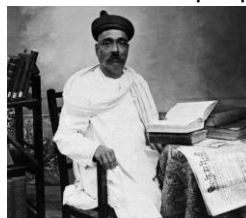


**Swadesa Mitran
Masthead**

G. Subramania Iyer founded the nationalist English newspaper The Hindu in 1878 to enthuse Indian populace to participate intensely in independence movement. He also founded *Swadesamitran* (meaning friend of self-rule) in Tamil language in 1891 to trigger national spirit among the Tamilians. The great nationalists like Mahakavi Bharathiar and VVS Iyer were Editors and wrote many

inspiring articles in the newspaper to kindle the freedom spirit among masses. Similarly Malayalam newspaper Mathrubhoomi started in March 1923 spread the message of nationalism in Kerala and south India. Ramnath Goenka started The Indian Express in 1936. He relentlessly and openly challenged the British rule through his paper. Jawaharlal Nehru founded the English newspaper National Herald and used it to propagate the Independence spirit.

Lokmanya Tilak founded two newspapers Kesari and Maharatta in English (both in January 1881) to spread dissent against British regime. Tilak always believed that journalism, when properly channeled, has the capacity to shape public resolve. He strongly



**Lok Manya Tilak and his
newspaper Kesari**

criticized the negligence of

Britain in tackling famine, drought, starvation deaths and epidemics like Plague which claimed many lives. He even conducted the Ganesh Chaturthi festival and Shivaji Maharaj festival and used them to arouse nationalism among people.



The Svadesabhimani

A bold journalist Sishir Kumar Ghosh shook the foundation of British Empire in India through his newspaper Amrita Bazar Patrika. He actively campaigned against exploitation of the Indian peasants by forcing them to do Indigo cultivation. Malayalam publication The Svadesabhimani was very

critical of British rule in India. Its editor Ramakrishna Pillai wrote a number of articles in the newspaper supporting freedom struggle. The newspaper was confiscated and Ramakrishna Pillai was deported by British in 1910. Another prominent pro-independence leader Madan Mohan Malaviya started English daily The Leader along with Motilal Nehru. He published many of Mahatma Gandhiji's works and he also set a benchmark for article writing in newspapers.

Role of radio in covering Indian freedom struggle:



Underground Radio Station set up by Usha Mehta and others

Indian newspapers were gagged by stringent laws like Sedition Laws, Rowlatt Act and Vernacular Press Act enforced by the British Government. To negate this in 1942, an underground radio station known as Congress Radio was started by Usha Mehta, Ram Manohar Lohia, Sucheta Kriplani and others to propagate independence movement with the tacit blessings from Congress Party

which was leading the freedom struggle. It broadcast news reports and talks by prominent leaders on need for India's independence. Many protests for the sake of Indian Independence were also broadcast to remote corners of the country. Usha Mehta

thundered: "When newspapers and news were banned, our transmitter helps in great deal in spreading and sustaining the freedom spirit by conveying the public with facts of happenings." People gathered in large numbers around the radio to hear the broadcast even in rural areas that boldly broadcast against British rule and the plunder of Indian assets by the British Raj.

Role of Entertainment Media (films) in freedom struggle

In 1921, Bhakt Vidur, a silent movie was banned by British for displaying Indian topi (cap) and Chakra. Many films produced and released during the freedom struggle explicitly carried nationalist sentiments. Hindi films like Apna Ghar, Naya Tarana, Amar Joti, had lyrics that supported independence movement but escaped censor as British did not know Hindi.

Thyaga Bhoomi, a Tamil film is a pointer in this direction. It was directed by K Subramanyam and lead actors were M.S.Subbulakshmi and Papanasam Sivan. The film was released in theatres in May 1939. It was



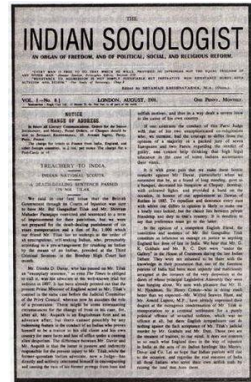
A scene from Thyaga Bhoomi

running to packed houses for weeks on. The film depicted people participating in protests against British rule. It also had a song praising Gandhiji. This made the Britishers uncomfortable. The film was banned after successfully running for more than 20 weeks. This was the first time in film's history that a film was banned after its release. The fans did not like the ban. Free shows were conducted in a theatre by Director Subramanyam for 24 hours before the ban order was issued. People thronged the theatre en masse and kept the police from entering the theatre.

Role of Media published from foreign soil

The Indians in Britain were not lagging behind in support for Indian freedom struggle. Shyamji Krishna Varma's started The Indian Sociologist newspaper in 1905 and published from London in the initial days and later from Paris. This newspaper propagated anti-colonial opinions and views.

The woman freedom fighter Bikaji Cam a was deported to Paris. She did not remain silent there. She in association with Munchers Shah Burjorji Godrej, Rewa Bhai Rana published many literatures encouraging rebellion in India that included a song Bande Mataram and an article Madan's Talwar in response to the execution of freedom fighter Madan Lal Dhingra. She also sent weekly magazines extolling freedom struggle to many freedom fighters in India. She also widely travelled in United States of America, bringing to their knowledge the freedom struggle in India through her talks and literature.



Sep 1908 edition
published from

Conclusion

The Print Media, Radio and Movies imbibed political awareness among Indians that led to strengthening of Indian independence movement. They were not run for the sake of profit but to propagate freedom spirit among Indians. The impact of the newspapers extended well beyond cities and towns and percolated down even to villages, where it was common sight for one literate person reading the news to ten and more of the villagers. This led to viral spread of nationalism throughout India. No wonder, the media is considered as backbone of freedom movement. The media thus played a major role in spreading the independence movement far and wide and sustaining it in this vast country called India.

This quote by the former President of India, Pranab Mukherjee clearly surmises the role of media in freedom struggle: "The history of journalism in India is closely linked to the history of our freedom struggle".

By Ramesh Sundaram, Consulting Editor

Source: August 2022 edition of PreSense

Media Industry Needs Rules and Regulations – B K Karuna

In an exclusive conversation with Prime Point Srinivasan, Mg. Editor of PreSense, Rajayogi B K Karuna, Chairperson of Media Wing of Brahmakumaris emphasized the need for rules and regulations for the media industry, in the light of the technological growth. He felt that that media in India is taking sides and partial. He wanted the media to work for the welfare of the people. Excerpts:



Now that you have successfully completed 26th National Media Conference at Abu Road, can you say something about the conference. How many people

attended?

Every year, we used to conduct two conferences for media persons. Due to corona, we did not conduct any conference for three years. This year, we are organising only one conference. More than 1800 media persons from all over India and Nepal participated. Everybody enjoyed this conference, as they were away from the routine media tension. They got energized well and they will go back with more energy to do their best. During these days, all the media persons had sufficient time to discuss about what they were doing and what they should do in future. During the conference, we wanted that the media should guide all the other pillars of democracy to create a vibrant Bharath. Our Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi always want that India should become the 'Vishwa Guru' of the world. We believe that this starts from self.

After the Media Conference, you have passed certain resolutions. Can you briefly mention about them?

We wanted to create an awareness among media persons that we are moving towards destruction due to conflicts. We want to create

awareness about Vasudhaiva Kudumbakam, which means that the entire world is one family. We want all people should follow three principles (1) we are all children of God, (2) we all belong to one family and (3) we all play our part in the world, which is called 'karma' or action. We need to do only positive things, which can give happiness to others, which we will also get back in return. We call this year as 'Karuna and Daya' for practice. These are all the resolutions we passed.

We see lot of changes in the technology. 5G is also coming shortly. How do you see the future of Media in 5 to 10 years?

Originally, we passed on the knowledge from one person to another person. Slowly it changed as Teacher and many Students. Thousands of centers got opened. Now digital world has started. Now, people realise that they can reach any number of people across the world through Internet. However, we started preferring eye contact. But now new technologies like holography, 3D and 4D etc. provide realistic environment. 5G is also coming up now in India. The digital connectivity is fast reaching villages through fibre optics. 5G will be through land that is fibre optics. This will save lot of money and avoid using satellite. Digital facility has changed the way of communication. Now all the information is available on the internet. For example, all the court judgments are available in our own mobile. Information is available on palm. Though our organisation is an international one, we feel that we are together, due to digital tools. Because of digital, media is able to transmit the news immediately. Recently, during cloud burst, many lives were saved due to quick digital communication. Artificial intelligence and robots are also playing significant role. Digital is going to change the world.

Now print media is suffering. Digital media is growing. Media is the only industry without any policy and regulations. Do you suggest Media Policy in the new environment. You have even included it in your resolutions.

Media is always considered as the fourth pillar in the governance of any country. Still Media does not have proper accreditation or recognition like other three pillars viz. Legislature, Executive and Judiciary. In view of this, Media always does what they want.

Media is also blamed for being partial and taking sides. Media freedom provided in the Constitution is also not respected. Media industry also should have rules and regulations like other industries. Media should assure that they are not partial and they are working for the welfare of the people and the country.

Any final message to media persons?

Media should work for the welfare of the world keeping in mind 'Vasudhaiva Kudumbakam' and 'Sarve Jana Sukhino Bhavanthu'. The whole world belongs to one God, who has given us the most beautiful world. We should bring back the original world that God has given to us.

Please watch his full interview

<https://youtu.be/GT5VVZFynq8>

Source: Sep 2022 issue of PreSense

OTT Platform Emerges as the Next Generation Content Provider



What is an OTT Platform?

Over-the-top platform (OTT) is a platform that gives the users a variety of options to stream the video content in various devices in comparison with the dedicated devices like cable operators, satellite channels that are fixed only to TV or movies that can be watched only in theatres.

OTT bypasses the cable and broadcasting platforms which traditionally act as a controller for video broadcasting by using the internet.

This ease of use in various electronic devices like phone, tablets, TV, projectors and firesticks and the wide variety of content the user can pick from, has made the OTT platforms very popular.

When was it started?

The term OTT was heard in India through BigFlix, a creation of Reliance in the year 2008. It took nearly a decade for the OTT space to rule the media industry. Between 2008 and 2016, the OTT platform was in its experimental phase telecasting IPL games and operating in a hybrid model giving access to both live TV and on-demand content.

Having the flexibility and the only factor that is required to access the content being high speed reliable internet, OTT has become the go to option to consume desired content.

What are the available Revenue Models ?

India's OTT market is at \$3 Billion for 2022 and is expected to more than double and reach over \$7 billion by 2027.

the common revenue models adopted by these money-making giants are :

- SVOD - Subscription Video on Demand, where users pay a monthly subscription fee
- AVOD - Advertising Video on Demand, where users don't pay a subscription fee rather, they watch Advertisements in the middle of the video similar to the TV commercials aired in satellite channels.
- Hybrid - This is a combination of both SVOD & AVOD where the user is charged a minimum subscription fee and also watches limited ads. Law of averages works best in this model.
- 4.TVOD - Transaction Video on Demand works in a "Pay per view" model where the users pay money to watch a particular content which works similar to purchasing tickets in a movie theatre to watch the film.

Apart from placing content in the OTT platforms, the players have started producing their original content which is becoming huge hit in the market and making great money.

What are the disadvantages?

The OTT platform has broken language barriers and given users the freedom to watch International content as well as a huge gold mine for content creators to create more originals in their own language without having to compromise the depth in emotions or the gravity of feelings that is contained in their native languages. Though we speak about various positives, nothing can be so good to be true in this world. Even OTT is not an exception and comes with its own set of limitations:

- For the people who don't have a stable internet connection, enjoying the content in OTT platforms is a challenge.
- For the very same reason that the OTT platform is celebrated for - the unlimited choice of content, OTT platforms become addictive to users who spend a very significant amount of time in watching content which affects their productivity, makes them sedentary resulting in lifestyle disorders and posture and eye strains.
- Also, binge watching, a term referred to prolonged watching of content has resulted in poorer sleep quality as a result leading to fatigue, insomnia, productivity issues, on ongoing prolonged exposure to TV.
- There is a negative impact in confidence levels when one misses out the popular series being discussed by all. The FOMO - Fear of Missing Out is another reason giving peer pressure and anxiety to people which has made watching content less enjoyable than before.
- Cyber attackers find it easy to collect personal information and bank details of users who are not using trusted platforms. Security is a major issue if the user is not vigilant.
- OTT platforms operate independently and are not following governmental policies. The lack of censorship and the fact that anyone can watch any content makes it a bit

While we mentioned a whole heap of disadvantages first, it will be interesting for the readers to note the **possible benefits** out of the platform too.

- With the exposure to global content, users from around the globe develop respect and tolerance towards other cultures and languages. There is harmony among global communities which definitely drives greater collaborations and higher positive outcomes.

- People have started learning various languages making them multilingual, a very important skill for survival in travel and also, a brain activator helping reverse brain age and Alzheimer.
- The creativity knows no bounds and the OTT platform has helped thousands of content creators to express their writings and their imaginations at the finest possible levels.
- Youngsters have started pursuing content creation and the creative arts as their mainstream profession with confidence thanks to the advent of the Internet, which was not the case a decade ago.
- With great novels being cinematographed and released in OTT platforms as episodes, the OTT has instilled hope in many writers to pursue their career in creative writing.

According to SBI Research, the over-the-top or OTT market is expected to reach Rs 11,944 crore by 2023, up from Rs 2,590 crore in 2018, logging in a compound annual growth of 36 per cent . While every single thing comes with its own pros and cons, it's up to the users to be wise in choosing what's best for one and being mindful is the only way out of any problems that may arise.

What is required to start an OTT Platform?

Everything starts with a plan and a clear roadmap on what the platform will contain.

- The content is the King and the OTT platform needs to have specific genres so that the viewers know what to expect from it.
- The crucial part is deciding the right OTT platform provider. The role of the provider is to host live and on-demand content that is broadcast over the internet.
- Selecting the monetization methods will define how the users view the content from the platform.
- Marketing and promotion are the key to making the OTT platform known.

- Social media integrations and User Interface (UI) to help easy navigation followed by the data analytics is the major scale up activity.

Being the diverse culture that it is, and also possessing a large crowd that is eager for entertainment, there are approximately 40 OTT platforms in India.

(The author of this article Sukruti Narayanan, based at Sydney, Australia is a Director in charge of Public Relations and Business growth in the leading OTT platforms MeTV and MeWorld. She is an engineer with specialisation in Robotics. She is the Student Board leader at the Legal Professions Admission Board, Australia. She is the Country Chair of Start-up ecosystem of G100 – Mission Million, an initiative of the Women Economic Forum.)

By Sukruti Narayanan, Director, MeTV, Australia

Source: Sep 2022 issue of PreSense

Beware and Be Aware of Fake News in the Social Media

With the estimated 650 million plus internet users in India and with the growth of technology like 5G, the credibility of the information that we receive is also under threat. India is the largest user base for platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube and Instagram. The Annual Search India Report of Google indicates that 2 in 3 Google searches are coming from the locations outside the 5 metros. It also reveals that local language searches are increasing every year.



Induja Raghunathan

The activities of social media platforms are mindboggling. 500 million blogs are written every day; 500 hours of videos are uploaded on YouTube every minute; 340 million photos are uploaded in Facebook daily; 500 million persons use Instagram stories daily; 6000 tweets are posted on Twitter every second.

This has resulted in the dissemination of fake or false information through text messages, images and videos on large scale. This has become a great challenge for the users and to Police authorities. In an exclusive interview with Ramesh Sundaram, Consulting Editor of *PreSense*, Induja Raghunathan, a Senior Journalist with more than two decades of experience in print, television and digital media explains the fake news and fact checking concepts. Induja is also a certified trainer on this subject. She is one of the very few experts in India to identify the fake news. *Excerpts:*

What is Fake news?

Fake news is not the correct term. Common man understands only this term. It is a combination of variety of false information. We get information from different sources online.

Fake news is a poorly defined term that combines nine varieties of false information. They are: (1) Mis-information (2) Dis-information (3) Unscientific claims (4) Rumours (5) False context (6) Imposter content (7) Manipulated content (8) Satire or parody and (9) propaganda.

Common man comes across mis-information and dis-information daily.

Misinformation is the information that is false, but the person who is disseminating it believes that it is true.

Disinformation is the information that is false, and the person who is disseminating it knows it is false. It is a deliberate, intentional lie. The person who disseminates this may have a political or personal hidden agenda. For example, you may be aware during Covid pandemic, many people collected money creating sympathy using the names of reliable persons.

Psychologically, people tend to believe fake news often without verification. There are many instances, the fake news has cost lives (eg.: lynching, false information about child kidnappers, etc.). Women harassment happens with fake news. Even senior politicians are not spared.

How a common man can identify the fake news?

Develop critical thinking. *PAY ATTENTION, OBSERVE, because attention is the gateway to mind.* There are no laws in India, other than cyber laws to curb this menace. If any information comes to you, please do not believe immediately. Many people tend to forward such fake messages immediately out of *Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)* without verification. Most of the WhatsApp groups are flooded with such fake 'forwarded' messages. Such messages consume the data and the service provider gets the benefit.



Some people create such false content and circulate it with a specific agenda. You may remember that during corona time, many false messages were circulated prescribing medicines. With

good intention many people forwarded these to others without knowing the implications.

Before further forwarding such messages, every person should think as to (1) why such message is received (2) is the message true and (3) is it needed to forward further.

For example, if a message is received informing that the schools would be closed next day, before forwarding, the receiver can take a few minutes by searching in the google. To get the correct results, put the keywords under double quote (") and using the 'tools' button, filter the duration, like 24 hours, one week, etc. If mainline or traditional media sites carry this information, then we can believe.

For photo or image verification, you can google image search with key words in double quote ("). Or you can do 'Reverse Image Search' to verify the authenticity of any image. Right click the image and click on 'Search image with Google Lens'. You can detect if any picture is morphed or not.

For example, in 2015, a picture was circulated with Kamala Harris, Vice President of USA, in traditional South Indian saree. Through reverse image search, it was found out to be a morphed one.

There are some advanced fake news verification sites like Alt news, AFP Fast Check, Boom live, First Check, etc. Leading media houses like India Today, NDTV, etc. have their own 'Fact Checking Team', in their Editorial desk. They use advanced tools to detect the fake information, images and videos.

Basic fake images can be found out through 'reverse image search', but 'deep fakes' need advanced tools for verification.

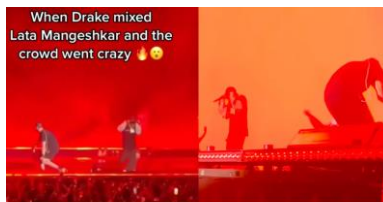


Courtesy: Alt News

Video verification - An extension tool 'Invid' can be installed in Chrome or Firefox browser. If you copy and paste the URL of the

subject video, it will analyse frame by frame and detect if there is any fake portion of the video.

Popular Canadian rapper Drake and American rapper Lil Wayne had their stage performance at Toronto in August 2022. A video that was uploaded in Instagram had a brief clip of remixed version of late Lata Mangeshkar's iconic song, *Didi Tera Dewar Deewana*. It attracted more



Courtesy: Boom Live

than 2 million viewers immediately. This posting went viral, with exciting comments hailing Canadian rappers singing Indian song. Even mainline channels carried this video. Later, BOOM was able to confirm that the song playing in the background was 'The Motto', sung by Drake and Lil Wayne, and not 'Didi Tera Dewar Deewana'. for more details about this story, visit

<https://tinyurl.com/fakevideo1>

What is the responsibility of the common man, if he comes across fake message, image or video?

Generally traditional media like print and television have different layers of 'gate keeping' for editing and verification, before they release the information. If people find that the information is fake or wrong in the traditional media, they can seek legal remedy and/or report to the concerned authorities concerned.

In the social media, information is disseminated by individuals without any 'gate-keeping' or verification. Common man cannot detect who emanates a fake information. The Social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp will share the information only with the Government Authorities like Courts and Police. Since there is no accountability in the social media, people should be more careful while trusting and consuming the information passed through social media.

The affected people can approach the cybercrime police for necessary action.

What message you want to convey to the Government to curb this menace?

There are no strong laws in India to address this issue, other than the cyber laws. With the technological growth, the fake news

menace will be haunting the society more in future. Hence, the Government should strictly enforce discipline among the social media platforms to respond to the Government Authorities, whenever complaints are made.

'Information literacy' is more required than 'fact-checking' to curb this menace. This means, before spreading the false information, the users of social media should think for a while before forwarding to others. The Government should also ensure that more awareness is created among the internet users and media persons about 'information literacy'.

Persons in higher position, celebrities and influencers should be more careful while sharing or forwarding any information in the social media, as this may be trusted by all his/her followers and the society.

By Ramesh Sundaram, Consulting Editor
Source: Nov 2022 issue of PreSense

New Guidelines on Fake News – PIB Fact Checking – What is Perceived and What is Not Understood?

On 6th April 2023, Government of India notified the “Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Amendment Rules, 2023”. Among other things, this notification and guidelines attempt to curb the misinformation and fake news that are being spread through the Digital media. The Government is setting up a ‘Fact Checking Unit’ under Press Information Bureau (PIB) to verify all the information relating to Central Government Ministries and PSUs. The notification is available in this link for download.

<https://tinyurl.com/meity2023>

Reaction from the Media organisations

Within few hours of this notification, some media organisations issued Press Releases demanding ‘withdrawal’ of this notification on the ground that the Government may use this to censor the information thereby curbing the ‘freedom of expression’ provided under Article 19 of the Constitution. They also described this as ‘Draconian’ and they accused the Government of trying to create a ‘chilling effect’. This Press Release was widely shared in various social media and messaging platforms like WhatsApp and Telegram. Leading dailies like The Hindu carried Editorial condemning these guidelines.

PreSense contacted many people who condemned the guidelines and asked them which were the clauses that could affect freedom of expression and draconian in nature. Unfortunately, none of the people had read the guidelines fully and simply forwarded those messages seeking withdrawal of the notification. Sadly, even the senior media persons simply forwarded such messages without knowing the content of the guidelines. PreSense decided to run this Cover Story to remove the wrong impressions and to emphasize the need for proper regulations to curb fake news, in consultation with stakeholders..

Fake News menace

Misinformation, false news and fake news have been causing menace throughout the world and creating disturbances in the society. PreSense for the past few years has been writing editorials requesting the Government to formulate proper 'Regulations' to curb the false news and fake news, in consultation with stakeholders. Even the Supreme Court of India has several times advised the Government to bring in proper regulations. Whenever the Central Government attempts to bring some rules, immediately, the 'fighters of freedom of expression' surface and make a huge noise and try to stop the rules. They even go to the High Courts or Supreme Court challenging the rules.



These activists should keep in mind that their reaction, knowingly or unknowingly help the criminals and anti-social elements to spread false news and fake news without any fear. Fake news and False news are short-lived and they create more damages within short time, before they are identified. Indian Constitution does not provide 'freedom of speech and expression' to people to spread false news and fake news. Also there is no special privilege for 'media' under 'freedom of speech' in the Indian Constitution. Media (traditional and social media) enjoy the same privileges and rights like any other citizen of this country. There is no absolute freedom to anybody, including media under Indian Constitution.

Removal of 66A – A case study



Section 66A of the Information Technology Act 2000 prescribed three years imprisonment to any person who sends out 'messages' (SMS or mail) using computer device causing 'annoyance' or 'grossly offensive'. Some activists went to Supreme Court challenging this Section 66A as unconstitutional violating the provisions of fundamental right of 'freedom of speech' given under Article 19(1). This Section 66A

related only to messages communicated to individuals and not published in the social media or website. In the Shreya Singhal vs. Union of India case, Supreme Court struck down in 2015 this section 66A as unconstitutional. Many media and activists hailed this judgement as 'second freedom'. At that time, PreSense and few other Cyber Law experts cautioned that the judgement would open up risk to women in this country in future.

In a similar case for the same section in UK, their Court advised the Government to frame the rules for clarity and retained the section. But in India, the section 66A was completely struck down. Though the Government promised to bring in a new Section to safeguard women victims, till date nothing has been done.

Till now, after the removal of Section 66A, there is no provision in the Indian law to punish any person, who sends out annoying or offensive messages through computer devices (SMS or email) to other persons, including ladies and create disturbance. Now, many ladies are complaining that Police is not taking action against those people who torture them through offensive messages.

Removal of Section 66A has given freedom to wrong persons to send out offensive and annoying messages. We are quoting this incident to establish that any knee-jerk reaction in the name of protecting 'freedom of speech' without understanding the implications of the guidelines or rules may help only criminals and anti-social elements who are interested in creating disturbance in the society. Those who are fighting for 'freedom of speech' should fight for the safety of the innocent people in the cyber space and not for the wrong persons who create disturbance in the society.

Today the ladies are left unprotected in the cyber space after the removal of 66A. We have not seen any organisation fighting for fundamental rights of women victims by taking up with the Government for their protection.

Objections for the new Guidelines

The Senior Journalists have appealed to the Government to withdraw the notification mainly on the two grounds.

1. determination of fake news cannot be in the sole hands of the government and will result in the censorship of the press.
2. violation of Fundamental Right to freedom of speech

Though the Government of India has issued notification, neither the MIB (Ministry of Information and Broadcasting) or MeitY (Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology) have organized any discussions online or offline to get the views of various stakeholders or explain the importance of these guidelines. They have left the guidelines to be interpreted by the people as they wanted. Even when the Senior journalists issued statement showing their concern, these two Ministries have not taken seriously to explain and remove the apprehension. When PreSense attempted to reach out to some officials for getting first-hand information, they did not respond. Notwithstanding this, PreSense spoke to some experts.



Naa. Vijayashankar, Bengaluru based Cyber Law expert says, “It is unfortunate that a speculative narrative is being built and is being propagated by vested interests and we need the public to realize that these views are biased and need to be rejected.” According to him that there are more than 30 Fact Checking Websites operating in the Private Sector and the PIB Fact Checking Unit verifies the false news and fake news information relating to Government of India and connected PSUs. Even a general public can refer any information to them for verification. If PIB, after verification, found the information to be false, only flag the posting. In a way, this helps the viewers to be cautious about the information. PIB does not have any authority to order removal of the content. If PIB goes wrong, they can be questioned in the Parliament.

If any content is flagged by PIB as fake or false, the intermediary has to take note of the caution and with ‘due diligence’, they have to take decision. The intermediary (the platforms like Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, etc.) have the right to remove the



content if they also find it fake or false or continue the content. After the flagging by PIB, the intermediary may lose 'safe harbour' protection under Section 79 of the Information Technology Act. If any aggrieved person goes to Court for remedy, and if the content is found to be fake or false, the Court may hold the intermediary also liable.

"According to *Shreya Singhal vs. Union of India* judgement (2015), Supreme Court has upheld the Section 79. According to the Judgement, contents can be ordered to be removed only by (1) Competent Court and (2) the Authority appointed under Section 69A of the IT Act. In view of this, the apprehension that PIB's Fact Checking Unit can order removal of the content or leading to censorship is highly misleading", Naa. Vijayashankar added. "Also, nobody has the right to spread fake news, misinformation or false news through digital media. Freedom of speech and expression provided in the Constitution does not apply to spreading wrong information. Hence, the second apprehension is also not based on facts", Naa Vijayashankar added.



According to Swaminathan Iyer from Singapore, a digital media expert, who has held high positions in various platforms in Asia Pacific Region said, "Every country has its own regulations. Australia, UK, Singapore has rules to remove the contents which are misleading or fake news. China is the strictest of the lot. With the emergence of Artificial Intelligence, the world would be facing more risk of fake news and false news. Every Government and every platform are facing this problem globally. When the technology grows, the law and regulations are also framed. They are getting improved based on the experience in consultation with stakeholders."

Vinoth Poovalingam, CEO, Hocalwire, who provides technology support to various digital media organisations, said that

regulations were needed to curb fake news. "Presently, when a fake news is found, the author removes the content. There is no trace of the author having put up the wrong content. But in print media, if a wrong news gets published, the Editor publishes an apology. Same way, in the digital media also, fake news content should remain in the site with flagged 'false news mark' and the author should be forced to apologise", Vinoth Poovalingam added.

Digital Media Ethics Code

In 2021, Digital Media Ethics Code was given to address the grievances of aggrieved persons. Three levels of regulations have been prescribed. (a) Level I - Self-regulation by the publishers; (b) Level II - Self-regulation by the self-regulating bodies of the publishers; (c) Level III - Oversight mechanism by the Central Government.

It suggested a self-regulatory body of the Industry and Grievances Appellate Committee. Any member of the public can put up a complaint for redressal. The Government may now review the current position as to how it works and take remedial measures to improve the system.

Conclusion

When the Technology evolves, correspondingly regulations and law also should evolve to protect innocent people and to punish criminals. 'No regulation regime' will lead us nowhere. It would help only wrong people.

Senior Journalists and activists should understand the ground reality and provide valuable suggestions to the Government to tackle the challenges in future, instead of demanding 'no regulation' regime in the name of 'freedom of speech'.

Senior journalists and stakeholders get apprehension about the new guidelines, because of the lack of communication by Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology. They should take the stakeholders into confidence and seek their support and guidance in framing the guidelines. Ultimately, the innocent people should be protected and criminals and anti-social elements should be punished.

PreSense Speaks| Media and Communication

Digital Journalists Association of India (DiJAI) organized a panel discussion through Zoom on 15th April 2023 to discuss about the new guidelines on Intermediary Rules and Media Ethics Code 2023. The experts discussed the guidelines at length in the international perspective. Please watch

<https://youtube.com/live/uvs- YEf1E>



***By Prime Point Srinivasan, Publisher and Mg. Editor
Source: April 2023 issue of PreSense***

Freedom of Speech vs. National Security: Where to Draw the Line?
NewsClick controversy



Recently, Indian television media have put out screaming stories on "NewsClick", a digital portal, alleging their involvement in anti-Indian propaganda with the support of Indian politicians. This generated a big political controversy when Parliament was in session.

NewsClick is an English digital portal that is viewer-funded. The portal says it is an independent media organization. But the moot question here is: Did China change its propaganda from mobile apps to media and fund some organisations, journalists, and some eminent people for this explicit purpose? The online news portal NewsClick is now mired in this controversy.

The accusations

Based on a report by the New York Times (NYT), more than 250 retired judges, bureaucrats, and veterans including former Chief

Justice of Telangana K Sreedhar Rao, former Home Secretary LC Goyal, former RAW Chief Sanjeev Tripathi, many former justices, ambassadors and DGPs, have addressed a letter to Hon'ble President Droupadi Murmu asking her to take action against the digital news portal NewsClick as 'traitors' for allegedly receiving funds from China-linked American millionaire Neville Rai Singham. They sought action against the portal. They quoted an NYT report about the alleged link between the millionaire Singham and the Chinese Communist Party. It also wrote about the link between the NYT report and a raid by the Enforcement Directorate in 2021 at the portal's office and residences of top employees, like its Editor-in-Chief Prabir Purkayastha.

The raids brought out regular e-mail exchanges linked to the Communist Party of China. These emails showed the involvement of not only journalists but also veteran members of political parties in India. The letter alleged that the portal's most recent news coverage was pro-China. The letter claimed that amidst the 2020 Galwan clashes between India and China, the portal built a pro-China narrative. The signatories alleged that there were email exchanges with Chinese agents about how to change the Indian map to show undisputed Indian areas as either disputed or as part of China itself.

Enforcement Directorate Probe

The ED action against the NewsClick portal uncovered the alleged involvement of the portal in promoting pro-China propaganda in a news format. The letter further accused a 'sinister' conspiracy between NewsClick and some opposition party members, thus easily playing into the machinations of an anti-national agenda. It also said the media coverage of the Rafale deal and the remarks of opposition leaders on the issue clearly show a nexus between NewsClick and millionaire Singham. The ED probe brought to light an email correspondence between CPI(M) leader Prakash Karat and Neville Rai Singham, making the issue murkier and murkier. The ED also uncovered the portal's director Prabir Purkayastha's email exchanges with many Indian journalists and the millionaire Neveille Roy Singham.

These emails were recovered by the ED from its searches during the money laundering probe against NewsClick. It is alleged that the email exchanges promoted China's propaganda on its fight against the pandemic, Indian Communists' affinity towards China, and some vital conversations regarding the India-China map. It was also mentioned that the millionaire Singham, who lives in China, illegally funded NewsClick to the tune of Rs. 38 crore for promoting pro-China information in India. The NewsClick director and his team of journalists were accused of publishing paid news on their website. This was in exchange for the funds transferred by Singham to PPK NewsClick Studio Pvt. Ltd. The ED alleged that NewsClick was not the only one to receive illegal funds, they alleged.

It said Javed Anand, husband of noted activist Teesta Setelvad (who is charged with her purported role in fabricating evidence during the 2002 Gujarat riots), had received over 12 lakh rupees, and Tamara, Teesta's daughter, received about Rs. 11 lakhs. Gautam Navalkha, accused in the Ela Parishad case, who received over 20 lakhs, and CPI(M) member Bappaditya Sinha, who maintains CPI(M)'s Twitter handle, were also alleged to be the beneficiaries. Media reports allege that there is also digital evidence that proves Singham and his journalists were working on various projects to enhance the image of China and to support China's action against the Chinese business magnate Jack Ma, the owner of Alibaba. It is pertinent here to mention that ED had earlier attached the property of NewsClick's director, Prabir Purkayastha. Popular social media platform X (formerly Twitter) had also suspended the NewsClick portal's official account, but it was later revoked.

The Government's ban on some mobile apps and gaming consoles

Earlier, the Central Government had banned some mobile apps and some gaming consoles because the Indian agencies found that China was using them to weaken the Indian economy through cellphones, gaming applications, and even some firms. They were further used for moneylaundering from China to India and spying on the Indian defence system. In stringent action against some

Chinese companies, the ED froze money lying in the bank accounts of China-based Xiami Group and also against mobile venture Vivo.

This is one side of the story.

Allegations denied

On the other side, all these were totally denied by the millionaire Neville Rai Singham. The NewsClick also denied money laundering and foreign remittances. About 800 eminent citizens, including the Director of The Hindu Group of Publications, N Ram, former editors of Wire, Siddharth Vardarajan and MK Venu, Former Judge of Madras High Court, Justice K Chandru, Journalists Prem Shankar Jha and P Sainath, also expressed their solidarity with the online news portal in a signed statement. They said the hounding of the news portal is an attack on independent journalism and freedom of expression enshrined in the Constitution. They took exception to what they termed as false accusations on the online news portal NewsClick. The signatories said this was an attack on independent journalism devoid of corporate influence.

A statement by the CPI (M) condemned the ED raid on the offices of NewsClick. The statement said the raid was a brazen attempt to intimidate and suppress the portal. It said central agencies were being used by the Modi government to harass and suppress independent media. It demanded an end to vindictive action against NewsClick and its management. The CPI(M) leader Prakash Karat has also denied the allegations and termed the allegation a bunch of lies propagated by the BJP.

Many eminent persons whom PreSense contacted said independent journalism and freedom of expression should not be at the cost of the country's security. They said there are limitations to freedom of expression when it involves the nation's security. National security takes precedence over freedom of speech, they said. They said the online portal must be taken to task and severely punished if the money laundering charges are proved.

In the Court

On August 11, 2023, the Delhi High Court issued notice to NewsClick and its director, Prabir Purkayastha, in response to a

plea by the ED seeking a vacation of the HC's order that granted interim protection regarding involvement in the money laundering issue. The Court said it had prima facie found merit in ED's plea and hence needed deliberation. The Court has listed the case for further hearing on September 6, 2023. Earlier on June 21, 2020, the Delhi High Court ordered the ED not to take coercive action against the online news portal and its director. The Enforcement Directorate first began its investigation into alleged illegal foreign funding in 2021. The ED said its investigation revealed that a foreign fund of Rs. 38.05 crore was fraudulently infused for three years into PPK NewsClick Studio Pvt. Ltd., which was distributed to many journalists, including Gautam Navalkha.

In these types of allegations, there may be truth or otherwise. When such serious allegations surface, the investigation authorities and judicial system should take immediate action without any delay. Justice delayed is justice denied. If there is any breach of national security the perpetrators should be punished forthwith. Freedom of expression provided in the Constitution does not empower anybody to follow the toolkit of enemy countries to defame India and spread false information among the people.

By Ramesh Sundaram, Editor in Chief
Source: August 2023 issue of PreSense

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