

Media conclave throws light on combating fake news, upholding freedom of speech

BENGALURU, DHNS

A conclave by the Editors' Guild of India and School of Communication and Media Studies of St Joseph's University, titled 'Journalism @ Digital Crossroads,' delved into issues around fact-checking, dangers of fake news, the need for a balanced approach that protects truth, freedom of speech and the importance of churning good content.

The event, held at the college auditorium, started with Sudhir Krishnaswamy, vice-chancellor of National Law School of India University, discussing 'Laws governing digital media.' He highlighted the state government's initiative to establish an Information Disorder Tackling Unit (IDTU) for fact-checking.

A session on 'Government responsibility and attitude with respect to media laws and protection of FoE (freedom of expression)' featured Anant Nath, president of Editors' Guild of India, and Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda.

Gowda stressed on the dangers of fake news and called for a balanced approach that protects truth and freedom of speech.

In the session, 'Journalism in the digital age: New challenges, misinformation and media ethics,' R Jagannathan, editorial director of Swarajya; Raj Chengappa, group editorial director of India Today Group; and K N Hari Kumar, former editor-in-chief of Decan Herald and Prajavani, shared their views on current challenges in the field.

The session was moder-

ated by Dhanya Rajendran, editor-in-chief of The News Minute.

Hari Kumar began by saying, "Newspapers are different from social media and they play different roles."

He stressed that press remains a risky profession and "fake news continues to be a problem".

Fact-checking unit

Most of the panelists agreed that a government-run fact-checking unit was not the best solution to handle fake news. Chengappa emphasised that journalists "must be accountable for and responsible with their content".

The post-lunch session, moderated by Lakshmi Chaudhry, founder of Splainer Media, focused on 'creating and running successful

independent media organisations'.

The panel featured experts, including Samar Halarnkar, editor of Article 14; H V Vasu, community head of Eedina; Kavya Sukumar, principal and CTO of Lightrock India; and Vignesh Vellore, co-founder of The News Minute.

They shared insights on running independent media outlets, citing funding as a challenge.

A session on journalism curriculum was moderated by Anusha Ravi Sood, executive editor, South First.

Its panelists included Kanchan Kaur, professor of practice with Manipal Academy of Higher Education; K S Dakshina Murthy, managing editor of The Federal; and Father Richard Rego, dean of St Joseph's University.