

Media and Minorities: Understanding the Ethical Issues of Freedom of Press in the Context of Rule of Law

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I. Prologue

The relation between media and minorities has always been complex and strained. The multifarious relation between media and minorities (especially the Muslims) in the last two decades has also turned manifold. In the recent past, there have been countless instances of false accusations, stigmatizing, unfounded reportages and unsubstantial stories targeting minorities especially the Muslims by the mainstream media that has shown the community in bad light. Hence, in a case, if a suspect is arrested by the police in terror related case and the police started their investigation, the matter reaches highest level of sensationalism due to extensive media coverage of each and every step of investigation agencies.² The protagonists of media support various justifications that the people have every right to get information and it is the duty of the media to discharge its function. But the said duty of the media hardly ever had done by dispassionate and impartial manner. There have been many reports broadcasted by the mainstream news channels wherein whole Muslim community's patriotism and their nationalism were challenged.³ Without going into the details of the case the media declared the suspect a hardcore terrorist.

Media reporting of criminal justice process commences right from the commission of a crime and runs through to the appellate level. Most disturbing trend is that whenever a terror strikes occurred media launched its own investigation thereby giving up the journalistic work and broadcast its finding repeatedly.⁴ If anybody dared to expose such outrageous reporting of media, the entire media took the criticism as an onslaught on freedom of press and termed the healthy criticism as an attack on the fourth pillar of

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² Dr. A. Raghunadha Reddy, "Trial By Media-A critique From Human Right Angle" *Nyaya Deep*, Vol.11 Issue 1, January 2010, pp. 35-36.

³ Najeeb Jung, "Why Muslims should have write on their sleeves their patriotism", *Stings of Bee*, Readsworthy Pub. New Delhi, 2013, p. 2

⁴ Jacob Joseph, "Media Reporting of Pre-Trial Criminal Proceeding-Need of Judicial Supervision", *Cochin University Law Review*, Vol. XXXIII March –June 2009, p. 1-2

democracy.⁵ The substantial issue is why the media forgets the basic principle of confirming facts when it comes to the Muslim community. When Urdu Press can do its job dispassionately then why not the mainstream media including Hindi and English both electronic and print media. Despite its very limited reach, the Urdu Press does follow the minimum standards of journalism. To some extent *Indian Express*, *The Hindu* and *NDTV* does follow some ethics of journalism but rest of the media houses have been remained barefaced. It is pertinent to note that Muslims alone are not the victims of a biased media, the Dalits, Tribals and other weaker section have also been facing same treatment from the biased media.⁶ In the above context, the present article is concerned with the certain contentious issues of freedom of express and more normatively complex arguments surrounding multifaceted relation of media and minorities especially the Muslims. The present article argues some ethical issues of freedom of expression along with certain basic principles of journalism.

II. Freedom of Press: Ethical Issues and Rule of Law

The object of freedom of press and media being dissemination of information to the people to promote public interest⁷ and strengthening the constitutional commitment, any information which is not in public interest and unpleasant must be strictly avoided.⁸ The basic thesis is that truth is most likely to emerge from free and uninhibited discussion and debate that too possible in “free speech society”. The media has therefore to play a neutral and constructive role so as to expose anti-social forces and to ensure as “peoples ombudsman”. It should be the role of the media to bring every public man to accountability of their actions which they do in the name of public interest. Ultimately it must be made possible to promote human rights and eliminate inequalities.⁹ Indisputably, the press and media (both print and electronic) considered as fourth pillar of Indian democratic system.¹⁰ The role of the media is immensely

⁵ Justice Arijit Pasayat, “Reporting of Court Proceedings by Media and Administration of Justice” *Nyaya Deep*, Vol. IX, Issue 1, January 2008, p. 39.

⁶ Meena Menon, “Media and Muslim-Facts and Fiction”, *The Hindu*, New Delhi Edn. Dt. 6.06.2013,

⁷ J S Mill, *On Liberty*, M. Cowling (Ed.), *Selected Writing of John Stuart Mill*, Everyman London, 1972, p. 213

⁸ Dr. Sreenivasulu N.S. and Somashekarappa M., “Media Freedom- Dimensions”, *Indian Bar Review* Vol XLI (1) 2014, p. 36

⁹ *Ibid*

¹⁰ Justice Patanjali Shastri says that “Freedom of speech and of the Press lay at the foundation of all democratic organizations, for without free political discussion no public education, so essential for the proper functioning of the process of popular government, is possible”, see, *Romesh Thapar v. State of Madras*, AIR 1950 SC 124, 128

valuable to shape the governance of the country and protecting its secular ethos. The law of the country requires that media must comply with certain norms while reporting about any incident without any biases and harming any individual and community.¹¹ It is a disturbing trend that currently the media has been putting their commercial interest on top rather than social responsibility to the nation. Moreover, the media also targeting Muslim community unfairly and often accuses them with serious charges of terrorism without going into the details of the case. Such unprofessional journalism heavily criticised by former chief justice of India Justice A. S. Anand in the following words, “Media has no right to pre-judge an issue and make comments about the pending cases. There is a vast difference between making fair comments after the verdict and making comments during the pendency of the trial of the case. Public policy requires a balancing of conflicting interest but I must emphasise that while freedom of speech ought not to be limited to any greater extent than is necessary but if there is a perceived prejudice to the administration of justice, freedom of speech has to give way.” It appears that certain basic norms envisaged as applicable mainly to print and electronic media do not follow rigorously.¹²

The Law Commission of India also came down heavily on biased and prejudiced media coverage aiming to suit a particular political class. In its 200th Law Commission’s Report submitted to the government, it had recommended that a law should be enacted to debar the media from reporting anything prejudicial to the rights of the accused in criminal cases from the time of arrest to conclusion of trial. The Commission also stated that police come with a story that it has nabbed a criminal and he has confessed.¹³ The fact of the matter is that confession before the police is not admissible and there is no value of police story, in the eyes of law. But media start its “Breaking News” items and finished the ‘trial’ same day with the help of ‘people’ who routinely appeared on TV screens at the evening hours.¹⁴

¹¹ Justice S. H. Kapadia, “Reporting of Court Proceedings by Media and Administration of Justice” *Nyaya Deep*, Vol. IX Issue 1 January 2008, pp. 44- 45.

¹² Justice A. S. Anand, “Free Press is Indian Democracy’s Greatest Success”. This is the presidential address of justice A.S. Anand at the International Press Institute Award function, held at New Delhi on 19 December 2007.

¹³ See, Detailed Report of the 20th Law Commission.

¹⁴ Manik Chakraborty, “Freedom of press and judicial Activism: The Emerging Issues”, *Calcutta Law Times*, Vol. 3 Part II, 201, p. 17

The media is not above the law of the land and if media is not following the certain basic norms the state must come forward to stop such wrongdoing of media. It is precisely stated that the media too should follow the certain basic principles of the governance and rule of law. There is proper code of conduct for the media before running any story or news items as per the Broadcasting Conference of 1962. Although, the Broadcast Code was chiefly set up to govern the All India Radio, the following cardinal principles have ideally been practiced by all Broadcasting and Television Organization:

- (a) To ensure the objective presentation of news and fair and unbiased comment
- (b) To promote the advancement of education and culture
- (c) To raise and maintain high standards of decency and decorum in all programs.
- (d) To promote communal harmony, religious tolerance and international understanding
- (e) To treat controversial public issues in an impartial and dispassionate manner
- (f) To respect human rights and dignity

The above said rules mandated to treat controversial public issues in an impartial and dispassionate manner. The rules also signify our constitutional spirit of secularism, human rights, and pluralistic society. It is also embodied in concept of rule of law that equality before the law or equal protection before the law.¹⁵ Hence, the Indian media must follow the basic ethics of the profession and must comply with constitutional spirit i.e. rule of law and shall not do anything just contrary to it. As it is generally stated that democratic credentials of the state are judged by the extent of freedom enjoyed by the media in that state. The freedom of press in India has been guaranteed by the Indian Constitution, in fact freedom of press is implied from the freedom of speech and expression guaranteed under Article 19 (1) (a) of the Constitution of India¹⁶. Although, there is no specific provision under the Constitution ensuring absolute freedom of press but freedom of speech and expression has been regarded as a “species of which freedom

¹⁵ K. T. Thomas, “The Constitution of India”, *Rule of Law in a Free Society* Edited by N. R. Madhava Menon, Oxford University, New Delhi, 1st Edn. 2008, pp. 32-33.

¹⁶ M P Jain, “*Indian Constitutional Law*”, Lexisnexis Butterworth Pub. New Delhi, 2012 p. 1070; Article 19(1) (a) of Constitution of India 1950, “Provides guarantee to all citizens the right to freedom of speech and expression.”

of expression is genius.” In a landmark case, *Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India*,¹⁷ the Hon’ble Supreme Court of India has emphasized on the significance of the freedom of speech and expression in the following words: “Democracy is based essentially on free debate and open discussion, for that is the only corrective of government action is a democratic set up. If democracy means government of the people by the people, it is obvious that every citizen must be entitled to participate in the democratic process and in order to enable him to intelligently exercise his right of making choice, free and general discussion of public matters is absolutely essential. The freedom of speech and expression also constitutes freedom of press in India. Therefore, the prime purpose of the free press is to creating a fourth institution outside the government as an additional check on three officials’ organs of the state- executive, legislative and judiciary.¹⁸ It is the primary function of the press to provide comprehensive and objective information on all aspects of the country’s social, economic and political life. The press and media serve powerful tool against the any instance of abuse of power by the government.

III. Media and Minorities: Coverage of Terrorism Cases

Indian minorities have a long standing love-hate relationship with the media. Some of the grievances of the minorities especially the Muslims are legitimate and can’t be rejected altogether. The major grievances of the Muslim is whenever any untoward incident occurred, the media raised the finger at the Muslim community and started their rattled clichés-Pakistan supporters Muslims may be behind the incidents. The media bashing against Muslims supports their arguments with Muslims alienation and the disgruntlement of the community after 9/11 terror attack and Gujarat riots of 2002 and so on.¹⁹In the immediate wake of terrorist strike or bomb blast, the electronic media (news channels) offers long coverage of the incident spot, with grim images of destruction and death but little or no coherent reportage to place it in context to help viewers to understand what is known about the situation and the real perpetrators of such heinous crime.

¹⁷ AIR 1978 SC 597: (1978) 1 SCC 248

¹⁸ Unlike the American Constitution, Article 19 (1) (a) does not expressly mention the liberty of press i.e. the freedom to print and to publish what one pleases without previous permission. See, *Sakal Papers (P) Ltd. v. Union of India*, AIR 1962 SC 305; *Express Newspapers (P) Ltd. v. Union of India*, AIR 1958 SC 578;

¹⁹ Najeeb Jung, “*The Sting of Bee*” Readsworthy Pub. New Delhi, 2013 p. 2

In majority of the cases, the persons apprehended are always from the Muslim community, and often devout and “Islamic” appearance, the news channels continuously show the such photographs, juxtaposed with images of destruction and death, subliminally to associate Muslims with the horrors that claimed lives of many innocent. Media rarely show the fair and accurate depiction of the Muslims victims of such events. In *Anukul Chamdra Pradhan v. Union of India*, the Hon’ble Supreme Court expressed its anguish and displeasure over the routinely intervention by the media during a pending matter related with the terrorism cases, wherein the accused belong to the minority community.²⁰ The law enforcement agencies too are responsible for such attitude against Muslims and often leaks information to the media about day-to-day progress of the cases and outcome of the interrogation. With the support of some “choice journalists” the police paraded arrested young Muslims youth before the premeditated “Press Conference”. Most of the detainees are totally innocent and they forced to confess the crimes under the duress of third degree torture. Media reporting of terrorism cases especially the cases where Muslims are suspects commences right from the commission of a crime and when police picked some Muslim youths. The reporting of such cases runs through to the appellate level and in that process covering the following important stages viz. registration of FIR, arrest, bail proceedings, the process of investigation, submission of charge sheet, trial, judgement and appeal. But the same media never give the prime coverage to the news of the acquitted Muslim youth who were falsely implicated in terror cases e.g. the Malegaon blast case, Mecca Masjid blast case, Ajmer Blast case and Mumbai local train serial blast case. In all these cases a majority of Muslims youths were falsely implicated by different ATS and CBI but their false prosecution theory and manufactured evidences could not sustain and finally the innocents were set free by the courts. Unfortunately, the Indian media never give importance to this shocking news of maligning the community and spoiling the life of many innocents.²¹

The impact of adverse media publicity on the criminal justice system, more particularly on the police investigation has been strikingly portrayed by the Law Commissions of

²⁰ 1996 (6) SCC 354.

²¹ Prakash Singh, *Terrorism and Rule of Law, Rule of Law in a Free Society* (Ed.) N. R. Madhava Menon, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1stEdn., 2008, pp.154-157

India thus²²: The day after the report of the crime is published; media says police have no clue. Then whatever gossips the media gathers about the line of investigation by the official agencies, it gives such publicity in respect of the information that the person who has indeed committed the crime, can move away to safer places. The pressure on the police from media day by day builds up and reaches a stage where police feel compelled to say something or the other in the public to protect their reputation. Sometimes when under such pressure police come forward with a story that they have nabbed a suspect and that he has confessed, the “Breaking News” items start and few in the media appear to know that under the law, confession to police is not admissible in a criminal trial. Once the confession is published by both the police and the media, the suspect’s future is finished. When he retracts from the confession before the Magistrate, the public imagine that the person is liar. The whole procedure of due process is thus getting distorted and confused.²³

Mercifully, and despite the large scale of Muslims falsely prosecuted by the different state agencies and continuous denial of justice, the Indian Muslims have refused to fall in the trap of Lashkar and other terror organizations. The media give importance to the newsworthy items, whenever terrorist strikes the media give the incident a communal colour. Shockingly, the media too launched their own investigation and analysis of the cases thereby giving up their journalism work. The media create sensationalism and try to show that it has almost cracked the case even before the police. In the course of their “investigation” the media had portray the images of the Muslims in a very objectionable manner, showing their homes, place of prayer and family members routinely aiming to create interest of the viewers and maximize their profit. The terrorism is the pervasive flavor for the media and a hit formula to gain TRP regardless of apprehensive effect of the act. Had the media shown the reports of those who had been acquitted from the terrorist cases in which the innocent were earlier portrayed as hardcore terrorist with great claims? Media know well that people are emotionally attached to the traumatic news and they exploit this nature of the people. Even before the pronouncement of the final verdict the media declared the suspect or an accused as convicted. Unfortunately,

²² See, Detailed Report of the 20th Law Commission.

²³ Meena Menon, “Media and Muslim-Facts and Fiction”, *The Hindu*, New Delhi Edn. Dt. 6.06.2013

the most of the victims of media highhandedness's are the innocent Muslim community.²⁴

The Indian Muslims want the media to highlight their problems and sufferings at the same time they are angry with the national media for sensationalizing anything to do with Islam or Muslims. There have been many instances where media had aired unsubstantial report painting the image of Indian Muslims in a bad light and had tried to associate them with the anti-national activities even before final outcome of the case.²⁵ Muslims clerics' statements of condemnation of terrorism are rarely covered by the press. The mob violence against Muslims receives less coverage than bomb blasts. Such kind of attitude of the media is open violation of Broadcast Code of Conduct.

IV. Prejudiced Reporting: The Crisis of Media Credibility

The media give importance to the newsworthy incidents which will capture the interest of the viewers and maximize their profit. The terrorism is pervasive flavour of the media and profit grabbing sector for media by selling sensational reports of Dawood Ibrahim, terrorist activities in Kashmir and North East part of the country. While reporting about the terrorism the media has changed the very nature of the problem and it is a dangerous phenomenon that media often associate the terrorist strike with Muslims citizens of the country.²⁶ The terrorism is a faceless menace and has no religion but it is worrying phenomenon that desperate attempt was given to Islam after the 9/11 episode thereby creating *Islamophobia* throughout the globe. The war on terrorism was targeted towards Muslim aiming to put the community in a bad light and portraying them as cruel and *jehadis* (fanatics). A section of Indian political class and a substantial chunk of media too have tried to associate Islam with the terrorism. Rather than presenting the actual facts to the world, the media started their bashing against Muslims through its unfounded and unsubstantial reportage.²⁷

²⁴ Shahid Siddique in "*Minorities Grievances Against Media*", <http://www.rediff.com> (Last visited 13.09.2015)

²⁵ Amit A. Pandya, "Muslim Indian-Struggle for Inclusion" *Stimson Regional Voice*, Stimson Centre, Washington, 2010 p.49

²⁶ Sharon P. Thomas and Dr M. Priyamvada, "The Trio-Terrorism, Media and Fear", *Indian Police Journal*, Oct-Dec 2013, p. 37.

²⁷ See, *The Indian Express*, New Delhi Edn. Dt. 14.05.2016, "The media hardly highlighted the lapses and wrongdoing of different ATS and Police and why all the accused of Malegaon blast, Ajmer Dargah blast, Mecca Masjid blast and Samjhauta Express blast were finally let off. Why the prosecution agencies miserably failed to prove their guilt in the court of law. The systematic silence of the media raised many

Indian media has been facing the problem of its credibility, gone are the days when people trust upon media without reservation. The role of the mainstream media on the whole, is highly deplorable and condemnable as the journalistic principles were outrightly sidelined while reporting about sensitive issue of terrorism, communal violence and political violence. Recently, in Malda the media coverage of the attack on Kaliachak Police Station by criminals, who happened to be Muslims, was given communal overtones and portrayed as if the incident was a national disaster under the influence of Hindu nationalists and their propaganda. Some of the news channels were more interested to associate the Malda with epic centre of ISI (Pakistan Secret Service Agency) activities.²⁸ The unsubstantial and biased media reports responsible for spreading the venom of communalism aiming to malign Malda and its Muslim majority population. A worst and more violent attack on state properties and on the police had been occurred in the past in which non-Muslims are involved but they do not receive national coverage on the scale that the Malda incident received thanks to the biased and compromised media houses of the country. The media failed to maintain its credibility in the eyes of vulnerable groups i.e. Dalits, Minorities and other oppressed section of the society. The media has been failed to show justice to their responsibilities, it focus only on sensationalising the issue which in turn raise the TRP (Target Rating Point) of their newsworthy items. It can be said that modern media cast away from the traditional journalism and neglected the ethics of “true journalism”.

V. The Flip Side: Genuine Voices in Media

It is wrong to suggests that entire media has acute enmity against the minorities especially the Muslims. In fact it was the same media which has played an instrumental role while reporting the communal massacre and atrocities committed against minorities especially the Muslims e.g. the 1992-93 Mumbai riots, the Gujarat 2002, Hashimpura 1989, Nila (Assam) 1980, and Kandhamal 2008 (Odisha).²⁹ The Bhagalpur riots of 1989 and more recently in Mujaffarnagar (2013), it is the national media which has

questions about functioning and class biases of Indian police system, but the same media hardly highlight such newsworthy items. The media has not made any attempts to show why innocent youths from Muslim community languished in jail without any fault. The National Commission for Minorities has also recommended a compensation packages to those acquitted in the false cases”

²⁸ See for Details “*Fact-Finding Report on Kaliachak Violence in Malda*”- Irfan Engineer (Ed.), Centre for Study of Society and Secularism, Mumbai, February 2016.

²⁹ Asghar Ali Engineer, *History of Communal Riots in India*, Shipra Pub. Mumbai, 2006, p. 36

brought out the truth through its rigorous investigative journalism and exposed those responsible for committing communal atrocities.³⁰ The Indian media, both vernacular and English, print and visual have in their own way tried to bring out the stories of struggle and injustice faced by the minorities, particularly Indian Muslims.³¹

It is the media which has repeatedly taken the government to task for not fulfilling its secular duties. If it were not for the media, then the atrocities committed in Gujarat in 2002 would have been conveniently forgotten as was the case in 1983 in Nellie massacre in Assam or 1993 riots in Mumbai. The national media despite all its own limitations, perversions, biases and shortcomings has tried to play the role of a successful communicator. It was the media who exposed the hands of prominent Congress leaders in 1984 anti-Sikh riots that had claimed lives of thousands of Sikhs in just three days. Initially the, central government had maintained that law and order situation of Delhi well intact and nothing adverse happened on the ground in November 1984. It was the media who exposed the three days of bloodbath through their reporting which reveals the grim picture of carnage after the assassination of former Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi.

Indian journalism is not full of “paid journalists”, still there are few genuine voices and they have been doing their journalistic work with committed principles and dispassionate manner. They have been inflaming the lights of journalism; amongst them are Rajdeep Sardesai, Siddharth Varadrajan³², Kuldeep Nayar³³, Anita Pratap³⁴, Barkha Dutt³⁵, Nikhil Wagle³⁶ and Ravish Kumar³⁷ etc. The Indian press and media will always indebted to the Rajdeep Sardesai for his testimony as witness before the Sri Krishna

³⁰ Asghar Ali Engineer, *Communal Riots after Independence-A Comprehensive Account*, Shipra Pub. Mumbai, 2004, p. 18.

³¹ See, Shahid Siddiqui in *We the People*, <http://www.ndtv.com/wethepeople/> (Last visited on 18.02.2016)

³² Siddharth Varadrajan, An alumni of London School of Economics and Columbia University, he is one of the most respected journalist of India and former Editor of *The Hindu*, he had taught political science and international relations in New York University, before joining the *Times of India* in 1995, presently he is heading the news portal <http://www.thewire.com>

³³ Kuldeep Nayar, Veteran Journalist was formerly associated with *Indian Express* and *Times of India*, he had been a former High Commissioner of India in United Kingdom

³⁴ Anita Pratap, associated with CNN and former bureau chief of South Asia

³⁵ Barkha Dutt, presently heading NDTV as its Managing Editor, she has won 26 International Prize for her neutral and independent reporting.

³⁶ Nikhil Wagle, former chief of IBN Lokmat (Marathi News Channel) he was attacked at number of occasion over his reporting about Shiv Sena in Maharashtra

³⁷ Ravish Kumar, associated with NDTV, highly acclaimed name in Hindi journalism, he has won many prestigious awards for his journalism work.

Commission.³⁸ Senior Journalist Rajdeep Sardesai³⁹ deposed personally before the Justice Sri Krishna Commission for giving his eye witness account what he had seen at the residence of Bal Thackeray in 1993. Justice Sri Krishna too appreciated the journalistic courage of Mr. Sardesai and mentioned his contribution in the commission's report.

VI. The Ethical Issues of Indian Media: Corruption and Corporatization

Corporatization of the media at some extent can be understandable as the corporatization brings professionalism, challenging environment and develop competitiveness amongst media houses. But corporatization does not mean abandoning the core journalistic values. In the contemporary society there is huge gap between the people and media, hardly people trust news items of some prominent news channels. In fact they are promoting and airing the policy and political agenda of a particular political class. Due to this, India has been terribly facing the crisis of media credibility and nobody taking this issue seriously. There is no news in the channels that why and how Reliance Industries Ltd takes over the large television news channels. Obviously, the majority of news channel will serve the interest of Mr. Mukesh Ambani and he closely associated with the ruling party. The sad thing in this whole episode is that even Editors Guild of India preferred not to speak, why?⁴⁰ The purposeful silence of Editors Guild of India is well understandable as they had also rejected the proposal that editors should also declare their assets public, the demand which they voice for politicians. Double standards make a mockery of the high pedestal on which the media sit. It is incorrect to say that corporatization of Indian media is wrong-signal, it is agreed that corporatization has its own advantages but such corporatization of Indian media at the cost of social justice, secularism, national integration and communal harmony is highly avoidable. Rising costs and shrinking advertisement have famished the media. Still, ideally, the media should be self-sufficient. But since it is not possible for most in the print and electronic media, there has to be a limit on how far the corporations should go.

³⁸ Justice Sri Krishna Commission (1993) was constituted by the central government under the chairmanship of Justice Sri Krishna to investigate of loss of lives of innocent people during communal riots in Bombay aftermath of demolition of Babri Masjid in 1993.

³⁹ Mr. Rajdeep Sardesai, Senior Journalist was associated with the Times of India, Mumbai as Resident Editor in 1993. He is currently associated with TV Today Group as Consulting Editor.

⁴⁰ Kuldeep Nayar, "Corporatization of India Media" *Mainstream Newsweekly*, Nikhil Chakraborty (Ed.) Dt 21.06.2014, p. 9

VII. Concluding Remarks

The author's view is that media should realise that it is the torch-bearer of civil liberties and human rights. It is a matter of grave concern that certain acts of news channels amount to a potential serious threats to the rule of law, freedom of expression, secular ethos and attempt to undermine the judicial process of the country. It is disturbing trends in Indian media that show frozen image of Muslims as essentially Jihadists, is at best a caricature and at worst a denial of citizenship rights to India's largest minority. The editorial push of media is to manufacture a Jihadi in the absence of one conveys a reckless desire to privilege debating format over content. It also appropriates the dominant global discourse spawned by a combination of some paid journalists, politically affiliated academia and security analysts. This approach is then combined with myths and prejudices propagated by the RSS and its ideologues about Hindutva. Muslims are far more likely to be radicalised because of the injustices meted out in Malegaon, the Akshardham terror case, and in Telangana where five Muslim youths were shot dead in cold blood early this year. It is difficult to remember when, if at all, electronic or the print media-barring *The Indian Express*-interrogated the excesses of the state on the minorities as a campaign, as was done with reportage on the Nirbhaya rape case in December 16, 2012. The new-age Twitter driven television content is based on anger, hate, unreal binaries, and banal stereotypes against Muslims. It is merely re-enforcing cultural prejudices that now enjoy the ideological backing of a state that appears to be shaping itself as a Hindu Rashtra. Further, the regulatory body of the Indian media i.e. IBF and Editors Guild hardly take biased reporting on their radar. As happened in Malda episode, the media spared no chance to term the incident equivalent to 'national disaster'. The electronic media should play a constructive and vital role in reporting the terrorist incidents, the objectivity must follow and it should refrain from associating the terrorism with any class or religion. Lastly, the strength of republic is measured in its capacity to treat all its citizens equally without any discrimination.