



National Council of News and Broadcasting

(Regd. with Niti Aayog under NGO Partnership System, Government of India)

International News and Broadcasting Networks

India's Premier News Agency

(Free, Fair, Fairless Reporting and Web News Channel)

Ref: UNGC/COE/22

Monday, 25 May 2020

H.E. António Guterres
Secretary-General
United Nations
New York, NY 10017
USA

Most Respected Secretary General,

I am pleased to confirm that National Council of News and Broadcasting supports the ten principles of the UN Global Compact with respect to human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption. With this commitment, we express our intent to support the Global Compact advancing these principles, and will make a clear statement of this commitment to our stakeholders and the general public.

We also pledge to participate in and engage with the UN Global Compact, where appropriate and feasible- through, for instance, participation in Country/Local Networks; involvement in specialized initiatives and work streams; engagement in partnership projects; and reviewing and providing commentary to participating companies on their Communications on progress. We recognize that a key requirement for participation in the Global Compact is the submission of a Communication on Engagement (COE) that describes our organization's efforts to support the implementation of the ten principles and to engage with the Global Compact.

We support public accountability and transparency, and therefore commit to report on progress within two years of joining the Global Compact and every two years thereafter according to the Global Compact COE policy.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Anthony Raju
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Who we are...

National Council of News & Broadcasting (NCNB), which is a duly registered Society under the Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860. Majorly we support and covers all news relating to Human Rights, liberties and Social Justice.

National Council of News & Broadcasting (NCNB), which is a leading India's Premier Multimedia News Agency providing content for every information platform, including TV, Internet, broadband, newspapers, and mobiles.

How we work...

Thousands of grass-root freelance Citizen Journalist & bureaus in India working 365 Days absolutely free and voluntarily , to encourage addressing democratic change, public accountability and globalization issues, Strengthening independent journalist trade unions, that are best able to defend media freedom and public scrutiny, Advancing the respect for international standards of media/press freedom, Raising the professional status of journalists, climate in which journalism can be practiced freely, Quality journalism Improving professional and ethical standards, high standards and ethical behavior in the practice of journalism, constant vigilance nu protection/ guarantees of freedom of speech and of the press.

Our Campaign....

Freedom of speech and expression

Freedom of speech is a principle that supports the freedom of an individual or a community to articulate their opinions and ideas without fear of retaliation, censorship, or legal sanction. The term "freedom of expression" is sometimes used synonymously but includes any act of seeking, receiving, and imparting information or ideas, regardless of the medium used.

Freedom of expression is recognized as a human rights under article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and recognized in international human rights law in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Article 19 of the UDHR states that "everyone shall have the right to hold opinions without interference" and "everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice". The version of Article 19 in the ICCPR later amends this by stating that

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the exercise of these rights carries "special duties and responsibilities" and may "therefore be subject to certain restrictions" when necessary or respect of the rights or reputation of others" or or the protection of national security or of public order (order public), or of public health or morals".

Freedom of speech and expression, therefore, may not be recognized as being absolute, and common limitations or boundaries to freedom of speech relate to libel, slander, obscenity, pornography, sedition, incitement, fighting words, classified information, copyright violation, trade secrets, food labeling, non-disclosure agreements, the right to privacy, dignity, the right to be forgotten, public security, and perjury. Justifications for such include the harm principle, proposed by John Stuart Mill in *On Liberty*, which suggests that: "the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others.

The idea of the "offense principle" is also used in the justification of speech limitations, describing the restriction on forms of expression deemed offensive to society, considering factors such as extent, duration, motives of the speaker, and ease with which it could be avoided. With the evolution of the digital age, application of freedom of speech becomes more controversial as new means of communication and restrictions arise.

Freedom of information

Freedom of information is an extension of freedom of speech where the medium of expression is the Internet. Freedom of information may also refer to the right to privacy in the context of the Internet and information technology. As with the right to freedom of expression, the right to privacy is a recognised human rights and freedom of information acts as an extension to this right. Freedom of information may also concern censorship in an information technology context, i.e. the ability to access Web content, without censorship or restrictions.

Freedom of speech, considered the basic freedom by most philosophical thinkers, consists of several facets, including the right to express one's opinion unhindered, unfettered by the fear of retribution. It is one of the most basic elements for a healthy, open-minded democracy. It allows people to freely participate in the social and political happenings of their country.

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In India, this right is granted by Article 19(1)(a). However, this right of freedom to speech and expression is not completely unchecked. Article 19 (2) allows for reasonable restrictions to be imposed on all fundamental rights, including that of freedom to speech and expression.

In *Romesh Thappar v Union of India*, Justice Patanjali has rightfully held that 19(1)(g) is the very basis and essence of the constitution and our democracy. Reasonable restrictions, however, he noted, should be such that others' rights should not be hindered or affected by the acts of one man, in the case of *Menaka Gandhi v. Union of India*.

The judiciary has upheld the restrictions that can be imposed and the author describes them under several subheadings, but the courts have also held that the government's interference in this right has to also be kept in check.

Indian Media need progressive reforms to ensure accountability

“The Indian situation cries out for such an independent, comprehensive, hard look into the culture, practices and ethics of news media and into the questions of what kind of regulatory and governance mechanism need to be put in place,”

Through his paper, 'The Changing Role of the News Media in Contemporary India,' NCNB drew out the paradoxical situation before the media, where it had statutorily established a watchdog, the Press Council of India, without an adequate legal regulatory framework when private satellite television channels had attracted growing public complaints of being a law unto themselves.

To ensure professional and social accountability, the media required to address the demands for well-considered and progressive reforms that expanded the scope of media freedom. Dwelling on the credible-informational, critical-investigative-adversarial as well as 'pastime' functions of the press and listing the derivatives, NCNB underscored the need for contributing to the building of a worthwhile public agenda, where the media participate with others.

NCNB highlighted the various developments in the media scene across the world. The arrival of Julian Assange's WikiLeaks, a completely new kind of digital technology enabling the “not-for-profit” player, had changed the rules of the game for newspapers and news media everywhere. It inspired other

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experiments or ventures to develop technologies, secure electronic drop boxes and platforms that encouraged and enabled whistle-blowing.

Meanwhile, the newspaper industry faced a double squeeze, where the print business subsidised digital journalism, which could not pay for itself, while the latter increased the pressure on newspaper circulation, readership and business as a whole. However, with the internet enjoying a mere 8.40 per cent penetration in India as compared to 36.30 per cent in China, the media in the Asian region had major challenges and opportunities as compared to the developed countries.

Journalism without boundaries

National Council of News and Broadcasting (NCNB), is a leading national & international non-profit and non-governmental organization that safeguards the right to freedom of information. Its mandate is to promote free, independent and pluralistic journalism and to defend media workers. Its advocacy is founded on the belief that everyone requires access to the news and information, inspired by Article 19 of the UN Declaration of Human Rights that recognises the right to receive and share information regardless of frontiers, along with other international rights charters.

India against commercialisation of Media

Important Extract... from the speech of former Vice President of India Dr. Hamid Ansari Ji

Vice-President of India Dr. Hamid Ansari warned that commercialisation of news content for revenue generation could damage the country's polity and economy.

“The recent practice of leveraging political and economic content in our media for overt and covert revenue generation have the malevolent potential to tarnish our polity and even destabilise the economy,” he said inaugurating the M.C. Varghese memorial lecture series organised by the Mangalam group of publications (Kerala) founded by M.C. Varghese.

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Dr. Ansari said the Editors Guild of India and the Press Council of India had investigated the “phenomenon of electoral malpractices of paid news and coverage packages.”

“It is now clear that amongst the pillars of democracy, it is only the Fourth Estate that has an identifiable business and commercial persona.

“The pursuit of profit has altered the profile of the media entrepreneur. Today, a media enterprise is seen as a necessary subsidiary for a growing business enterprise, a political party and even individuals seeking to leverage public influence for private gain.”

Commercial success of media organisations had become a function of advertising revenues rather than subscription and circulation figures. The advertisers had thus replaced the recipients of media products. By the same logic, circulation figures, meant to attract advertising, became more important than content.

“Deception, opaque flow of political information, or slanted economic data” prevented political and economic actors from exercising rational and well-considered choices, Dr. Ansari said. They impeded the democratic process and could lead to public disenchantment.

Due to rampant media growth and the phenomenon of convergence of news media, entertainment and telecom, the demarcation among journalism, public relations, advertising and entertainment was rapidly eroding.

“Vibrant journalism monitors the exercise of power in the State and stands for the rights and freedoms of citizens. It informs and empowers citizens rather than entertains and titillates them. Vibrant journalism is based on professional ethics and should be the rule rather than the exception it has come to be.”

Dr. Ansari, in his tribute to Varghese, stated that his rise from a newspaper boy to the head of the Mangalam Group was a source of inspiration to every journalist, entrepreneur and social activist.

Former Chief Justice of India K.G. Balakrishnan said media should “present accurate and balanced reports.”

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Introspection

He called for introspection on the recent commercialisation of the media which had “some adverse effect on journalistic practices.”

When media establishments became preoccupied with the size of their readership or viewership, there was a greater likelihood of journalists resorting to intrusive newsgathering methods and editors approving content without verifying the relevant facts or explaining their proper background. While practices such as ‘sting-operations’ and high-decibel reporting might be justified in exceptional circumstances, they should not be resorted to as a matter of routine. Especially with regard to the legal system, there had been a raging debate about how unrestrained reporting often diluted the ‘right to fair trial’ for the accused in high-profile cases.

Price war flayed

Mathrubhoomi Publications group Chairman and Managing Director M.P. Veerendrakumar hit out at some big corporate media houses for initiating price war and commercialisation of news content which affected small and medium newspapers. The media groups should function like a community and should not try to destroy or dominate each other. This sort of competition was “unethical” and a danger to democracy, he said.

Many wings under the umbrella of NCNB

National Council of News & Broadcasting (NCNB) has constituted various **Units / Wings / Councils / Coordinating Points** at National & International level to cover genuine, authentic, undisputable, guaranteed, fair and grass-root news to make our effort to change the society and to reach to every individual of the world and to promote freedom of Press, Freedom of Speech, Welfare of Journalists & Press & Media Ethics etc.

All India News papers Federation

All India Press Federation

All India News & Broadcasting Federation

National News & Broadcasting Networks

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Lawyers Collective for Freedom of Speech
All India Council for Media Reforms & Accountability
Journalists Council of India
Media Council of India
National Media Summit
Employees Union News & Broadcasting

International News papers Federation
International Press Federation
International News & Broadcasting Federation
International News & Broadcasting Networks
International Lawyers Collective for Freedom of Speech
International Council for Media Reforms & Accountability
International Journalists Council
International Media Council
International Media Summit

Stop Fake News

Fake news (also known as junk news, pseudo-news, alternative facts or hoax news) is a form of news consisting of deliberate disinformation or hoaxes spread via traditional news media (print and broadcast) or online social media. Digital news has brought back and increased the usage of fake news, or yellow journalism. The news is then often reverberated as misinformation in social media but occasionally finds its way to the mainstream media as well. If fake news has no concern for the truth at all, there it would be a form of bullshit as defined by the philosopher Harry Frankfurt.

Fake news is written and published usually with the intent to mislead in order to damage an agency, entity, or person, and/or gain financially or politically, often using sensationalist, dishonest, or outright fabricated headlines to increase readership. Similarly, clickbait stories and headlines earn advertising revenue from this activity.

The relevance of fake news has increased in post-truth politics. For media outlets, the ability to attract viewers to their websites is necessary to generate

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online advertising revenue. Publishing a story with false content that attracts users benefits advertisers and improves ratings. Easy access to online advertisement revenue, increased political polarization and the popularity of social media, which competes with legitimate news stories. Hostile government actors have also been implicated in generating and propagating fake news, particularly during elections.

Confirmation bias and social media algorithms like those used on Facebook and Twitter further advance the spread of fake news. Modern impact is felt for example in vaccine hesitancy.

Impact of Social Media

Social media are interactive computer-mediated technologies that facilitate the creation or sharing of information, ideas, career interests and other forms of expression via virtual communities and networks. The variety of stand-alone and built-in social media services currently available introduces challenges of definition; however, there are some common features:

User-generated content such as text posts or comments, digital photos or videos, and data generated through all online interactions, is the lifeblood of social media.

Users create service-specific profiles and identities for the website or app that are designed and maintained by the social media organization.

Social media facilitate the development of online social networks by connecting a user's profile with those of other individuals or groups.

Users usually access social media services via web-based apps on desktops and laptops, or download services that offer social media functionality to their mobile devices (e.g., smartphones and tablets). As users engage with these electronic services, they create highly interactive platforms through which individuals, communities, and organizations can share, co-create, discuss, participate and modify user-generated content or self-curated content posted online.

Observers have noted a wide range of positive and negative impacts of social media use. Social media can help to improve an individual's sense of connectedness with real or online communities and can be an effective communication (or marketing) tool for corporations, entrepreneurs, non-profit organizations, advocacy groups, political parties, and governments.

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