

Essay on Freedom of the Press

Similar to:

The Importance of the Press in Democracy

The Importance of Press Freedom

Hints: Introduction, Importance of freedom, Press in politics, Hindrance to free the press, Way to free the press, To what extent the press should be free, Conclusion.

Introduction

Freedom of expression is a basic right and pre-condition of democracy. In a democratic society, people have the right to express their opinion without any fear or restriction. Since the press is the only way to express public opinion, it bears a vital role in every democratic society. Its influence is so great that it is considered as the "Fourth State". Napoleon used to say "Four hostile newspapers are more to be feared than thousand bayonets".

Importance of freedom

Freedom of the press is the pre-condition of democracy. To ensure political, economical, and social development freedom of the press is a must. The importance of the press in some specific sectors is discussed briefly.

a. Press in politics: The press plays the most important role in politics. In most of the countries now governments are formed by popular votes. As a result, it is called that the public is the main source of all power. Press has a great influence to create this power. A government remains in power or goes out of power by the

trend of public opinion and the press is the most important single factor in molding public opinion. Really, an independent constructive press is a powerful check on arbitrary governments. The press had a great role in the 90's mass revolt in our country against army autocrats. French Revolution was held and succeeded due to writings of Rusho, Valtaire, Monteskura, etc. famous writers.

b. Press and justice: Newspapers bring out any acts of injustice, oppression, or mal-administration to the notice of the people. As a result, many people get rid of injustice and administrative malpractices. Without freedom of the press, it is quite impossible to establish human rights.

c. Press and civilization: Freedom of the press is very important to eliminate all superstitions from society and to establish a civilized and conscious society. If the freedom of the press does not exist in a society, it will be a stagnant and static society. Because only the free press can ensure the formulation of modern and dynamic society. Afghanistan was going back due to a lack of freedom of the press.

d. Press in the economy: The press can bring out the socio-economic problems of a country and can suggest probable solutions. It is possible only when the press will be free.

Hindrance to free the press But, reality says that it is not so easy to free the press. In all countries, a newspaper is either owned or controlled by a business magnate or government and it is used as a weapon of its owner. As a result, its usefulness is reduced to a great extent. Whoever might be controlling it, he necessarily limits its freedom by his own needs and requirements. In third-world countries, it is a common picture. These countries are mostly ruled by autocrats in various forms. Sometimes, they come to power by unfair means or resorting to military power. So, the base of their

power is not among the people. As a result, they are not respectful of democratic norms and values at all. That is the reason behind their interference to free the press. In third world countries, almost all business magnates have an unfair business. As a result, they also create pressure not to publish correct news.

Way to free the press

The creation of mass- consciousness is the main way to free the press. On the contrary, the free press is the pre-condition of creating mass consciousness. So, ensuring freedom of the press is very tough. Legislation, of course, should guarantee interference by the government and other miscreants. Besides, there should be independent-minded editors who have the courage to express their opinion freely and fairly.

But, real freedom of the press can be ensured only by ensuring a true democracy where a people can function freely. Legislation alone cannot ensure freedom of the press. It can operate as a supplementary.

Another indirect but important factor is the economy of a country. Without fulfilling the basic needs of the general people, it is not possible to ensure true democracy as well as freedom of the press.

To what extent the press should be free

There is a term “Yellow Journalism” which is well-known in media now. Sometimes, we get a conflicting or false report or news that is supplied intentionally. In Bangladesh, we see that almost all the papers are publishing reports which have been blatantly prepared in favor of a political party either in power or opposition. Reading any paper every person can say, which party is its ultimate target of

attack. Besides, some newspapers, magazines, etc. are publishing vulgar news to increase sales and earn more profit. For this reason, the press, which was once service-oriented, has become a business. So, the question is being arisen "To what extent the press should be free"? In response to this question, it can be said that we must have to free the press. The problems which are mentioned above are controllable by legislation and the creation of mass consciousness. Actually, the positive influence of freedom of the press is several times more than its negative influence.

Conclusion

A free press is the symbol of free people and it is a basic right for any person to express his/her opinion freely. Besides, press freedom is a must for a true democracy. So, the government should ensure freedom of the press and guarantee to free it from all arbitrary interference. Editors should keep in their mind that "Pen is mightier than sword". So, they must perform their duties without any fear. Finally, it is the duty of ultimate beneficiaries to demand and defend freedom of the press as a priceless heritage. Because, there is no question or debate regarding necessity of press freedom.