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MISUSE OF THE POWER OF JOURNALISM

Abstract

The power of Journalism is one of the powers that is granted to the media to bring out the truth but over a period it has been seen that the power is misused making the innocent person victim of public outrage. There have been various discussions over time about the restriction on the power of journalist, but it is also violative of their rights. So, to fill the gap between the use and misuse of the power by Journalist there needs to a solution where the power starts and where it needs to end. This paper tries to analyze the extent of the power of the journalists and the gap on the exercising of the power by the journalists. It also discusses the various solutions where the gap can be filled.

Statement of the Problem

As an essential component of democracy, journalism serves a crucial function. Acting as a sentinel, it prevents the government from overreaching and engaging in unethical activities. Contemplate it akin to a custodian. Certain rulers attempt to subjugate or muzzle the press to manipulate populations within a nation. However, journalism holds significant clout. Although one person's ballot may appear insignificant, the information we peruse and view has the potential to mould our existence. Reporters have a duty to be impartial, yet discrimination within media can obscure reality.

Relevance of the Study

Free, independent and pluralistic media based on freedom of information and expression is a core element of any functioning democracy. Freedom of the media is in fact essential for the protection of all other human rights. Instances of torture, discrimination, corruption or misuse of power many times have come to light because of the work of investigative journalists.

Making the facts known to the public is often the first, essential step to start redressing human rights violations and hold governments accountable.

POWER OF JOURNALISM

In this publication, disinformation is generally used to refer to deliberate (often orchestrated) attempts to confuse or manipulate people through delivering dishonest information to them. This is often combined with parallel and intersecting communications strategies and a suite of other tactics like hacking or compromising of persons. Misinformation is generally used to refer to misleading information created or disseminated without manipulative or malicious intent. Both are problems for society, but disinformation is particularly dangerous because it is frequently organised, well resourced, and reinforced by automated technology. The purveyors of disinformation prey on the vulnerability or partisan potential of recipients whom they hope to enlist as amplifiers and multipliers. In this way, they seek to animate us into becoming conduits of their messages by exploiting our propensities to share information for a variety of reasons. A particular danger is that ‘fake news’ in this sense is usually free – meaning that people who cannot afford to pay for quality journalism, or who lack access to independent public service news media, are especially vulnerable to both disinformation and misinformation.¹

MISUSE OF POWER IN JOURNALISM

There are occasions when journalists misuse their power, although journalism is critical for informing the public and keeping those in power responsible. Misuse of power in this line of work is diverse and does not indicate the entire field of journalism.

Reporters may sometimes let their personal biases seep into their reporting, resulting in a lack of objectivity. Lack of objectivity may occur when reporters allow their personal biases to creep into their reporting. This frequently results in coverage that is unbalanced and is unsuccessful in presenting diverse perspectives on an issue. The influence of bias on reporting can be problematic. Breaching journalistic ethics is a serious matter when journalists use false reporting. Fabricated stories or knowingly sharing inaccurate information could be used to achieve personal or political goals. Individuals' privacy can be violated when journalists engage in aggressive tactics or encroach on their personal lives. Such actions can harm people and also

¹ Journalism, Fake News and Disinformation, UNESCO Series on Journalism Education, 2018

undermine ethical standards. Without proper attribution, journalists are often found to use content from other sources, a violation of professional ethics which can severely harm their credibility. This action is known as plagiarism. Reporters, due to financial or personal connections with the topics they cover, might have a conflict of interest which compromises their impartiality. Such interests may blur the lines between reporting and advocacy. The truth can be distorted and the audience can be misled when reporters selectively present information that aligns with their desired story angle and exclude facts that don't match. This is known as selective reporting. Disseminating unverified or false stories can occur as a result of inadequate verification and fact-checking.²

RECOMMENDATIONS AND SOLUTIONS

There are several alternatives to deal with falsehoods and disinformation that can be undertaken by various organizations. Many of these ideas represent solutions that combat fake news and disinformation without endangering freedom of expression and investigative journalism.

- ***Government responsibilities***
 - 1) One of the most important thing governments around the world can do is to encourage independent, professional journalism.
 - 2) Governments should avoid crackdowns.
 - 3) Governments should avoid censoring content .

- ***News industry actions***
 - 1) Focus on high quality journalism.
 - 2) Call out fake news and disinformation

- ***Technology company responsibilities***
 - 1) Invest in technology to find fake news and identify it for users through algorithms and crowdsourcing.
 - 2) Strengthen online accountability.

- ***Educational institutions***
 - 1) Enhance news literacy.

² ibid

- *How the public can protect itself*

- 1) Individuals can protect themselves from false news and disinformation by following a diversity of people and perspectives..
- 2) In the online world, readers and viewers should be sceptical about news sources.

CONCLUSION

Journalism is in a state of considerable flux. New digital platforms have unleashed innovative journalistic practices that enable novel forms of communication and greater global reach than at any point in human history. But on the other hand, disinformation and hoaxes that are popularly referred to as “fake news” are accelerating and affecting the way individuals interpret daily developments. Driven by foreign actors, citizen journalism, and the proliferation of talk radio and cable news, many information systems have become more polarized and contentious, and there has been a precipitous decline in public trust in traditional journalism.³

Governments should promote news literacy and strong professional journalism in their societies. The news industry must provide high-quality journalism in order to build public trust and correct fake news and disinformation without legitimizing them. Technology companies should invest in tools that identify fake news, reduce financial incentives for those who profit from disinformation, and improve online accountability. Educational institutions should make informing people about news literacy a high priority. Finally, individuals should follow a diversity of news sources, and be skeptical of what they read and watch.

³ ibid