

Neo-journalism dangerous to profession



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Daya Nath Singh 14 October 2008 12079 views

The last two decades have seen a mushroom growth of the Fourth Estate in the northeastern region in general and Assam in particular. There is no doubt that due to this haphazard growth the demand for the media persons has increased, but their functioning in general, has fallen short of the set journalistic norms. With information technology witnessing a fast pace development, the media houses have not been able to get competent and trained workforce to cope with the increasing demands of this ever expanding and fast changing sector. The vacuum created by such situations has given birth to 'neo-journalism'. This is just a 'stopgap' arrangement for the unemployed educated youths.

The majority of the media houses take advantage of the burgeoning unemployment problem (especially among the educated youths) and engage inexperienced people to do those jobs, which require expertise and technical and language skill. But the moot point is that such people lack the primary knowledge of professional ethics. Nor do they have even the basic experience of interacting or communicating with people, which is a vital point to be developed in public relations – an inseparable part of journalism. To cut a long story short, they demonstrate a poor exhibition of their ethical behavior. What, of course, they are unnaturally very sure of, is that their job is quite 'glamorous'. This 'neo-journalism' is dangerous to the profession in all respects.

As of today, one comes across instances of many conflicts between the media and other sections of society. One of the reasons for such irritants is the violation of the basic norms of journalism. It hardly needs reiteration that a pen-pusher or a journalist should remain 'controlled' in the most trying of circumstances. This, to say the least, is in the interest of gaining confidence of the people in the profession.

With regards to reporting, the less said the better. There are a number of cases of reports leading to controversies. At the other extreme are the readers who remain a confused lot insofar as the authenticity of the news is concerned. This happens mostly because of the 'one-sided' reports that appear in the print media and most of which are 'syndicated' (filed by people who may not have the requisite journalistic background).

The plight of the journalists in particular and the Fourth Estate in general can also be traced to other ancillary reasons. A significant aspect of the modern-day journalism is the 'hire and fire' policy that is really very dear to most of the managements of the media houses. For minor mistakes, employees lose their jobs and that too even without a show cause notice. The poor innocent scribe fails to get his legal dues as well, in the long run. In all such cases, the media houses have the upper hand. The employees find themselves on the receiving end. In short, this noble profession continues to be badly insecure despite all the charms.

A large number of mass communication institutes are doing field work and preparing a number of journalists year after year. But they have not been able to make much progress in achieving their aims. Most of such institutions fail to even gauge the merits of their students. And, what more can one expect with the basic aim of most of these media training institutes. They just need to mint money depriving their students and

that too at the cost of providing the elementary education to their students on the Fourth Estate. One thing is for sure though these so-called institutes of media will never be able to supply the industry the trained and experienced manpower if they cannot mould the minds of the students and subsequently create a true and ethical interest on the sector among their students. The motto should be to create the 'right' class of the journalists.

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