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Truth is a rare commodity despite the freedom enjoyed by the print and electronic media

Outlines

1) Introduction

Thesis Statement:

Despite the freedom given to print and electronic media, truth is rare to find. However by taking corrective measures, social media and print media can be revamped to project truth.

2) Overview of print and social media:

3) How truth is a rare commodity despite the freedom enjoyed by print and electronic media?

i) Pressure from government and corporate owners hinders the projection of truth.

- (ii) Partisan media outlets project biased news rather than objective reality
- (iii) Spreading information without fact-checking leads to the dissemination of misinformation
- (iv) Infotainment of news to get TRP obstructs the coverage of truth
- (v) Abundance of news makes it difficult to distinguish truth from lies.
- (vi) The increase trend of social media journalism without having the required credentials reduces the coverage of truth.

4, Measures to enhance the spread of truth by media outlets

- (i) Enhance media literacy to distinguish truth from fake news
- (ii) Legal protection to journalists from the undue

pressure of high
authorities

(iii) Institutions to regulate
the news content to
reduce the likelihood
of false news

(iv) Strengthening of defamation
law to discourage
misinformation

v) Impose penalties and
fines for disseminating
false news

6) Conclusion

Essay

"If you are not careful, the newspaper will have you hating the people who are being oppressed, and loving the people who are doing oppression" (Malcolm X). He aptly highlighted the fact that media outlets do not project credible news. In the age of information, truth is increasingly become rare due to pressure from high authorities. Similarly, partisan media outlets spread biased news not objective reality. Moreover, spreading information without prior fact-checking and intainment of news hinder the coverage of truth. Therefore, certain measures should be taken to enhance the dissemination of truth by print and social media. These measures include enhancing media literacy

and extending legal protection to journalists from external pressure and threats. Furthermore, imposing strict penalties and strengthening defamation law can discourage the spread of misinformation. Therefore, despite the freedom given to print and electronic media, truth is rare to find. However, by taking corrective measures, social media and print media can be revamped to project truth.

Print media and electronic media are two forms of mass communication. Print media is a traditional way to convey information in the form of physical printed materials. Print media encompasses newspapers, magazines, books, journals. On the other hand, social media is a modern tool of disseminating information through electronic devices.

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It includes Television, radio and internet.

Truth is a rare commodity due to pressure from government and corporate owners which hinder the projection of truth. People with high authorities intimidate journalist to project the news which serve their hidden agendas. For instance, during water gate scandal President Nixon of the US put pressure on the Washington Post to not give coverage to the scandal. Thus, the undue pressure from the authorities deters journalists from reporting truth.

Partisan media outlets project biased news rather than objective reality. These outlets aligned themselves with a particular party, as they receive funds from it. As a result, they glorify the policies of one party and bash the policies of another party. For example,

Fox News, an American News channel, is aligned with Republican party and the Microsoft National Broadcast Corporation (MSNBC), an American news channel, has its tilt towards Democratic party.

Thus, partisan media outlets hinder the projection of truth as they pursue the agendas of a particular party and protect its interests.

Spreading information without fact-checking leads to the dissemination of misinformation. In the race to give coverage to a particular news, media houses often neglect the verification of a particular piece of information. As a result, misinformation spreads like wild-fire. For example, during COVID-19, social media circulated fake news regarding the origin of virus and the effectiveness of vaccines against the disease. Thus, dissemination of news without

Verifying the credibility of information source leads to the spread of fake news.

Infotainment of news to get TRP (Television Rating Point) obstructs the coverage of truth. The sensational news gets more viewership; therefore, truth is compromised for the personal benefits of media outlets. They do not even hesitate from ~~sensationalizing~~ ^{sensationalizing} the tragic crimes.

To illustrate, every development of Zainab Ansari's rape case and Dua Zehra missing case was presented in a dramatic manner that had nothing to do with the reality. Thus, infotainment of news is another impediment to the coverage of truth.

Abundance of news makes it difficult to distinguish truth from lies. Every journalist interpretes news as per his own worldview. This leads to

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the different interpretation of one news. As a result, it becomes difficult for readers to get down to the bottom of truth. For instance, Yuval Noah Harari stated in his book "21 lessons for 21st Century", "Censorship no longer works by hiding information from you; censorship works by flooding you with immense amount of misinformation or irrelevant information." Thus, abundance of information hinders truth from reaching people.

The increase trend of social media journalism without having the required credentials reduces the coverage of truth. Most of the people who are not adept in the art of journalism use social media to share information without checking the credibility of information. This break opens the flood gates of fake news. Thus, social media journalism, particularly journalists having rudimentary

knowledge about the art of journalism, adds to the prevailing trend of misinformation.

The preceding paragraphs explained how truth is a rare commodity. Now, in the following paragraphs corrective measures will be explained to enhance the spread of truth by print media and social media.

Enhance media literacy to distinguish truth from false news. People will not fall prey to false news and misinformation after acquiring media literacy. For instance, Finland inculcates media literacy in early stages of life by making it part of the school curriculum. Thus, media literacy prevents the spread of false news.

Legal protection should

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be provided to journalists from the undue pressure of authorities. It will give rise to press freedom and the dissemination of truth. Several countries have passed legislation in this regard. For instance, the Press Act (1969) is a remarkable legislation to protect journalists, passed by Norwegian Parliament. Thus, legal protection to journalists paves the way towards Press Freedom and spread of credible news.

Institutions should be established to regulate the news content to reduce the likelihood of fake news. These institutions will regulate the content of print media and social media for fake news. For example, Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA), a federal institution, regulates the media.

content. Thus, establishment of independent institutions help in the dissemination of truth and prevent the spread of misinformation.

Strengthening of defamation law to discourage misinformation. It will discourage people to spread fake news about others, as it would have legal repercussions. Several countries have passed defamation laws. Notably, the UK Defamation Act 2013 acts as a barrier against spreading calumny. Thus, strengthening of defamation laws help prevent the spread of fake news.

Imposing strict penalties and fines for disseminating fake news pave the way towards responsible journalism. The fear of fines and punishments deters people from spreading disinformation. As a result,

People verify the facts before printing it in the newspapers and putting up on the social media. For instance, in Singapore people are charged with \$36,000 fine and 5 years imprisonment. Thus, fines and punishments prove to be effective tools against the perpetrators of disinformation.

In a nutshell, despite the freedom given to print and electronic media, truth is a rare commodity. It has several reasons: tampering with news on the behalf of high authorities, partisan media outlets, infotainment news and abundance of news. Therefore, several measures should be taken to combat the menace of disinformation. It includes legal protection to journalists, enhance media literacy and laws to discourage the spread of

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all these measures in
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