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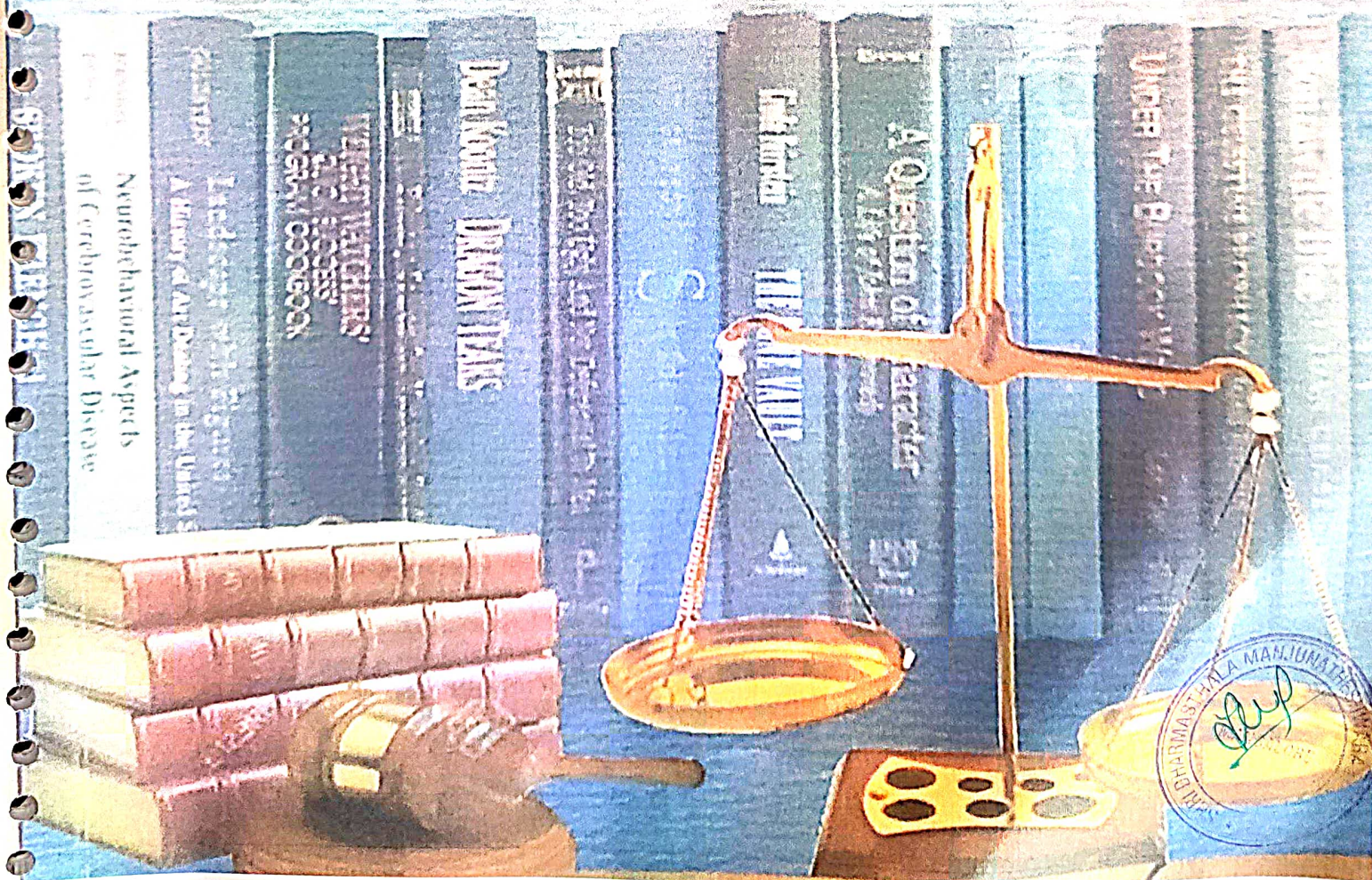
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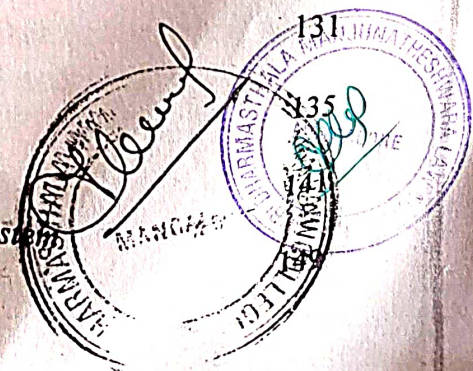


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WHAT EXACTLY IS PROGRESS, DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH WITHOUT FREEDOM???

Mr. Amith S. M. *

Mr. Mohan Kumar K. **

Education is considered to be an indicator of human as well as societies' progress as education is one such tool which contributes to the development of rational thought and also to develop secular values but the same education is of no value if it doesn't make an individual think. We see people with multiple degrees but at the same time they lack basic common-sense, which in turn contributes to the several problems that a country face. It could generally be argued that, a dumb population ruins any countries rich cultural heritage, and also peaceful co-existence of human beings.

Speech is one of the great aspect which a man possess, through speech people can convey a lot of things; positive as well as negative; speech also serves as a tool for criticism and social change, and freedom of speech and expression is one among the natural right which a man has, just on the virtue of being a human. "Everyone has the right to freedom of speech, opinion and expression; which includes the freedom to hold opinions without interreference and to seek and receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers", proclaims the Universal Declaration of Human Rights¹.

Article 19(1)(a) of Indian Constitution declares that all citizens have the right to freedom of speech and expression, meaning that, one has the right to express one's own convictions and opinions freely through any modes of communications, it could be through language, art, writing, signs etc. but the same right to freedom of speech and expression is subject to limitation under Article 19(2) of the constitution taking into consideration the larger interest of the community². But in the last few years the free speech even though part of the constitution doesn't actually seem to be practiced, or rather it has lost value, wherein critical thinkers, writers get the tag of anti-national for speaking up against the atrocities and violations of human rights taking place in and across the country.

There were times in the country, wherein criticism were taken in a sportive spirit and inculcated to bring about certain changes in the society, and tool of criticism has

* Asst. Professor, SDM Law College, Mangaluru

** Lecturer, SDM Law College, Mangaluru

¹ https://www.un.org/en/udhrbook/pdf/udhr_booklet_en_web.pdf

² <http://legislative.gov.in/sites/default/files/COI-updated.pdf>



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helped the societies grow stronger, but today the same criticism is feared by some sections of the society or rather certain organizations and this has resulted in suppressing of one's free speech and right to criticize by selective tagging of people as anti-nationals, urban Naxalite's and to the extent of sedition charges upon the people for voicing out the suppressions taking place in the societies.³

Democracy is where one has the daring to accept the mistakes, digest the criticisms and take in corrective measures and change oneself for the larger interests of the people, but today we are living in a Kakistocracy, wherein those with power fear criticism and suppress the voice of the citizens, and impose a communication blackout denying more than lakh citizens the provision to voice out their concerns, which can be termed the Marxian way "Alienation"⁴, though the term is used in a capitalist sense, the same term stays valid in the societies today,

as the opportunity to interact develops "Class Consciousness" which would in turn result in a "Class-Struggle" and bring about a drastic change in the conditions for the welfare of the members of the society. The fear of this uprising has resulted in what I term, alienation; communication blackout. as it's the only way in modern 21st century to suppress the voice of the people and rule them.

If we look back at the history of any world societies, even under more rigid rules there were certain writers, publishers, print media, which played a prominent role in creating mass awareness and creating class consciousness and helping in creation of mass protests against the atrocities of the governing as well as non-governing elites, we have an apt example to quote, the French Revolution 1799, influenced by the works of several philosophers like Montesquieu's The Spirit of Laws, Voltaire's Critical Writings stressing on Freedom of Speech, Rousseau's Social Contract are a landmark in the history of French Society. Like wise Dr Ambedkar's Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha and most importantly the Constitution brought some major changes in the functioning of the country. These iconic personalities reached to the mass and spread awareness or rather made them to think rationally and prompted them to fight for a cause, the mantra of Dr Ambedkar 'Educate, Agitate, organize" is definitely a tool of social change.

Though the role of media is a significant one in social transformation and reaching out to the masses with authentic and genuine information's, majority of the media seems to be taking a negative stride and involving themselves in circulating certain personal agendas of certain groups, rather it has become a sold out agent working for their own financial stability, and thus selling out their values and ethics. Recently, the Australian print media houses, in protest of government interference in the press, resulted in them protesting by blackening the front page of the dailies and all the print media houses cooperated with one another, something which I call the

³ <https://www.thenewsminute.com/article/holding-me-too-urban-naxal-sign-complaint-filed-against-girish-karnad-87966>

⁴ <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/pdf/Capital-Volume-I.pdf>

development of class-consciousness amongst the media groups. Some media houses in some countries protest and revolt, whereas majority in some countries fail to revolt rather restrain from revolt signifying that they have sold themselves to the powers of certain groups and have accepted to serve them as a slave.

The freedom of press is as important as the freedom of human beings. The journalists act as a watchdog of human welfare and they play a major role in exposing various discriminations, exploitations, corruptions etc and hence their life should be protected by the law, but then law has been manipulated in such a way that, credible journalists are made to suffer for their works. In recent times, a journalist who reported the mid-day meal scheme of a state, where the kids were served and forced to eat chapati with salt, was rewarded with a charge sheet filed and getting him arrested with government interference. And on the other hand, a journalist wins Ramon Magsaysay Award for his credible work, and no other media houses telecast this news, neither he is congratulated by those in power, as he never budged to their demands. And when one wins Nobel Prize, rather than acknowledging their achievement some go to the extent of making comments about their personal lives, their spouses etc. So, this symbolically says how the country is progressing and how it will impact the younger as well as future generations.

A power which doesn't allow rational thoughts, a power which doesn't respect and treat well its citizens, a power which doesn't provide welfare measures and secures the life of people, a power which misuses the tax payers hard earned money, a power which manipulates and spreads lie and hatred amongst the masses, a power which supresses the voice, a power which manipulates law for its own benefits, a power which promotes hatred and communal riots, a power which makes some individuals feel insecure despite being the proud citizen of the country for years together, a power which silences the voices of the mass and much more, moreover a power which doesn't respect the holy book (Constitution) can never really progress and can only regress and eventually ruining the lives of its citizens forever.

If you silence one Lankesh, you are developing many more Lankesh, if you kill one Kalburgi, you are developing many more Kalburgi's, if you try to supress the voice of the masses through communication blackouts' the voice will still rise and they have the power to bring in some drastic changes, if you file sedition charges on few, there will be many more voices which arise, and all these uprising will bring back the faith amongst the people and create a consciousness and they will join together to keep the values enshrined in the holy book (Constitution) of any country safe. Masses are more powerful than the power, the world history is an example.

You can fool all the people some of the time, and some of the people all the time, but you cannot fool all the people all the time

- Abraham Lincoln

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