

Terrorist Strikes and Governmental Restriction on Media: A Great Challenge

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Abstract: The purpose of writing this research paper is to have a view of the incidents, attacking on Freedom of Speech' across the world. Kidnapping and beheading of an American journalist by ISIS terrorists, attack on office of a magazine in Paris by terrorists and apart from the terrorist attacks, the administrative and governmental restrictions on media have been also over-viewed well in this paper with examples.

Indian media witnessed its worst period for Freedom of Speech when their constitutional rights were restricted by the Center and states governments during Emergency imposed by late Prime Minister Mrs Indira Gandhi. Media was totally banned to speak anything against the then Union government. Later, after lifting of Emergency in 1977 after a period of 22 months, imposed since June 25, gained its old glory during tenure of Janta Party Government headed by Morarji Desai. Later, Bihar Government introduced a Press Bill to restrict freedom of speech.

This study focuses on atrocities on journalists by the hard core criminals and state sponsored on Freedom of Speech. Many examples have been cited to establish the study, both on international and National level. Even then, the dedicated scribes are discharging their duties honestly, and also sacrificing their lives time to time.

Recently, During KisanAndolan in Delhi during tractor rally on January 26, scribes were beaten by agitators . The journalists were beaten and their vehicles were set on fire when a few years back, Baba Ram Rahim was being taken to Court in Haryana in connection with a rape case.

The young lady reporter of AajTak, Mausami Singh was misbehaved and pushed back by the agitators when she had gone there to cover the scene at Sabri Mala temple in Kerala after verdict of Supreme Court in connection with controversy. Reporters of various channels, had been misbehaved by the Security personnel at Srinagar Airport when they had gone there to cover the news of Kashmir with a delegation of MPs led by Rahul Gandhi after abolition of Article 370 .

Terrorist strike at the Charlie Hebdo's magazine office in Paris, claiming lives of 10 journalists and two cops, clearly indicates that the ' Freedom of Speech' is passing through the most crucial stage globally. Time to time, reports of scribes being killed on coverage, have come up and most of them have been from Gulf countries like from Iraq where a US, scribe, James Wright foley was beheaded for cause of his dedicated journalism to tell truth .

Prime Minister, NarendraModi during Vibrant Gujrat Summit in Gandhinagar expressed his condolence to the victims of terrorist strike in France, has called upon his counterparts of western world, present in the summit to come together for combating terrorism.

Many journalist, performing their duties to inform the people, without geographical barriers, were killed by the militants and criminals across the world. James Wright Foley, an American journalist-cum-video reporter as war correspondent in Syria was kidnapped by a group of ISIS backed militants on November 22, year 2012 and after being in their captivity for a long time, he was beheaded to warn American administration for poking nose in Iraq .

As a fallout of attack on Freedom of Speech, the out-spoken , Left wing journalist, Editor of the weekly, GauriLankeshPatrike, published from Bangalore, GauriLankesh was shot dead by a man near her house there in September 2018.

Another glaring example of administrative attack on Freedom of Speech is of PawanJaiswal, a print media reporter of Mirzapur district in UP, who was put behind bars for exposing irregularities in Mid Day Meal at a primary school on August 22, 2019. . The school was being run by the UP government's primary education department .

The reporter had filmed only salt and chapatis, kept for distribution among the children as usual and flushed the news .The district administration, pretending that rest edible items were to be cooked shortly for children, lodged an FIR against the reporter and one more for tipping off him, and arrested them. The administration said ,the reporter had tried to tarnish the image of state government through a false report. Later

,on opposition of local journalists and intervention of Press Council of India, the UP government released them from jail .

Another young reporter of a daily, ManojSoni was brutally beaten up by a mine mafia in Anpara area of Sonbhadra district of UP. After a long treatment in Varanasi, he was recovered. He was attacked for writing against illegal mining of sand from the nearby river .

Another middle aged journalist, Gajendra Singh was burnt to death allegedly by a team of police personnel at his house in Shahjahanpur district of UP on June 1st, 2015 at the behest of UP Minister, Rammurti Singh. The reporter was writing on social media against the involvement of Minister in illegal mining. After sustaining severe injuries, he was admitted to a local hospital where he succumbed to his injuries on June 8 .Later, on initiative of UP IPS official Amitabh Thakur, who met the family members of slain journalist, going against the UP government without being assigned this case. An FIR was lodged against the Minister and five police personnel including an inspector. They were sent to jail. .

JyotirmoyDey, editor of Mid Day, a tabloid newspaper being published from Mumbai, had been shot dead in June, 2011 for writing stories against net-working and evil operations of mafiosis and extortion by Dubai based absconding Indian don, Dawood Ibrahim.

The NDTV Hindi news channel, anchored by Ravish Kumar, had been prohibited by the Secretary of the Information and Broadcasting Ministry to go off air for one day as a punishment for broadcasting sensitive details on January 2005, attack by Pakistan backed militants at the Pathankot air force base there .

The NDTV Management, annoyed with this dictatorial order of the Government, attacking on freedom of speech , immediately moved to the Supreme Court .

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The Bihar government had restricted on anti -government reporting of newspapers through a bill passed in VidhanSabha at Patna in Bihar in 1982.It had been opposed widely by cross sections of society including Press Council of India and Editors Guild.

Indian media under the Right to Freedom of Speech as per article 19 (1) (a) of Constitution – refers to the right to express one’s own convictions and opinions freely.

. The press is subject to the restrictions that are provided under the Article 19 (2) of the Constitution. Before Independence, there was no constitutional or statutory provision to protect the freedom of press. As observed by the Privy Council in Channing Arnold v. King Emperor.

Under Article 19 (2) of the Constitution of India, the State may make a law imposing ‘ reasonable restrictions’ on the exercise of the right to freedom of speech and expression

Freedom of Speech of Indian newspaper and magazines has been restricted by the Centre government across the country headed by then Prime Minister, Mrs Indira Gandhi on June 26, 1975 as part of Emergency under article 19 (2) of the Constitution.

Journalists writing against imposition of emergency had been put behind the bars. Noted electronic media journalist, Rajat Sharma had been also to prison as a reporter of Azad newspaper of Delhi. Later, ban was lifted after installation of Janta Party government led by Morarji Desai as PM in 1977.

Restrictions on freedom of Press by Emergency was fallout of state sponsored terrorism while true journalists, exposing evils and anti national activities fell victim of terrorism and lost their lives. JyotirmoyDey, editor of Mid Day, a tabloid newspaper being published from Mumbai, was shot dead in June, 2011 for writing stories against operation of criminal activities and extortion by Dubai based absconding Indian don, Dawood Ibrahim.

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