



ARNAB GOSWAMI: SUFFERING THE VENDETTA POLITICS!

The Hon'ble Supreme Court of India sternly reprimanded the Maharashtra government on November 11, 2020 for illegally confining Mr Arnab Goswami into jail and also criticised the Bombay High Court in not granting bail to him. In fact, he has been suffering the vicious course of vendetta politics for the past many months for launching a vigorous crusade against unimaginable corruption in public places with a view to strengthen democracy and rule of law in the country. In this scenario, one can easily remember the wisdom of George Orwell as reflected in his memorable words: '*Ours is an age of democracy.*'

In a democratic country like India, the government has to respect the voice of the people.

Democracy is the '*government of the people, for the people and by the people*' according to the wise counsel of an ancient Greek philosopher Cleon. And that was reiterated by the US President Abraham Lincoln more than one and a half century ago. Hence, a free, independent and fearless journalism is the *sine qua non* for a dynamic, vibrant and meaningful democracy.

Against this backdrop, the continuing vengeance unleashed by the Maharashtra police against Republic Bharat's Editor-in-Chief Arnab Goswami was highly condemnable. In fact, his inhuman arrest was absolutely illegal because the case wherein he had been implicated was closed nearly two years ago. Apparently the case was deliberately opened just to strike at Mr. Goswami, even without seeking arrest warrants from a competent court of law. The way he was forcibly arrested like a hardened criminal at the behest of the state government speaks much about gross abuse of the state machinery, obviously with a view to silence him and crush the freedom of press, which indeed is the fourth pillar of government in a democracy.

In fact, Goswami has been instrumental in bringing out many new facts in connection with some of the most controversial cases, like Palghar lynching of *Sadhus*, Sushant Singh Rajput's death-mystery including that of an actress Disha Saliyan, Hathras rape case, Shaheen Bagh protests and few more such past incidents, thereby exposing unethical nexus among politicians, mafia, police and probably underworld, having international presence.

In fact, India is a democracy as guaranteed by the country's Constitution, which is the supreme source of all powers and is the basic law of the land. As, the Preamble of the Indian Constitution explicitly says that it is WE THE PEOPLE OF INDIA which HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION IN OUR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY on 26th November 1949. It is, in fact, the democracy wherein the people at large have the final say in all matters of governance. Hence, WE THE PEOPLE OF INDIA have the every right to know each and every thing pertaining to the affairs of the state, including politics, bollywood, drug-cartels, criminal-syndicates, police, underworld and their foreign funding to destabilise the country.

To strengthen democracy in the country, the Right to Information Act, 2005 has been passed by the Indian Parliament to justify the rationale in support of the popular awareness about the governance with a view to ensure constitutionalism, meaning thereby that each organ of the government runs strictly according to the provisions of the Constitution, never exceeding its limits as set out therein. Since its inception in 2005, RTI has made its impact felt in the functioning of Government bodies and the larger governance discourse. The corruption in the division has reduced to an extent. Big scams have been averted by the use of RTI. Thus, constitutionalism and the Right to Information help contribute the spirit of the democracy in true sense of the term.

Thus, the role of social media assumes crucial significance in this context which, indeed, lets the common man know as to what exactly is going on in the country or world. It is by the enlightened awareness about governance, that the masses can take right decisions in their interest as well as that of the society and the country. As the Latin phrase goes, *Vox populi, Vox Dei*, i.e voice of people is the voice of God; therefore it is the people in totality whose will is supreme. Hence, it can neither be ignored nor trampled in anyway by anyone.

Although Mr Goswami might have occasionally become vociferous in his outbursts and his raising of relevant questions directly to the government and other political leaders and higher-ups in civil and police administration might have been embarrassing to all of them, but in doing so that is his duty as a journalist and certainly not a crime. He could have been restrained by the media authorities or legal actions could have been taken through proper channel, if he was found guilty in any way by the competent court of law. Thus in the given scenario, the long-pending reforms in police and judiciary are the need of the hour as the archaic provisions inherent in the system are detrimental to the innocent, and instead, beneficial to the criminals.

As Arnab Goswami has already emerged out as a hero and an icon of the bold, fearless and fair journalism, his persona must be protected under all circumstances and the Union Government of India must provide a tight security cover around him, as had been granted earlier to the film-actress Kangana Ranaut. Unfortunately almost entire media, which ought to have taken lead in staging a decisive crusade against mounting threats to the freedom of the press, has been silent as a mute spectator as if nothing has happened. Similarly, even civil society groups were not raising the issue against such gross misuse of the coercive power on a journalist. But what if any one of them may have to undergo the similar agony in future, if such a barbarous assault on a high profile journalist goes unnoticed and without protest. This episode would obviously set the example for browbeating an independent and fearless journalist in future.

Nonetheless, one must not forget that ultimately truth prevails, despite all obstructions, repressions or suppressions, *i.e satyamev jayate nanritam*. And that has been vindicated again by the order of the Hon'ble Supreme Court on 11-11-2020, granting Mr. Arnab Goswami bail for his immediate release from the Taloja jail. Obviously it underscores that the Hon'ble Supreme Court stands as a supreme custodian for the rule of law and the protection of human rights of all citizens in the country, thereby upholding once again the sanctity of the Indian Constitution and the spirit of democracy. Thus, Indian democracy has the power to survive and sustain forever under all circumstances, in spite of occasional obstructions. And that obviously upholds that nothing is beyond human endeavour. ■

(The views expressed are the author's personal).

AUTHOR



Sudhanshu Tripathi

(The author is Professor of Political Science, U.P. Rajarshi Tandon Open University, Prayagraj (U.P.), India)