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Management of Paid News & It's Effects

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Introduction

To Inform, to educate the people are the main objectives of the newspaper. There are important goals also. Newspapers also entertain the people and give knowledge to them. To create public awareness, to help people to form their opinion is also function of newspaper. Now a day's big media houses are owned by politicians and industrialists. Remaining newspaper owners are in close relation with these two. Many reputed newspapers and Electronic News channels accepting paid news. Management of paid news, which is ban by Law, is common things now a days in India. The main reason behind this is yellow journalism which includes paid news. Paid News means to get publish the news, article or reviews in any type of media by accepting money or any consideration. Press council of India which regulates the newspapers, Election Commission, Parliament and court also agrees that the paid news culture is spreading rapidly in India. Even readers are also well-known about the yellow journalism. As per survey, paid news culture started in India from 1967 Loksabha Election. The ratio of paid news in national newspapers is 30%, state level newspapers 50% and local newspapers it is 75 to 90 %. Total 28 Indian language newspapers publish their editions. Media has become profit making industry.

News is free to all, but advertisement requires the charges which are not affordable. Press council has issued guidelines. According to it, the main difference between advertisement and news is cleared by the word disclaimer. Advertisement is for selling purpose while purpose of news is to give information, entertainment, give further knowledge etc. The purpose of news changes according to the situation and need. During the election, paid news misleads the people. It affects the decision making power of voters and their right to elect clean and fair government. Once the wrong and corrupt candidates are elected, there are serious problems to the democracy.

Paid news are seen during the Loksabha election, Legislative election and Local body elections. The issue is so serious that whole democracy is in jeopardized. Political parties and Media requested Election Commission to take strict action against paid news. Parliament also discussed on paid news. Election Commission and political parties arranged a two meetings in which it was resolved to prepare action plan to curb the evil of paid news. It has shown good results. Election Commission has appointed Media Certification and Inspection committee at district and state level. The main work of committee is to see whether there is any advertisement in news of print or electronic media. It takes action against the candidate. When there is complain regarding paid news, the committee investigates the complaint. The expenditure incurred on paid news should be shown in election expenditure by the candidate. If does not happen, committee suggest Election Commission to issue notice to the candidate. The committee conveys decision to the



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candidate and his party. State committee check the challenges against the District Committee's decision regarding all paid news cases. In certain cases, it work on Su motto basis and orders concerned Election Officer to issue notice to candidate. After the orders of District Committee are passed and it is challenged in the office of State Committee, it gives its verdict within 96 hours. The copy of it is forwarded to the candidate and District Committee. The orders of both, District and State Committee can be challenged with Election Commissioner. The decision of Commission is final, it can't be challenged. If the candidate is not satisfied with decision of District Commission, he can approach to the State Committee within 48 hours. In case if candidate is not satisfied, he can go to the Election Commission within two days.

Economy of Newspaper

To start and run a newspaper is not easy job. It needs huge capital investment and lots of efforts. Trained, skilled and talented manpower is required. One should have capacity to bear the losses for so many years. Patient is required. Beside this, modern technology, best services, different and qualitative news is the demand of this business. Those who fulfill these conditions can stay here. That's why common man cannot afford to start newspapers. Only industrialists and politicians who have black money can enter in this business. Today, the cost of production is increased to such a height that the old and well established newspapers also rethinking about their business. Administration expenditure is also high. If one want to continue his newspaper, he require qualitative staff which demand attractive salary. The main source of income is commercial and government advertisement. Income from circulation can't meet the expenditure. A single copy of newspaper costs for Rs. 10 to 15. Because of advertisement it is affordable to sale for Rs. 3 to 4. The loss of new edition is covered by the profit earning editions in other cities.

Meaning of Paid news

News means what is new to the other. News also means the news coming from all the directions i.e. north, east, west, south. Which is not known to others, new for them is news. The matters which a person wants to suppress are news. A different phenomenon like man bites dogs is news. The things which were not known yesterday becomes today's news.

Paid news is one of the kinds of corruption which one can find in print media, new channel, web journalism. News doesn't require to pay money, but advertisement need money. Paid news are paid in the form of money, article or in any other exchange which is demanded by the print media owner. The regulatory authority which regulates newspaper i.e. Press council of India, has defined paid news. Election commission has accepted the same definition. Following is the definition `` Paid News means to get publish the news, article or reviews in any type of media by accepting money or things.`` Paid news mostly appears during the time of Local Body elections as well as Legislative Assembly and Lok Sabha election.

Action by Election commission



During the Loksabha election, Legislative election and Local body elections, the Election Commission came across the paid news and its effects. The problem is so serious that whole democracy is in jeopardy. Political parties and Media requested Election Commission to take strict action against paid news. Even Parliament also discussed on paid news. Election Commission and political parties arranged a meeting on 4th October 2010 and on 9th March 2011. It was resolved to draft action plan to curb the evil of paid news.

Committees to curb Paid News

To curb the paid news, Election Commission has appointed Media Certification and Inspection committee at district and state level. The main work of committee is to see whether there is any advertisement in news of print or electronic media. It takes action against the candidate.

Functions of committee

This is committee investigate the complaint about paid news. If the expenditure incurred on paid news is not shown in election expenditure by the candidate, that time committee suggest Election Commission to issue notice to the candidate. The committee then informs its decision to the candidate and his party. State committee check the challenges made against the District Committee's decision regarding all paid news cases. In certain cases, it work on Su motto basis and orders concerned Election Officer to issue notice to candidate. After the orders of District Committee are passed and it is challenged in the office of State Committee, it gives its verdict within 96 hours. The copy of it is forwarded to the candidate and District Committee. The orders of both, District and State Committee can be challenged with Election Commissioner. The decision of Commission is final, it cannot be challenged. If the candidate is not satisfied with decision of District Commission, he can approach to the State Committee within 48 hours. Even if he is not satisfied there, he is allowed to go to the Election Commission within 48 hours.

Action against Media

When it is proved that the print media has accepted paid news then the Election Commission forward the matter to the Press Council of India. In case of electronic media, the case is sent to the National Broadcasting Standard Authority, for further action. Many newspapers publish paid news, but very few complaints are registered with ECI because local machinery work under the impression of leaders and newspapers.

Identification of paid news

Identical articles with photographs and headlines appearing in competing publications carrying by-lines of different authors around the same time. On the same page of specific newspapers, articles praising competing candidates claiming that both are likely to win the same elections. News item stating that one candidate is getting the support of **each and every section of society and that he would win elections** from the constituency. News items favouring a candidate, **not carrying any byline**. Newspaper publishing a banner headline stating that a party/candidate is ready to create history in the state/constituency but not carrying any news item related to this



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headline. News item saying that the good work done by a Party/Candidate had marginalised the electoral prospects of the other party/candidate in the state with each and every sentence of the news item in favour of the party/candidate. There are instances of **fixed size news items**, each say of a length of 125-150 words with a double-column photo. The fixed size news items hid more than they revealed. News items are seldom written in such a rigid format and size whereas advertisements are most often. In specific newspapers, multiple font types and multiple drop case styles were noticed within the same page of a single newspaper. This happened because just about everything – the layouts, fonts, printouts, photographs – was provided by candidates who had paid for slots in the pages of the newspaper. Publishing same photos, same article or news with same title in different newspaper. More and more publicity to a particular candidate and not publishing the news of opposite candidate.

Management of Paid news

Management Level

Some Local newspapers are run on ownership basis, while some newspapers are managed by trust. Some newspapers started its business as private firm. Sakal, Lokmat, Divyamarathi are example. Format may differ but the election paid news money goes to pocket of owner. Management decide the rate of paid news and order to the editors of various edition to work accordingly. Sometimes, owner directly deals with the candidates.

Editorial Level

When the editor is paid servant and working at remote area, he himself become the dealer of paid news. Owner gives the instructions, but they are not followed. Editor decides his own rate of paid news and get it published. He misguide the owner about income side of paid news. Some owner or management of regional newspaper sanction full power to the editor to deal the this black business.

Reporter`s Level

Newspaper regularly accepts paid news trust their reporters. Some reporters are specially appointed for this purpose. Marketing departments employees are also assigned this job in District and state level newspaper. Reporter is in regular touch of political leaders. The business of paid news depends on the mutual trust. Reporters plays important role. So, management of some newspaper gives clear cut directions and power to the reporters to collect the paid news.

Causes of Paid News

1.No Ethics

Newspapers like Losatta (Express Group), Maharashtra Times (Times group) doesn't accept paid news during any election. This is the present situation. Few years ago, Sakal, Lokmat, Divyamarathi refused paid news but now, the observations says that they have started paid news.



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In Loksbaha election April 2014, Lokmat and Divyamarathi published advertisement saying no to paid news. Times group ran the special campaign for this. Local newspapers and news channel openly accepted the paid news packages. So, there is no business and moral ethics remained with newspapers.

2.Laws are effect less

The famous case of paid news against former chief minister of Maharashtra, Ashok Chavan is pending before High Court since four and half years. There is no concrete proof because no receipt is given. Law dements proof.

3.Greediness

Without any efforts the newspapers get money. No special space is provided like advertisement. This business is gives hard cash. So, greediness of owner is increasing day by day.

4.Cut throat competition

Regional newspapers have created great challenge before local newspapers. There is cut throat competition amongst the regional newspapers. To face the competition, to grow and survival, the paid news is accepted.

5.Inactive constitutional Institutions

Election commission has appointed District and state committee to detect and take action against paid news. Parliament also appointed all party committee. Judiciary is also there. But all are helpless. Some of them is purposely remain inactive.

6.Political system

Politics is not easy job. Industrialists, NRI are financing political parties. Those who are wealthy, becomes M.P. or M.L.A. When they get elected, they start corruptions. The black money is uses for paid news. This vicious circle is impossible to break.

7.View of society

The negative view of society is also responsible for paid news. Their unhealthy attitude that system can't change is dangerous not only to the nation but also to the democracy. People enjoy the holiday for voting and don't go for voting. In India, people who doesn't vote, indirectly elects the candidate.

8.Economical problems

Economy of local newspaper and channel is very week. Number of people and families depends of particular newspaper. Administration expenditure is also bulk. Competition has created the



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question of survival. To pay the salary of staff, meet the daily expenditure has become difficult task for the management of newspaper. So, they take resort of paid news. Same is the case of reporters.

9. Nexus

There is nexus between leaders and journalist from Delhi to village level. Administration and police are also managed. Even though there are committees at various level, all deliberately neglect the paid news. Political party themselves approach to the newspaper and offer paid news. Big deal is there between leaders and newspapers before and during the election.

Effects of Paid news

1. Harmful to the Country

Paid News destroys the ideal political system. Politicians seeks to circumvent election expenditure laws/ ceiling. They try to corrupt the whole system. One can win the election even though he is behind bar. This ruddy approaches is dangerous to the democracy.

2. Creation of Black Money

Like advertisement ,there is no receipt of paid news. It is never shown in account. It means it is black money. Old District level newspapers owner receives minimum 1 corer from black money from Z.P. & Municipal election. Assembly election and Loksabha election also give him same amount. If it is the case of Big regional newspaper, the amount is 2 to 5 corer for each edition from a city edition. If there are more than one editions the amount increases.

3. Fourth pillar is weaken

It is criticism that other pillars of democracy are failed. Newspaper is the fourth pillar of democracy. If it is corrupt and engaged in yellow journalism. In non election period newspapers generally avoid to criticize the leaders who gives paid news. Nexus is established among the leaders, culprits and newspapers.

4. Serious problem

If all pillars of democracy are failed, where shall people approach against injustice is the question. The situation created in future, would be revolutionary. Newspapers and News Channel are bias now days, because they are owned by leader or industrialist which have relation with government. If these institutions are neglecting common man, then he is force to violate the laws.

5. Paid News misleads people

Paid news always misleads the public and hampers the ability of people to form correct opinions. Election process is the sole of democracy. Poor but honest and candidate having good character



would never get elected. This is not expected and affordable in democratic country like India.

6. Paid News adversely affects level playing field

Paid news originates from black money. This is possible to only the party or candidate who is or was in power. The new party or candidate like Aam Admi Party can't compete the ruling party. Because the ruling party always raise funds from commission in various contracts. So, Paid News adversely affects level playing field.

7. Demoralization of Society

When people pledge to fight against corrupt party or candidate, they has option of election. This is the only way to change the candidate and get the candidate which is liked by people. But the paid news changes the situation. People are demoralized as this is the trend.

8. Wealthy candidates always win

Election process is very costly in India. Only reach personalities afford it. Common man can't even think about it. The political system and the mindset of the people has accepted this fact. Economically weakened candidate can never win.

9. Wrong message to the society

When corrupt candidates always win, wrong message spread in the society. People disappoint. They avoid casting their vote. The voters who don't caste vote elects the government..

10. Paid News causes undue influence

Paid news causes undue influence on voters and also affects their Right to Information. As per Indian Contract Act, the contract is void when there is undue influence. The opinion of the people should not be tempted. But paid news causes undue influence.

11. Wrong Image of Media

Paid news creates wrong image of media in the eyes of people. People thinks that general news also requires money. All the newspapers and news channels doesn't accept paid news. But the wrong image is created that all types of media publish paid news.

12. Bad culture in journalism

Paid news create and cultivate bad culture in journalism. The new journalist thinks that, paid news is the part of policy of newspaper. Paid news becomes trends and when there is no election, journalist indulges in yellow journalism. When common news is there, journalist ask money to publish.

13. Credibility of Newspaper decreases



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Newspaper is fourth pillar. Society at large still trust newspapers. Though, today is the age of news channel and social media, people prefers and trust newspapers. The circulation of newspapers in advanced countries is decreasing day by day, while in India, it is increasing. But the paid news is hampering the credibility of newspaper.

14. Credibility of Journalism decreases

Paid news not only reduces the credibility of newspaper but also decline the image of journalism. It is fact that few reporters and news reporters doing wrong practices, but people thinks that all the reporters are doing same, all the newspapers are doing yellow journalism. So, it affects the whole credibility of journalism.

15. Encourage Yellow Journalism

Paid news has side effects also. It encourages yellow journalism. It leads the malpractices in journalism, like robbery, commission, bribe etc. Some journalists are doing these practices. Newcomers are also forced to do it.

Conclusion & Suggestions

Paid news is generalized now. It is treaded as common news by the management and editor of the newspaper. Paid news are given treatment by the newspaper. The fact is that all newspapers doesn't publish paid news. Loksatta, Maharashtra Times have not accepted paid news. Lokmat and Diya Marathi publish advertisement against the paid news. In Municipal and Assembly election, big Marathi newspapers accepted the paid news. Suggestions is that, strict action should be taken by the authority. Readers should encourage clean image newspapers. At the same time the newspapers who accepts paid news, must be warned. Election Committee and Press council shoul not wait for complaint. They themselves initiate the action. Paid news directly creates black money. No written order is passed by the Editor or owner to the employees. No receipt is issued to the person or agent of leader who handover paid news. The amount received is ot shown in the audit. So, the newspapers are doing national crime. Common man including professionals don't have idea about paid news. There is need of public awareness among the readers.