

India is considered to be a country having freedom of press. In the constitution it is nowhere mentioned specifically about a free press in the country. This right is safeguarded by one of the, fundamental rights i.e. freedom of speech, Article 19(A) of the Indian Constitution.

In India's struggle for independence, press had a major role to play, it was the voice of the common man against oppression, it would inspire the Indians by spreading the ideologies of Mahatma Gandhi, Bhagat Singh, Subhash Chandra Bose etc. The only choice Britishers had was to curb the freedom of press through "Vernacular Press Act" which fuelled the agitation even more.

Due its immense outreach and it's freedom of expression it is considered to be the "fourth pillar of democracy" in India. As it keeps us informed about the good and the bad in the society, in the governmental and non-governmental institutions, different policies and their implications etc. As the common man cannot participate directly in the proceedings of Parliament which are going to shape the country's future, it is the press that gives him voice and tells the policy makers the mood of this country.

But what is alarming is India's dropping press freedom index. Press freedom index measures the level of freedom available to journalists. India was ranked 138 (135 in 2017) out of 180 nations. Three main reasons for this drop could be:

1. Section 124a of IPC: It states that an act of 'sedition' is punishable by life imprisonment. Now it is nowhere clearly mentioned which acts fall into the category of sedition and which acts don't. And government has misused this law a number of times. The press should have the right to criticize the government as criticism/opposition is the true essence of democracy. But the present government is reluctant to write it off. This law was brought by the Britishers to curb the revolts against their rule, and it makes no sense to continue with this law in the largest democracy in the world.
2. Killing of journalists on the basis of their work: In 2017 alone 11 journalists were murdered and over 40 attacked. They all were criticising the government for the good. And police hasn't been able to identify the attackers for more than a year now. Journalism has become a dangerous pursuit in India. Obviously, these incidents hamper the freedom of press.
3. Paid Media: A sting operation conducted by 'Cobrapost' on major news houses in India brought out the fact that the Indian media content nowadays revolves around false news, propaganda which is highly unethical when it comes to responsibility of the press in a democracy. And this phenomenon was quite evident when the farmers were

on marches, SSC students were on protests for the injustice done to them, hike in petrol prices, rupee depreciating in its value etc. and the news channels were having their communal debates, showcasing the achievements of government when there are hardly any on ground, and the questions asked to the people responsible in the government are completely irrelevant. Instead of just stating the true facts (true role of the press) and let people form the opinions they were serving us directly with opinions

Also Read : Indian Business Schools - Are they really effective?

Conclusion :-

“The unleashing of hatred towards journalists is one of the worst threats to democracies.”

- Christophe Deloire. (RSF, Secretary General)

In the light of above-mentioned arguments, it is quite evident that the Press carries a huge responsibility on its shoulders in a democracy. And the journalists and the government both should be in full realization of it. Protection of free voices is the duty of the government and avoiding misuse of this freedom the responsibility of the press.

Your Turn...

What is your opinion on this topic? Express your thoughts in the comment section below. Subscribe to our blog to read answers to trending GD topics.

Photo by [rawpixel.com](https://www.rawpixel.com) from [Pexels](https://www.pexels.com)

Copyright @ Group Discussion Ideas.

You may also like:

- [Can India turn 'Brain Drain' into 'Brain Gain'?](#)
- [Should both developed and underdeveloped countries have equal binding in combating climate change?](#)
- [Digital payments in India](#)



- [Fake News - Impact on society](#)
- [Controversy as a marketing strategy](#)

Subscribe to GD Ideas

Email Address

I'm in !!!

Please subscribe to [our YouTube channel](#). You will get good content & we will get a subscriber. It's a win-win for both of us. ☐