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**PRESS VS POWER****ABSTRACT:**

“To silence Journalist is equivalent to silencing the people as whole”

- Ahmet Sik

The life of press is always at risk especially, when they release a report on corruption or malpractices by the people who has higher power. Their life is not like “do or die” but, “if do then die”. Our countries main object is Democracy but this object is violated when there is no freedom of press. Freedom of press not only affects press but also our thoughts, our knowledge, our speech and expression and also our right to know the truth. This free press has always been a firing topic which led to many debates and issues across the world. So, let’s see how our freedom is being violated by the higher power in this article.

KEYWORDS:

Violation, Journalism, Article 19, Threats, Democracy

INTRODUCTION:

A press is not only a work that publishes daily news or articles in the newspaper or in journals but it is a communicating device between people and Government. They are known as the indicator of democracy. A free press can inform us about the success and failures or mistakes that are done by the Government or any person who has highest power and they also convey people’s needs and their problems to Government.

A businessman improves his business with the help of media, a public issue reaches government using media and peoples are told about steps taken by Government through media. So, when the freedom of press is affected, then there comes poverty, illiterate or un-updated society and corruption. Therefore, freedom of press is the vital point of one democratic country.

FREEDOM OF PRESS UNDER INDIAN CONSTITUTION:

The word freedom includes, 'no control', 'no restrictions' and 'just free'. Whereas, free press includes, 'printing or publishing or telecasting the truth of democratic country without any restrictions or control'.

Freedom of press is not clearly mentioned under the Indian Constitution. But in constitution assembly debate, Dr. Ambedkar, chairman of drafting committee, says that 'no mention of the freedom of press was necessary at all as the press and as an individual or a citizen were the same as far as their right of expression was concerned'^[1]. Therefore, article 19(1)(a) says that, all citizens shall have the right to freedom of speech and expressions^[2]. But it has certain restrictions when it comes to any expressions affecting sovereignty and integrity of the country. Corresponding to first amendment of the US constitution, article 19(1)(a) says that, a congress shall make no law abridging the freedom of speech or press.

There are two important features in the US constitution. They are,

- Freedom of press is specifically mentioned in US constitution, and,
- No restrictions are made for freedom of speech.

Whereas, Supreme Court of India held that there is no special provisions will be made for press since, both citizens and press are equal. They held press is not a separate citizen. Therefore, press cannot claim any special privilege unless specifically mentioned by law.

ESSENTIALS AND IMPORTANCE OF FREE PRESS:

“FREEDOM OF PRESS IS NOT JUST IMPORTANT TO DEMOCRACY, IT IS DEMOCRACY”

-Walter Cronkite

Freedom of press is not only an important element of democratic country but, it is the meaning of democratic country. A democratic country is where people act on their own behalf and where there is transparency on the functions of government. When the freedom of press is restricted, then the transparency of government will not exist and the people will be restricted from right to information.

Freedom of press has three important elements to work free. They are,

- Freedom of publication,
- Freedom to access all information, and,
- Freedom to circulate information

The primary purpose of the free press is to have outside check on the three important bodies of the government. That is,

- Executive,
- Legislative, and,
- Judiciary.

In the case **Supreme Court of India in Indian Express Newspapers (Bombay) private Ltd VS Union of India** ^[3], judges have highlighted some of the importance of free press. They are,

- it helps an individual to attain self-fulfilment,
- it assists in the discovery of truth,
- it strengthens the capacity of an individual to participate in decision making, and
- It provides a mechanism by which it would be possible to establish a reasonable balance between stability and social change.

And also, while considering the efforts or risks taken by the press, the judges says that, ***“freedom of press is the heart of social and political intercourse...The purpose of the press is to advance the public interest by publishing facts and opinions without which a democratic electorate cannot make responsible judgments. Newspapers being surveyors of news and view.... Such articles tend to become an irritant or even a threat to power”***

From the above it is understood how much the need for press is important and the risks take by them in order to serve people and the government. Press is the intercommunication between people and the Government. This interconnection leads us to profit in business, development and also to the information up to date.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The descriptive and secondary-data based analysis is used to know whether press has given full freedom and how people in power are violating the press. The data contained in this paper is collected mostly from various journals, reports and statistics.

FINDINGS:

- There is a correlation between press and suppression on numbers of COVID attack information. ^[4]
- Freedom of press has been decreasing over past decades.
- There has been more than 400 incidents regarding violation of press from 2017 – 2019.
- There has been 30% decrease in trust over press since 1970's due to lack of information
- The murders of journalists has been doubled since 2019 in India.

ATTACKS OR THREATS ON PRESS:

“When the public’s right to know is threatened, and when the rights of free speech and free press are at risk, all of the other liberties we hold dear are endangered”

-Christopher Dodd

Attacks or threats on journalist does not mean attacking physically. The world has changed a lot. All sources are now computerised. Likewise, the method of attacking has also been developed. Some of the methods of attacks are,

- Tracking, detain from work or arresting journalists in order not to report on them,
- Using inflammatory rhetoric targeting the press,
- Threatening to take away the license for broadcasting

A number of 30 journalists were killed in 2020, of which 21 of them were singled out for murder in retaliation for their work.

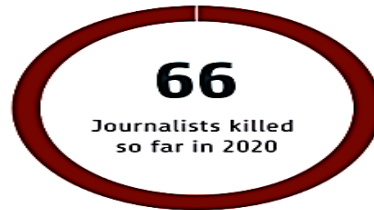
Out of 30 murders in 2020, 2 murders have been from India: journalist Rakesh Singh and journalist Subham Mani. Rakesh Singh was murdered in the month of November by setting fire in his house which is located in Balrampur. Subham Mani from Tripathy was shot and killed in Kanpur in June

Journalists killed in 2020 by region



Most Dangerous Countries for journalists in the World in 2020

Mexico	14
Afghanistan	10
Pakistan	9
India	8
Philippines	4
Syria	4



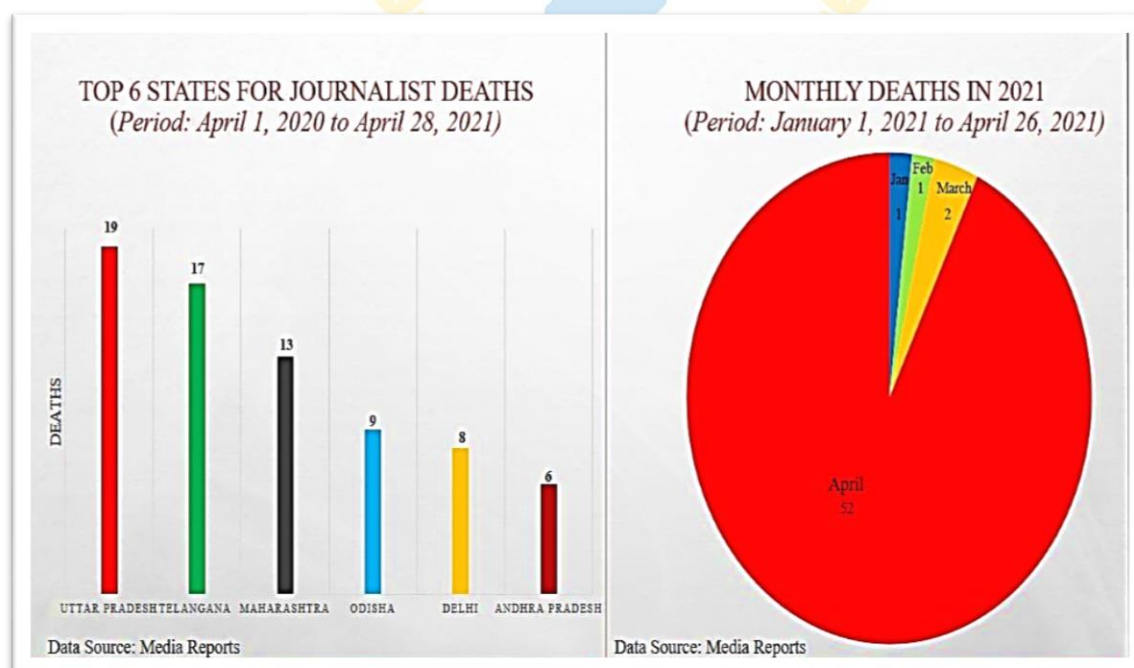
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According to the above statistics we can find that India is ranked as one of the most dangerous country for journalists in the world with number of 8 deaths in one year i.e., 2020. Whereas other countries such as Mexico with number of 14 deaths, Afghanistan with 10, Pakistan with 9 and Philippines and Syria with 4 number of deaths in the year 2020.

In the year 2021, according to the report given by reporters without border, India is ranking as 142nd freedom of press out of 180 countries ^[5]: according to this statement we can assume that India is ranking as nearly 32nd country in the list of most dangerous country for journalists in the world. Let's see top 5 states for journalists' deaths in 2021 in India.

There are some of the acts brought up in order to have control over the press in past. They are,



- Press and Registration of Book Act, 1867 - it is an act brought up to have control over the press by regulating the printing presses and newspapers by registering them.
- Official Secrets Act, 1923 – it is the act brought up to keep the secrets of Government from the public. Any person who breaks the secrets or brings hatred to the people against government will result in resignation of that person under Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1932.

CONCLUSION:

“a free press can, of course, be good or bad, but, most certainly without freedom, the press will never be anything but bad”

-Albert Camus

A press is said to be both good and bad. A free press can destroy the one person's freedom or his/her name. a free press can even pulldown a company but without a free press no person can attain democracy. No person can acquire knowledge and no company can be developed. Without free press, there is no democratic country but only a dominating country. In order to acquire free press, there should be,

- Amendment should be in the Indian Constitution in favour of Press
- The life of Journalist must be ensured by special provisions
- Assistance should be given to independent press for their growth
- The state should ensure that there is no threat given to press on matter of reporting any issues regarding government or people in power.

Thus, in order to achieve healthy and democratic country, a free press is very important, therefore, government should take steps accordingly to achieve the main objective (democracy) of the country.

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