

THE BEACON

PRACTICE NEWS BULLETIN OF THE PG STUDENTS OF JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION

Thursday, 10 December, 2024 / St. Joseph's University / Vol: 17 Issue: 53 / www.sjcdeptcomm.wordpress.com

State interests dictate media

Echenren

CAMPUS : Journalist and author Aaker Patel emphasised on Saturday how the media operates in India with no autonomy at a St Joseph's University conclave on December 7, 2024. Indian media operates within a unique framework influenced by corporate ownership, dependence on advertising, and government regulation, he said while addressing the students, academicians, and journalists.

Drawing on Noam Chomsky's model, he called Indian media a "government mouthpiece." Elaborating on its economic fragility, he said that major media organisations like NDTV and Times Now have seen stagnant revenues and declining profitability over the past decade, with much of their advertising revenue now absorbed by global giants like Google and Facebook.

The discussion also highlighted the government's influence over the media through regulatory controls, public sector advertising funds, and raids. Examples like the forced sale of NDTV to Gautam Adani and the denial of licenses to journalists such as Raghav Bahl illustrated how state pressure suppresses dissent.

Especially sensational topics, such as Islamophobia, were found to have minimal impact on ratings, suggesting that such decisions are politically motivated and not audience-driven, he said. "We should expect that a media in an economy that is soft, in a model that no longer has a pathway to profit, and with a government that is willing to use the stick as freely as this one does, we will not see change."

Liberty survived siege, yet 10 yrs were hard

Olivia Debroy

CAMPUS : Digital media is grossly being misused to spread misleading and fake information, stated Krishna Byre Gowda, Revenue Minister of Karnataka on Saturday at a conclave in St Joseph's University (SJU). He described how fake news has been used as a deliberate tool to manipulate public opinion and weaken democratic institutions worldwide and warned, "nothing comes for free".

Addressing the conclave "Journalism @ Digital Crossroads," held on December 7, 2024, organised by the Editors Guild of India in collaboration with the School of Communication and Media Studies of SJU, Gowda identified misinformation and fake news as systemic threats to democracy and freedom of speech, highlighting their far-reaching consequences. "Nothing is free. You need vigilance. And what we have observed over the last 10 years



Krishna Byre Gowda addressing the Conclave at SJU

Debarpita M

around the world is that somehow misleading, misinformation, and false information tend to have a greater reach," he said.

He critically examined the role of media in today's landscape, acknowledging its double role as a "victim" and a "perpetrator" contributing to the decline of freedom of speech. He noted that while some sections

of the media face suppression, others actively distort the truth, mislead the public, and, in their eagerness to align with those in power, compromise the principles of freedom and democracy of our country. Gowda defined modern-era politics as "post-truth politics," reflecting on the extensive reach of manipulated news.

Gowda further spoke on the fragile state of democracy and freedom of speech in India, calling them under "systemic institutional attack" and subjected to active assault. Recognising India's resilience throughout its democratic journey, he observed, "India has always been a miracle of democracy... But in the

last decade, we've witnessed a steep fall in freedom and democracy as reflected in global rankings by organisations like Freedom House and the Economist Intelligence Unit."

Discussing the failures of self-governance, he declared that self-governance is "nothing but an authority for abuse", expressing distrust about the media's ability to regulate itself effectively. Gowda argued that self-regulation often protects the perpetrators of falsehoods, allowing them to dodge accountability. However, he agreed on the need for an evolving framework to safeguard the truth and curb the misuse of freedom of speech.

Emphasising the consequences of fake news and the importance of accountability, he drew attention to the real-life consequences of falsehoods—violence and broken communities. Gowda urged mitigation of these issues with collective vigilance.

Independent media champions the unheard voices

Rupasree

CAMPUS : Independent media houses have the potential to thrive by focusing on voiceless communities and addressing neglected issues, said Dr VH Vasu, the community head of Eedina, during a panel discussion on Journalism @ Digital Crossroads moderated by Lakshmi Chaudhary, the founder of Splainer Media

The panel was held at the conclave organised by the Editor's Guild of India in association with the School of Communication and Media Studies at St Joseph's University Auditorium on December 7, 2024, and witnessed speakers such



Panel of Independent media organisation members

Debarpita M

as Samar Harlankar, the editor of Article 14, Vignesh Vellore- co-founder of the News Minute, and Kavya Sukumar principal & CTO of Lightrock India discussing the topic Creating and Running

Successful Independent Media Organisations. Chaudhary began by examining the evolution of India's independent digital media since 2013, reflecting on evolving challenges, innovations,

media dynamics shifts, and news platforms' success in achieving both scale and independence.

"Media and sustainability are the elephant in the room, which is the fact that Independent Media are under the government's unprecedented attack in India, and there is the threat of punitive action," said Samar Harlankar.

Vellore deliberated on the topic, "Legacy and larger media have not been the fourth pillar of democracy, and so I believe going forward there is hope." However, he added, a massive media empire is not feasible.

The future will be digital : Murthy

Gitanjali

CAMPUS : If they have the "stomach" for it, they will do a great job, said K S Dakshina Murthy, Managing Editor at The Federal, referring to the dedication and hard work that journalism demands. He addressed the budding journalists at St Joseph's University, Bengaluru, during the conclave on 7 December 2024.

As part of a panel discussion at a conclave by the Editors Guild of India in association with St Joseph's University, Bengaluru, along with Murthy, Kanchan Kaur, a senior journalist, Father Dr Richard Rego, Dean at the School of Communication and Media Studies of the St Joseph's University, and the moderator, Anusha Ravi Sood, Executive Editor of South First, deliberated issues related to the journalism curriculum for a digital age. The panel discussed bridging academic and professional experience to give the students a better understanding of the field and how the journalism curriculum needs to be changed. Murthy also highlighted that digital newsrooms are the newsrooms of the future, which is very different from legacy newsrooms.

Combating virtual misinformation

Ourouge RF

CAMPUS : News stories must have credibility, perspective, and balance, and one must get their facts right and verify them, regardless of digital, print, or television media. It is fundamental to journalism, stated Raj Chengappa, Editorial Director of India Today, shedding light on media ethics.

Chengappa was joined by R Jagannath, Editorial Director of Swarajya, KN Hari Kumar, Former Editor of Deccan Herald, and the moderator Dhanya Rajendra,

Editor of News Minute, for a panel discussion on Journalism in the Digital Age: New Challenges, Misinformation, and Media Ethics, organised by the Editors Guild of India in collaboration with St Joseph's University on December 7. The panel discussed the challenges in journalism today, including the spread of misinformation and the importance of media ethics. "Social media gives people the ability to create their own content, whereas

newspapers are objective. Their mission and role are different from the former," said Hari Kumar. He discussed the concepts of press freedom, the distinction between newspapers and social media, and the relevance of newspapers in digital media.

He emphasised that misinformation exists due to this bias, and journalists are equally vulnerable. He added that a journalist aims to inform, not claim the absolute truth.

India's call for digital truth

Merwin Mathias

CAMPUS : India must adopt co-regulation models prioritising transparency and independence over state intervention to combat misinformation, said Dr Sudhir Krishnaswamy, Vice-Chancellor, National Law School of India University, discussing 'Laws governing digital media' at St. Joseph's University Bengaluru in a conclave with the Editors Guild of India (EGI).

Drawing lessons from the European Union's Digital Services Act, he recommended that India adopt co-regulation models focusing on developing a healthy and transparent ecosystem, particularly in

tech hubs like Karnataka. He criticised India's fact-checking approaches. "State-controlled mechanisms and criminal penalties only undermine free speech." He warned that excessive state involvement stifles debate and risks undermining democratic values.

He highlighted the challenges with traditional free speech models, emphasising assumptions that free speech rights are absolute, and explained that truth emerges from open debate. Digital platforms, prioritising profit over truth, are eroding truth ecosystems, with misinformation actors and disengaged audiences further disrupting the process, he added.