

# English

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Censorship awareness moment The modern day society is in many instances quoted to be holistic in matters of governance and personal rights/freedoms provisions within the confines of democracy. However, freedom has not always been as provided for in the legal frameworks as often quoted and this makes the essence of regulation and imposition of power by regulating bodies or the government. The determination of the rightfulness of engaging in a practice or expressing oneself as may be provided for within the legal framework governing a society is vested on the governing authority and as such is subject to be influenced in manners of support or even restriction. The freedom to speech and communication is a universally accepted provision within the modern day confines of democracy though the government and other oversight bodies are charged with the mandate to regulate the limits to this freedom. The government or the other regulatory bodies have the capacity to enforce regulation prohibiting publication of a piece of literary work such as a poem, thematic play or any personal declared piece of information upon establishing that the information being conveyed is detrimental to a country's or institutions welfare and this define censorship. Nevertheless, there exists varying opinions between people in favor for or against censorship as supported by individual experience or perception of the same.

I highly appreciate the government's role in controlling and managing the freedom of expression as is provided for within our constitution. However, I highly disregard her role to censor the public for selfish gains or order to condone practices that are against ethics and morality as it happened through my own experience. My theatre group happened to be shortlisted

the best student in provincial drama festivals in the category of High school competitions back in the year 2010. We had presentation of a play that had the theme of the deep rootedness of corruption within the governance structure of a hypothetical country though in real sense that was a direct representation of our country. The event that had lead to the script write choice of the theme had been a just recently concluded election where one ethnic community (and which had previously made the better part of the government) won the presidency as well as the majority representation in the national assembly. Through the play, we captured how this community and politics had shaped the institutions of the country to be more or less a communal structure and had over two-thirds of all-powerful positions taken over by the community. As we prepared to stage the play for the national festivals, the worst happened when we learned through our teacher that through mysterious ways, the governing council of the high school drama festival had stopped our play's presentation. It was a rather frustrating moment not only for the drama team (for which I was part of) but to the entire public, which had, highly appreciated the play as it was in the provincial level presentations. However, my group with the help of political lobby groups within the country rose to the occasion to demand, through judicial procedure, for the right of the play to be presented in the national festivals as the supreme law provided for the freedom of speech and the right to information to all.

However, as I later learnt, this was a deliberate decision by the provincial administration through the support of the office of the president to prohibit the play in fear that the play would elicit reactions as it finally did through

the awareness that was created during the judicial procedure. I therefore learnt that though one may have important information to be communicated to a group of people or even the general public of a republic, the regulatory power with the governance institution may be used to censor it. My previous ignorance of the topic would cost me much in other instances and thus I appreciate this experience for it gave me an exposure to censorship related practices within government. However, a critical analysis of the events led to my appreciation of the censorship because what the reactions of the public were from the play threatened the political stability of the country.