“The Democratization of Media and Governance”

A public talk/YEP by author and senior journalist and founder of CGNet Swar,

Shubhranshu Chaudhury

Place: BCS Government PG Degree College, DHAMTARI
Date: 22nd July 2015.
Jointly organized by Babu Chhote Lal Shrivastav
Government PG Degree College, Dhamtari And
Azim Premji University, Bengaluru.

The BCS Government PG College organized the same under RUSA (Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan) with collaboration with Azim Premji Foundation, District Institute Dhamtari

Other resource persons: Dr. Sridevi Chaubey, Dr.Chandra Shekhar Chaubey, Principal, Purusottam Thakur, resource person, Azim Premji Foundation.

Participants: Around fifty students and similar number of Professors and Readers from the different colleges of Dhamtari district and local journalists. (Total above 100 participants)

Objective: To have regular dialogues with the stake holders of education for the quality education and to achieve our vision, “Towards a just, equitable, humane and sustainable society”.
“Just democratize the Media and Governance and the issue of Naxal will be over”- Shu

Addressing to the audience of students, Professors and journalists, Shubhransu Chaudhury who is the founder of CGNet Swar and author of “Let’s Call him Vasu” in English and “उसका नाम वासु नहीं” in Hindi was the resource person for the YEP cum Public Lecture held on 22nd July of this month at BCS Government PG college, the oldest government college of Dhamtari district.

He says, a journalist of BBC world service for 15 years he has visited many countries of the world and the South East Asian countries in particularly. He has covered the war and conflicts of Sri Lanka, Afganistan, Burma, Bangladesh and in India, done stories on conflict areas like Kashmir, Mizoram, Manipur etc.
But has extensively visited Bastar and Naxal areas. Has travelled and specially trekked with Maoist also.

“What I found is that, we journalists speaks only with the leaders of Maoist or officers of police or the ministers but never talks with the foot soldiers. I spoke to the Maoist supporters who are mostly tribal young boys and girls. And they explain how the Naxalism may be rooted out! Many of them says reason behind joining Maoist movements are issues related to their day to day life which may be silly issues for us like harassments by land lord, administration, police, injustice, problems of water, land and forest etc. If these issues will be addressed people may not be attracted to Maoist. For this the boys and girls suggested the democratization of media and governance. They says their small issues are neither reported by media nor addressed by administration which shows the apathy towards the issues of people. So the democratization of media and governance is required.

Explaining how the media is not democratic. He says, the nature is kind enough to see and bestowed every one equally with things like sun, air and water etc. But it is human being who has neither created the same nor own it but now trying to and in some places owned the same.

He says earlier the dialogue between people to people was direct there was no one in between but now due to the rapid development we are under influence, control and using machines to speak, interact with each other and others.

But those machines are under control of few persons. He says he means it about media like newspaper, radio, television etc. And it’s the owners of the media who decides what to deliver and what not to be, depending on the interest of his/her advertisers or promoters.

He cites the examples of the production cost of few newspapers and magazines. “I speak to the owner of a popular national newspaper published from Chhattisgarh as well and ask him about the production cost of the newspaper which sold at Rs. 3/-, he said it cost them Rs. 75 to 100 rupees. Similarly I tried to know the cost of production of The Times of India was Rs. 150 above some 4/5 years back and cost of the India Today Hindi was Rs. around 280 which sold at Rs. 20 or more. So naturally if the cost of production will increase and if the selling price is low than the question arise.
As there is a proverb that. “There is no such thing as free lunch” means someone must paying for the same and who is paying need his interests to be safe guard. “

He says “We became independent in 1947 but our media is becoming under control of corporates day by day. Nature has provided us the media in the principle of equality but we did not. We made a system where few people became more powerful and large number of people became weak.”

He again quotes them, “Is media ever be democratic?”

Shubhranshu added “ Karl Marx has says “ The religion is like opium “ and modern days opium is media.

Shubhranshu says it is possible with mobile phone and explain about the initiative he has started since 2010 and explain how it works and why it is feasible and accessible.

Since mobile is with maximum person from poor to rich, from powerful people to weak one and even where there is no network.

He says we are now living with three cast and i.e.

1. Internet cast
2. Mobile cast
3. And Radio cast

And says, Out of three Radio cast is at the receiving end, they can’t speak or no one listen to them they just listen to others what they broadcast through radio.

So he urge the audience to come forward for the democratization of media and governance and says this is not impossible!

His talk was followed by a puppet show cum play. Where the artists from CGNet swar depicts the same issue and issues of the rural India and particularly of Bastar. They have very well explained how the people of Bastar has been neglected by the government and civil societies. The play is successfully able to explain that, the issue should be addressed and it’s possible if we will think and try for it.