

Research Vidyapith International Multidisciplinary Journal

(International Open Access, Peer-reviewed & Refereed Journal)

(Multidisciplinary, Monthly, Multilanguage)

* Vol-2* *Issue-5* *May 2025*

Unfiltered: Exploring Freedom of Speech in the Age of Social Media

Richa Mittal

Research Scholar, Madhav Vidhi Sansthan, Jiwaji University, Gwalior

Ankit singh Rajput

Research scholar, JIWAJI University Gwalior

Abstract

Freedom of expression is one of the needs of the present century, and a society which does not have freedom of expression and communication media is a dictatorial society. It is clear that freedom of expression does not mean insult, ridicule and anarchy, rather the meaning of freedom of expression always deviates from its logical and realistic behavior. The question is, what evidence should world opinion rely on regarding freedom of expression? 'Whenever speaking, speak on time, think for a long time and speak briefly.' With this learning of oral tradition, journalism has come a long way, starting from the first journalist Narada, the first editor Ved Vyas, the first live telecast of Mahabharata, Sanjay etc. After Kautilya's Arthashastra, Mughal period's Vakyanvis and the Roti and Kalam symbol in the first freedom struggle (1857), journalism, after passing through the state proclamations and the typical Harkars or sandhis in remote rural areas, has evolved into its current cutting-edge and revolutionary form 'e-journalism or web journalism', Information technology, technical discoveries and inventions and its daily increasing use and expansion of the Internet have further expanded the scope of web journalism. In the era of globalization, journalism has expanded to a revolutionary level by combining cutting-edge technologies with the norms of knowledge, philosophy, spirituality and creative creation. Web journalism or social media has emerged as an easy means to interact with the entire world in the blink of an eye.

The biggest difference between a human being and an animal is that humans can express their thoughts and actions but animals are silent creatures. Free exchange of ideas, debate and expression of viewpoints are important for democracy. Through this paper we will research what is freedom of speech? And why is this important? How is freedom of speech depicted in the new Indian Judicial Code? What is the Freedom of Speech

platform? What is social media? How it is misusing freedom of speech, and how to balance both, all this will be studied through this paper.

Key Words- Social Media, Freedom, Speech and Expression, Journalism, Inventions.

Introduction-

In India, the tradition of free speech can be traced back to the Rig Veda, the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, the 16 Mahajanapadas, the Buddha's teachings, and the edicts of Emperor Ashoka. Free public assemblies and discussions at the Nalanda and Vikramshila universities in ancient India continued even during the medieval period of Akbar and Dara Shikoh, culminating in the 1947 enshrining of free speech in the Indian Constitution. Ideological diversity is the Indian way of life. India is naturally democratic. There have been democratic institutions in its ancient history as well. There have been assemblies and committees in the Vedic period as well. There have been debates and dialogues. Their objective has been public welfare. The objective of resistance should also be public welfare. Aimless resistance has no meaning. The objectives of resistance in the context of Delhi Ramjas College are dangerous. India is a sovereign nation state. The enjoyment of freedom of thought expression along with resistance is a fundamental right of all of us but this enjoyment is within the sovereignty of India. The basic question is that when there will be no India, then where will we enjoy this expression of thought and resistance? In the recent resistance, the sovereignty of India itself has been challenged.

Modern India and its nation-state territory are the result of the conscious and unconscious deeds of our ancestors. Loyalty to the Indian Constitution is the duty of all of us. The makers of the Constitution were our forefathers. There were occasions of disagreement and resistance in the Constituent Assembly as well. There was a serious debate on the name of the country (Article 1) as well. Many names like Aryavart, Bharat, India, etc. were in the debate. The constitution makers created many constitutional institutions. Legislature, Parliament, Executive Government and independent Judiciary are the pillars of Indian Parliamentary democracy. The country functions through many constitutional institutions including independent Election Commission and CAG. Political parties are institutions of resistance and expression of opposition. Of course, such institutions are not self-sufficient. There remains scope for amendments and additions. But the demand for independence of any part of India cannot be resistance. The flag bearers of resistance should guide as to why attacking the sovereignty of India is not a crime? What is the limit of expression of views and resistance? Is sloganeering to break the country only resistance?

Freedom of thought and expression is granted by the constitution. The nation state is the protector of this freedom. This freedom cannot be misused to insult even an ordinary person. Is India not like a person? The slogans of "Bharat tere tukde honge" are a direct threat to the living entity called India. The ideology of Umar Khalid, who was invited to Ramjas College, does not consider India as a nation. His love for terrorists like Afzal and Burhan Ali is well known. Opposition to Khalid was natural. Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad opposed it. Slogans like "Bastar

maange azaadi/Kashmir maange azaadi/Chhin ke lenge azaadi” were raised in protest or resistance to the protest¹. Such threats that trample the identity and sovereignty of India come under the category of war against the Indian nation state. India is a democratic country where all people have been given the freedom to express their views. But it is said that the more freedom, the more arbitrary. Indian law is so flexible that people take advantage of it and interfere in India’s internal matters. Social media has become such a platform through which India’s internal matters are interfered with even without being aware of it at the international level and thus India’s unity, sovereignty and integrity are attacked. The best example of which is when US Foreign Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said at the time of CAA, “We are concerned about the notification of CAA. Respect for religious freedom and equal treatment under the law for all communities are fundamental democratic principles².”

Freedom of expression through social media is necessary to prevent arbitrary governmental behavior and misuse of its powers, but whatever policies are made to prevent the improper use of social media, we should respect them instead of opposing them so that confusion can be avoided, the unity and integrity of the country can be maintained and rumors can be stopped. Freedom of expression should be to such an extent that the objective mentioned in this verse can be achieved.

Freedom of media enunciates the fundamental principle that communication and expression should be freely exercised through various media such as print media, electronic media and published material.

Freedom of the press is not explicitly covered under any legal system, but it is implicitly protected under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution of India, 1950 (COI).

OBJECTIVES-

- i. To analyze the importance of media freedom.
- ii. To figure out the threats to media freedom in India.
- iii. To analyze the landmark judgments regarding freedom of Media.

SIGNIFICANCE-

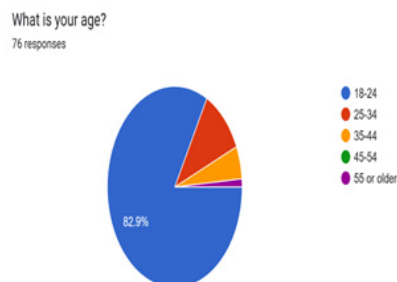
The research aims to aid to the growth of a extensive and effective legal frameworks for social media in India. By analyzing the present regulations and suggesting reforms, this study can:—

- i. Understand the impact of social media on civic participation.
- ii. Develop strategies to mitigate online harm.
- iii. Investigate the intersection of free speech, social media and global governance.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY-

This research employs a mixed-method approach:-

- i. Doctrinal research-** Analysis of existing laws and regulations.
- ii. Judicial approach-** Analysis of specific disputes and controversies.
- iii. Primary Source-** Insights from journalists, advocates, researchers, students, academicians the data is collected through questionnaires and the total respondent are 76. And the age group is-



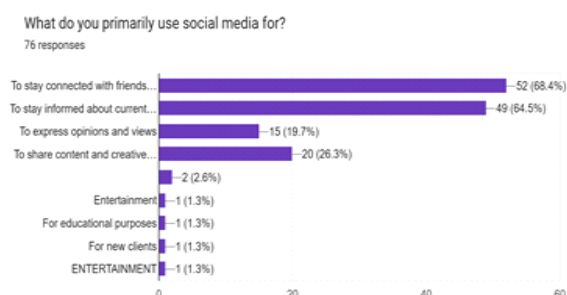
The chart shows the distribution of ages among 76 responses. Here are some key observations:

- The largest group is 18-24, with 65 Respondents.
- 25-34 years follows, with 8 Respondents.
- 35-44 years follows with, 4 respondents
- 55 years or older follows with, 2 respondents.

This age distribution suggests a predominantly young sample, with a strong concentration in the early twenties.

2. Why is media freedom important in India?

- Freedom of media enables the free exchange of ideas, information and different viewpoints, which plays a vital role in the smooth functioning of democracy.
- A free press can inform citizens about government bodies and the work they do, which makes the government accountable.
- It conveys the needs and desires of the public to government bodies, helping them to make informed decisions.
- It promotes open discussion of ideas, which allows individuals to fully participate in political life.
- It provides the public with the right to freedom and expression.
- It simplifies complex information for public consumption.
- It is considered the fourth pillar of democracy, the other three pillars being legislature, executive and judiciary.



As per the empirical data the use of social media is as follows:—

- As per the 68.4% peoples they used the social media to connect with the friends and family.
- As per the 64.5% peoples they used the social media to stay

informed about current events.

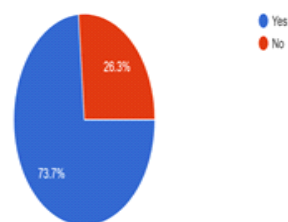
- 26.3% peoples used the social media to share and creative works.
- 19.7% peoples used the social media to express their opinions.
- And rest of the peoples used for the purpose of
 - Entertainment
 - Educational purpose

3. Rights of Media in India-

The following rights can be exercised by the media in India:

- Right to free speech and expression
- Right to receive and publish information
- Right to circulate and broadcast
- Right to conduct interviews
- Right to criticize
- Right to report court proceedings
- Right to advertise

Whether you know that the right to excess social media is a fundamental right?
76 responses



As per the 73.7 % respondents right to access social media is a fundamental right still 26.3% still unaware from this.

4. What are the threats to media freedom?

- The influence of social media and the constant onslaught of fake news act as a barrier to media freedom.
- Murders and attacks on journalists have become very common, raising many security questions.
- Hate speech shared and propagated on social networks is targeted against journalists who use social media.
- Corporate and political power has overwhelmed large parts of the media, both print and visual, promoting vested interests and undermining freedom.
- Misinformation and paid news can simultaneously mislead millions of people, a direct contradiction to the basic principles of democracy, which is the basis of our existence.

5. Landmark Judgments Regarding Freedom of Media³:-

- **In Romesh Thapar vs State of Madras (1950):** The Supreme Court

(SC) held that freedom of the press is at the foundation of all democratic organizations.

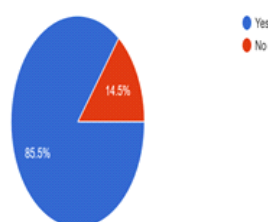
- **In Indian Express vs Union of India (1985):** The Supreme Court held that the press plays a very important role in a democratic system. The courts have a duty to uphold the freedom of the press and to strike down all laws and administrative actions that curtail that freedom.
- **In Maneka Gandhi vs Union of India (1978):** The Supreme Court held that freedom of speech and expression is not limited to national boundaries.
- **In Bijo Emmanuel vs State of Kerala (1986):** The Supreme Court held that the right to speech includes the right to remain silent or not to utter a word.
- The US SC recently sidestepped a crucial decision in *Moody v. NetChoice, LLC* (2024) leaving unresolved the question of whether states can pass laws limiting social media companies ability to regulate user content. At the heart of the case were laws enacted by Texas and Florida, aimed at restricting social media platforms from censoring or removing users based on their content moderation policies. But Lower courts had issued conflicting decisions on these laws, by upholding an injunction against the Florida law and another allowing the Texas law to take effect. The SC of USA did not make a final ruling on the substantive issue of whether states can impose such restrictions on Social Media.
- **Javed Ahmad Hajam vs State of Maharashtra (2024)-** The SC of India made a landmark statement while dismissing a criminal case against a professor who criticized the decision of government to revoke Article 370 on WhatsApp. The court emphasized the need to educate law enforcement agencies about the fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression as guaranteed by the Indian Constitution. This observation is significant as it highlights the importance of balancing free speech with the need for law and order. By educating law enforcement agencies about the nuances of free speech, the court objectives to prevent unnecessary censorship and protect citizens rights to express themselves freely.
- **Monu Upadhyay v. State of Madhya Pradesh (2024)-** The MPHC at Gwalior has made a significant ruling, stating that simply expressing doubts about the fairness of Legislative Assembly elections on social media does not constitute an offense under section 505(2) of the IPC, which deals with “statements conducting to public mischief”. In essence the court has upheld the importance of free speech in a democratic society, emphasizing that citizens have the right to express their opinions and doubts without fear of persecution.

- **Dejo Kappan v Deccan Herald & Connected Cases (2024)**- The high court of Kerala has made a significant ruling and stating that the media cannot declare someone guilty or innocent while a criminal case is still ongoing. According to the court, such comments do not fall under protected free speech as guaranteed by Article 19(1)(a) of Constitution of India. The court also emphasized the need to balance the right to free speech with the right to reputation, which is guaranteed under article 21 of Constitution.

Impact of Social Media on Civic Participation

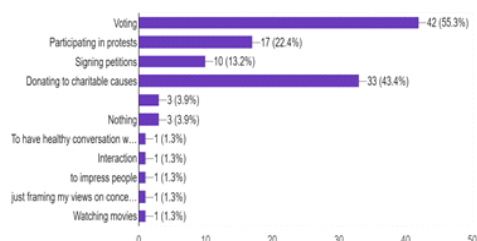
The impact of social media on civic participation is a complex and multifaceted issues. On One side, social media has made it easier for people to engage in civic activities. Studies have shown that social media use is positively correlated with civic engagements⁴. A study found that 90% of high school students had engaged in politics through social media and 40% had participated in participatory politics. However, there are also concerns that Social media can have a negative impact on civic participation. For example, social media can create 'echo chambers' where people only interact with other who share their views rather than engaging with diverse perspectives. Social media addiction among teenagers has become pressing concern. The constant need for validation, fear of missing out and the endless scroll of curated content have created a storm of addiction.

Has social media increased your interest in civics issues?
76 responses



As per the collected data 85.5% respondents consider that social media increased their interest in civics issues.

Which of the following civic activities have you engaged in on social media?
76 responses



Highest data from 55.3% respondents consider that for the purpose of voting they engaged in civic activities on Social media. And other considerable group of respondents with 43.4% they engaged in Donating to charitable causes. And 22.4% people engaged in protest petition.

The biggest right of a democracy with the spirit of liberty, equality and fraternity is 'freedom of expression'. This can be understood from the statement of the famous thinker Voltaire that 'Although I disagree with you, I am ready to struggle throughout my life so that you can express your views.' Indian democracy has entered the twenty-first century facing some minor attacks and restrictions on freedom of expression. Today the real form of freedom of expression has been presented by new media i.e. web media. New social media with modern technology has emerged as the vehicle of information revolution. For example, all the social networking sites including WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, Google Plus, LinkedIn, My Space, Pinterest, Orkut are tying the world together and connecting them globally, are we really helping in the creation of 'human society'? Have I become more aware than before? Talking in statistics, there are one billion active users on Facebook, 20 crore on Twitter, 175 million on Google Plus, 15 crore on LinkedIn and more than 11 crore active users on Pinterest. From public awareness to political movements, social media has played an important role in a short time and has created its own distinct and unique place. In a democratic system, when people started resorting to social sites as the fundamental right of expression like protest demonstration and reporting was no longer effective, the police used Section 66-A of the Information Technology Act to teach a lesson. The exercise was started, that is, Section 66-A of the IT Act became a means to curb the freedom of expression on social media. The very nature of this section was against freedom of expression⁵.

Every citizen has the right to expression under Article 19 (1) of the Constitution. It is true that this right is not unlimited. The Constitution has set some limits under Section 19 (2). For example, in cases where national sovereignty is affected, law and order is threatened, and animosity is created between different communities, punitive action can be taken against the content. These limits will remain in force as they are. Similarly, the law related to defamation will remain as effective as before.

If there is a complaint regarding violation of the limits set under Section 19 (2) regarding any website, then the option of shutting it down is also open to the government. But the Supreme Court has eliminated the scope for police action against citizens by labeling dissent and criticism as cybercrime. That means the ability to tolerate the voice of dissent and struggle to give it rights is the biggest right of democracy. But this right should not be used in an unconstitutional manner. Freedom of expression does not mean that you should abuse, harass and arbitrarily exercise your rights to express your anger and rage. In fact, the most wrong thing with Section 66-A of the IT Act was that there was a provision to register a case against anyone who harasses or helps in spreading harmful, defamatory religious hatred through any comment. In which arbitrary interpretation of this terminology was possible. This facility for arbitrary interpretation was the attraction due to which governments did not want to remove this law. Many leaders objected to the very general comments and it was on their instructions that the police registered an FIR. Freedom of expression was being strangled at the behest of the leaders. Many such cases came to light when arrests were made under this law.

In 2012, two girls were arrested in Mumbai for commenting against

the Mumbai bandh on the death of Shiv Sena leader Bal Thackeray on social media-Facebook. Protests were held across the country after the arrest of the girls. Recently, a case came to light in UP in which a boy was arrested for commenting on social media against SP leader and cabinet minister in Akhilesh government Azam Khan and Professor Ambikesh Mahapatra for making cartoons of Mamata Banerjee. Aseem Trivedi was arrested for making objectionable cartoons against Parliament and the national emblem on social media. Two Air India employees were arrested for posting against some leaders. In 2012, law student Shreya Singhal had filed a PIL in the Supreme Court demanding that Section 66-A of the IT Act is an attack on freedom of expression and it should be amended. Actually, there was a provision in Section 69-A that the information which is grossly offensive or character defamatory. The person knows that the information sent by him is false but sends such information Supreme Court Justice J. Hearing the PIL on April 24, 2015, the bench of Chelameswar and RF Nariman declared freedom of expression as a fundamental value and directed to abolish Section 66-A of the Information Technology Act. While hearing this case, the Supreme Court ordered investigation and issued guidelines that in such cases only SP rank officers can order arrest. However, other sections 69-A and section 79 of the IT Act have not been repealed and may remain in force with some restrictions. Section 69-A gives power to issue directions to prevent public access to any information through any computer resource and Section 79 provides for exemption from liability of the intermediary in certain cases. The Supreme Court argues that it is the responsibility of the government to maintain a balance between freedom and liberty. Governments themselves should decide how this work should be done. But imposing restrictions on freedom of speech by showing fear of law is a violation of the freedom of ideological expression provided under Article 19-(1) of the Constitution. There is no doubt that the court's decision will prove to be a milestone in terms of the arguments of the advocates of freedom of expression, but it is the responsibility of the government to protect the security and social concerns of the border and society and for the governments burdened by it. This decision will undoubtedly prove to increase the challenge.

The reality of the negative and positive aspects of this historic decision cannot be denied. In the context of this decision, the challenge of controlling the freedom of cyber space is becoming a problem for the government on the one hand, while the challenge of controlling itself is no less easy for the sections active on social media. Like the real world, the virtual world is also not a world devoid of law. We cannot turn away from the fact that most of the youth are active in cyber space. This class has been battling the natural danger of crossing the limits of decorum by getting carried away by the tide of its emotions. Looking at the recent JNU episode or other cases, it seems that the youth will have to recognize the limits of law and decorum while expressing their views on social media. The positive aspect of this decision is that in the era of information revolution, there is freedom to know, understand and give the widest dimension to one's thoughts. This taste of freedom can be called meaningful only when people who have made their presence felt in social media or cyber world understand the sensitivity of this medium. Cyber expert Pawan Duggal

says that this decision of the court is very balanced but has increased the limits of awareness and responsibility of the governments. Especially in the special circumstances of India, where despite the lack of adequate spread of education, access to the cyber world has now become easy among all sections of the society. Irrespective of social concerns like education, employment, economic conditions, people of every section have access to the Internet in some form or the other. Through this decision, the message of the court is clear that governments cannot control social media with the sword of law.

It is a universally accepted truth that every decision in the country is politically motivated. The use of Section 66-A so far shows that the police administration has used it only to suppress the emerging voice against the political group of youth active on social media. The removal of Section 66-A has strengthened the right to freedom of speech and expression. Social media has freed us from unnecessary fear of police. Due to the abolition of this section, the police cannot immediately arrest the accused for any alleged objectionable comment made on social media including Facebook, Twitter, whereas there was a provision for immediate arrest in Section 66-A. Under this section, there was a provision of three years imprisonment for any person sending objectionable messages on social media platforms. Although action can be taken under other sections of the IPC for objectionable comments, the case will no longer be prosecuted under this section. Here it can be said that now if anyone has any objection to someone's post, then the court will decide whether it is wrong or right. However, it is also possible that the nation and the opposing social sections can write anything objectionable under its cover. Or a separatist organization may post some material which is correct in their opinion but which is harmful to the unity and integrity of the country. Law enforcement agencies to stop abusive content being shared on the internet in the name of freedom of expression We will have to resort to different laws⁶.

6. Arbitrary Control on Freedom of Speech through Social Media (Many arrests have been made so far)

Under Section 66-A of the IT Act, in the last few years, many people have been arrested in many states of the country for giving statements against politicians on social sites. Many people have been arrested for raising questions about the system and making indecent comments. On 18 March 2015, a class 11 student was arrested in Bareilly for making controversial comments in the name of Uttar Pradesh Urban Development Minister Azam Khan. After judicial custody, the court had granted bail to the accused student Vicky Khan. On 23 May 2014, Goa Police arrested 33-year-old engineer Devu Chodankar. He had made indecent comments against Prime Minister Narendra Modi. On August 05, 2014, CPIM worker Rajesh Kumar was arrested in Kollam district of Kerala for writing an objectionable post on Facebook against Prime Minister Narendra Modi. On August 6, 2013, Dalit writer Kanwal Bharti was arrested after posting a message on Facebook. Kanwal Bharti had criticized the SP government in UP for suspending IAS Durga Shakti Nagpal, who was cracking down on the sand mafia. On 19 November 2012, Shaheen Dhada, living in Palghar area of Mumbai, was arrested because she had commented on Facebook about the Mumbai bandh on the funeral procession of Shiv Sena

chief Balasaheb Thackeray and her friend Reenu Srinivasan was arrested for liking the comment. Was arrested instead. On 06 November 2012, Kishori Sharma, Bansilal and Kirti Sharma were arrested in Kishtwar, Jammu and Kashmir for tagging an objectionable religious video on Facebook. Due to which he had to spend 40 days behind bars. After this incident, tension spread in Kishtwar. On November 01, 2012, businessman Ravi Srinivasan was arrested for tweeting against Karti Chidambaram, son of P. Chidambaram, who was a minister in the UPA government. On 10 September 2012, cartoonist Aseem Trivedi, associated with the Anna movement, was arrested after posting a cartoon on Facebook about the scams of the UPA government. The cartoon titled 'Bhrashtamev Jayate' made fun of Parliament and the national emblem. The police had also registered a case of treason against Asim. On 11 May 2012, Mumbai police arrested two Air India employees, Mayank Sharma and KVJ Rao, for a Facebook post against a politician. Both the personnel posted as crew members in Air India had commented on a labor leader. On 13 April 2012, the police arrested Professor Ambikesh Mahapatra of Jadavpur University for making a cartoon against West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. Later, Alipore Court granted him bail on a personal bond of Rs 500 each. Ambikesh and his neighbor Subrata Sengupta had created satirical cartoons of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, Railway Minister Mukul Roy and former Railway Minister Dinesh Trivedi and posted them on social networking sites and e-mails. The professor had posted this cartoon on Facebook when Mamata Banerjee had removed Railway Minister and her party MP Dinesh Trivedi from the post. In September 2011, Bihar Legislative Council employee and popular poet Musafir Baitha was suspended from his job. He had criticized the functioning of the government on Facebook. Then questions were raised regarding freedom of expression on social media⁷.

That means the ability to tolerate the voice of dissent and struggle to give it rights is the biggest right of democracy⁸. But this right should not be used in an unconstitutional manner. Freedom of expression does not mean that you abuse someone and use your rights arbitrarily to express your anger and rage.

It is necessary to differentiate between the sovereignty of the state, its prestige and the personal honor of politicians. Due to the development of technology and education in the society, open freedom with cyber space is inevitable like in western countries. We also have to protect our sovereignty, socio-cultural heritage and dignity of different communities while respecting their desire for expression. We have to create systems not with the intention of controlling the cyber world, but to prevent it from becoming chaotic. This decision has taken away the additional power given to the police. One of these provisions is IPC. Section 295-A of the Indian Penal Code clearly states that anyone who insults someone's religious feelings or belief through writing, speech, visual publicity or otherwise can be arrested. This section makes this act criminal.

In contemporary digital India, freedom of expression is being dealt a severe blow. In this digital India, those who created Digital India somehow exist under their rule and they can sometimes force an Agnivesh or a Vinayak Sen to grind in jail for years. Then, why not only Agnivesh or

Vinayak Sen, Soni Soren or the recently released Hidme or there could be hundreds of tribals lodged in the jails of Bastar in treason cases, who neither explain the meaning of patriotism nor understand the meaning of treason. For them, their food and shelter, their forest and their freedom are everything.

In independent India, freedom of expression has never been absolute nor has it been enjoyed by the people in absolute terms. Freedom of expression has a direct relationship with democratic structures and values. Earlier and even today it is often said that the four pillars of democracy are legislature, executive, judiciary and media and now efforts are being made to present social sites as the fifth pillar. This is nothing but an attempt to force a blatant lie into people's throats from childhood till adulthood. The basis of democracy is liberty, equality and brotherhood. Where are these bases? There was a time when you could not speak Hindi in then Madras. Even today, Hindi speaking people in Mumbai are being forced to speak Marathi. Painter M.F. Hussain receives so many threats that he has to leave the country. Agnivesh has been threatened that if he comes to Bastar, he may even have to lose his life. Foreigners cannot enter the temple of Puri. In the era of liberalism, farmers' land is being snatched away and given to industrialists where they are building SEZs, they will have their own police, there will be laws, there will be rules and where entry of common people will be prohibited. Same is the case with equality. In almost every city of the country, apart from the city, not only private builders but also government institutions are building the city complexes, where buildings costing crores are being built on land taken from farmers at throwaway prices and the rich class of the city is living in those cities. -Living in monasteries. That is, reconstruction of the feudal structure where the rich and noble people will live in the fort with the king and the labourers, Dalits and poor people will live outside the fort. Same is the condition of brotherhood, talking about religious and caste discrimination has become as if it is a very small matter. Now the thing is that the Hindu fundamentalist forces are not shying away from saying that no matter which countryman is a follower of any religion or belongs to any sect or caste, he is a Hindu⁹. This means that the foundations on which democracy came to the world have been continuously weakening in India since independence¹⁰.

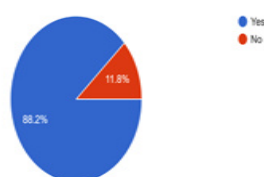
US Supreme Court Justice Robert Jackson said that 'control of ideas is the epitome of dictatorship, and we (America) do not claim that. It is not the job of our government to stop the citizens from making mistakes, it is the job of the citizens to stop the government from making mistakes. But, a class of politicians has formed in India who are eager to shut the mouth of those who call them wrong by any means. For him, democracy is only a way to get elected as king and he does not accept any expression, especially against it. Unless the true foundations of democracy - liberty, equality and fraternity - are not strengthened in the country, the right to expression will always remain in danger¹¹.

7. Conclusion

The government and other bodies are trying to curb hate crimes and protect the lives of journalists by making strict laws and imposing fines when needed. Responsible journalism acts as the engine that drives

democracy towards a better future. Newspapers have historically served as catalysts for social and political change, so if democracy is to be maintained in a country, the press must be kept free. In summary, it can be said that freedom of expression is one of the needs of the present century and a society which does not have freedom of expression and communication media is a dictatorial society. It is clear that freedom of expression does not mean insult, ridicule and anarchy, rather the meaning of freedom of expression always deviates from its logical and realistic behavior. Obviously, any government that believes in democracy cannot curtail this right. The status of freedom of expression or speech in any country will determine how strong or weak the democracy there is. If under any circumstances a person's right to speak is restricted or obstructed by any party, it will harm democracy.

Do you think people also access social media to spread hatred, contempt, and disaffection?
76 responses

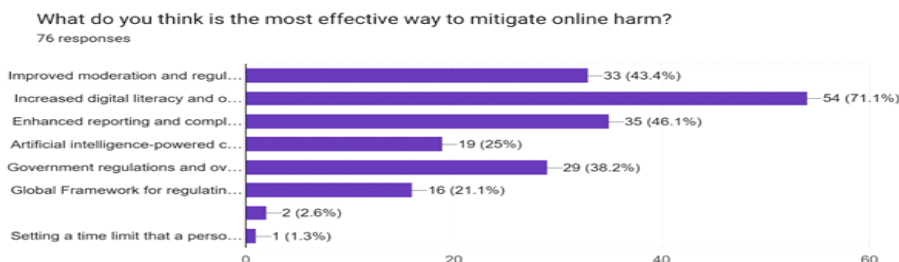


As per the collected data form survey the conclusion is that 88.2% peoples consider that people also access social media to spread hatred, contempt and disaffection. Which is directly misuse of social media platform.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research, the following recommendations are made—

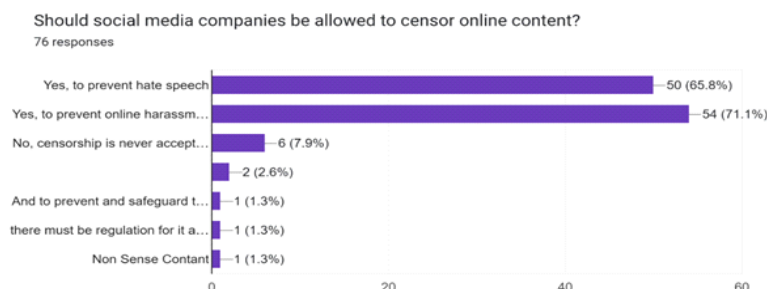
1. Social media companies should develop clear and transparent policies for regulating online content, including hate speech and online harassment.
2. Social media companies should provide users with tools and resources to help them manage online harassment and hate speech.
3. There should be a balance and cooperation between the government and social media companies. Government and regulatory bodies should work with social media companies to develop frameworks for regulating online content.
4. Education and awareness-raising initiatives should be developed to promote critical thinking and media literacy among social media users.



As per the collected data from 76 responses, the following suggestions are given to mitigate online harm-

- As per, 71.1% peoples, by Increasing the digital literacy and online safety education we can mitigate the online harm.

- As per 35 responses we should enhance reporting and complaints mechanism to mitigate online harm.
- As per 33 respondents, improved moderation and regulation by social media platforms we can mitigate online harm.
- 29 respondents consider that government regulations and oversights help to reduce online harm.
- As per 16 respondents Global Framework and regulations are the effective mode to mitigate the harm.



As per the 54 respondents it is necessary that social media companies be allowed to censor online content to prevent online harassment. While 65.8% consider that social media companies be allowed to censor online content for prevent hate speech.

Reference-

1. <https://www.drishtiias.com>
2. <https://www.aclu.org>
3. Press Law and Journalism, Sanjiv Bhanavat
4. <https://journalistsresource.org/politics-and-government/social-media-influence-politics-participation-engagement-meta-analysis/>
5. "Freedom of the Press in India: Constitutional Provisions and Their Application" by Arun K. Thiruvengadam (Cambridge University Press, 2019).
6. "Media, Gender, and Popular Culture in India: Tracking Change and Continuity" edited by S. V. Srinivas (Routledge, 2019)
7. "Media Law in India" by Seema Kazi (Oxford University Press, 2018).
8. "The Indian Media Business" by Vanita Kohli-Khandekar (SAGE Publications, 2019).
9. "Media At Work In China And India: Discovering and Dissecting" by Manoj Kumar Mishra (Routledge, 2018)
10. "Free Speech and Censorship Around the Globe" by Vikram Raghavan and Madhavi Sunder (Cambridge University).

Cite this Article-

'Richa Mittal; Ankit singh Rajput', 'Unfiltered: Exploring Freedom of Speech in the Age of Social Media', *Research Vidyapith International Multidisciplinary Journal (RVIMJ)*, ISSN: 3048-7331 (Online), Volume:2, Issue:05, May 2025.

Journal URL- <https://www.researchvidyapith.com/>

DOI- 10.70650/rvimj.2025v2i50012

Published Date- 10 May 2025