

Government ever limit freedom of speech - essay



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Governments have an obligation to regulate the freedom of speech. Freedom of speech is a right that is limitless to the people unless Governments introduce legislations that are passed to limit freedom of speech to prevent acts of verbal violence, which include racial discrimination, discrimination of minority groups and various forms of hate speech to minority groups. There have been various examples of freedom of speech being too limitless to the people, causing unwanted violence. Though it is an essential part of governing the people, to let them express especially in a democratic society. The freedom of speech and expression is limited due to the violence caused by it and is therefore limited by laws that enable the peoples' speech to be limited and reduced in harm and offence. Representative democracy is much more ideal in leading the people, instead of the people leading the people. The majority can cause havoc at times. Freedom of speech is limited to the fact that a Representative Democracy is usually ideal. In some circumstances, voting is permitted for certain laws, also called a referendum. However, though Freedom of speech may have many negative impacts on today's society, it has also helped society grow in better ways to help prosper into the future.

Freedom of speech is sustained and regulated to the point where it has been altered to try and prevent and reduce verbal violence and abuse. These alterations have benefited society in restricting their expression to harm others. It is asked at times... " What type of speech, if any cause harm?" (Mill, 2008). It may not be evident through speech but evident through the actions taken by the group of others to destroy the speaker. An example would be from a 'Dutch Film Maker, Theo Van Gogh who was stabbed to

death after producing a movie that criticized the Islam's.' (Tunehag 2011, p. 77). This is very alarming, freedom of speech can lead to one's death depending on one's speech. In some cases, Christmas is often removed or renamed to not offend Muslims, in this, the heart of the people is ideally recognized and laws that protect race and religion (Racial and Religious Hatred Acts) come into play. The way we perceive someone's speech may differ from others perceived hearing of it and the idea that other people may or may not take offense to it is a factor in trying to modify and renew Freedom of speech. It is hard to interpret if someone is offended by what is said. "Actions speak louder than words" is what can be used to interpret whether or not the hearer is offended and whether actions will speak louder than what the speaker has said. Freedom of speech is contradictory to the fact that what can be said by the speaker can be offensive, but the hearer can also offend the speaker if the path is chosen by the hearer. Engaging with the issue of limiting Freedom of speech is important to concerning many minority groups. Ideally they are more subjected to discrimination due to social norms placed by society. Minority groups are protected by laws such as Anti-Vilification and Hate Speech Laws. These laws not only protect minority groups, but also protect social relations with other cultures and groups.

Freedom of speech is a given right, but limitations is a must to prevent damage to society with the introductions of laws and acts. Freedom of speech is the foundation of a democratic society; it allows us to express our own views and helps us to express 'freedom of the press, rights to open political debate, freedom to manifest religious beliefs, freedom of expression

in art and music, etc.' (Tunehag 2011, p. 77). As it is a foundation of a democratic society, there must be limitations to the law as the full freedom of speech can lead to harm, offence and hate. The peoples say is limited through laws. These laws include such laws as Anti-vilification laws in Australia which 'prevents hatred or prejudice towards a person, group of people on a specified ground' (Gelber 2011, p. 83). This reduces racism or discrimination against minorities labelled from the public and is an escape from the label of a minority. In the UK, the Racial and Religious Hatred Act was passed after being rectified in 2006,' making any incitement of religious hatred an offence...' (Smits 2009, p. 155). Limitations on speech are purely defined by what the Government believes 'might harm the Government or the people itself'(Wallace, 1989, p. 506). As governments later realized the danger of not limiting freedom of speech during the war effort, Espionage Act of 1917 and the Sedition Act of 1918 were passed during World War 1. During this time, some speech may have affected with the war effort. These acts helped limit the freedom of speech during the war effort. Some countries such as Britain and France have severe restrictions on freedom of speech due to their concern of national security. Other countries such as Denmark have less concern, though many Western Nations follow strict restrictions. To this notion of restrictions, it follows how Democracies are predominantly Representative Democracies where the people vote on an expert leader in Political events to decide for them/the people.

Freedom of speech is a given right to the people, in a democracy, the people are able to voice their opinion, though a Representative democracy is much intended. Letting the experts decide in their own field of politics is much

safer than the people deciding for the people. A country such as Australia is run by a Representative democracy, where there are free elections, which 'gives the people a chance to choose their leaders and express their opinions on issues' (Harvard 1989, p. 127). The representative is more aware of laws than the people itself, making the representative fully aware of the freedom of speech right and laws that alter its right. To this advantage; the representatives have the ability to modify the right through the passing of legislations through multiparty systems. Democratic societies pursue to promise their 'citizens certain freedoms, including freedom of religion, freedom of the press and freedom of speech' (Harvard 1989, p. 126). Most of these freedoms are limited, just like the Freedom of speech has its own limitations in the public usage. In a Democracy, the Majority will always rule. But the majority cannot take away the rights of other people; these consist of the basic freedom of speech, press, assembly and religious worship. By no means can the majority strip the rights of the minority " to become the majority by legal means" (Harvard 1989, p. 127). This set guideline for a majority rule is important as Democracy ensures that 'citizens are endowed with personal liberties and rights and no government can remove or weaken them and freedom of citizens to associate together within 'civil society' (Woodward, 2010, p. 9). This ensures every citizen under democratic rule is equal to every citizen around them. Representative Democracy has ensured the limitation of freedom of speech by the experts in the field, ensuring that the majority cannot strip the rights of others. It has also shown the true potential of these limitations and the right itself, Freedom of Speech.

Nevertheless, even with its negatives aspects, it is a right that has great significance in society, allowing people to express their true opinions and values. This allows great expression from various people which can show true potential in fluent and influential speech. This is shown through many who have sought to believe what is right and challenge laws and fight for what they may believe is right. Some people may abuse the right by resulting into racism or discrimination against minority groups, but ideally, it helps share ideas between people and helps to nurture social relationships and social unity. The Act also helps with social evolution as the human race thrives as social beings. The Government should be limiting the Freedom of Speech but to the extent where individuals are able to still foster creativity and promote their identity and individuality to which their expression as a right will not be revoked unless harmed or verbally harmed against others. These restrictions in the recent years have not stopped individuality. "

Absolute freedom of opinion and sentiment on all subjects" (Mill, 1978, p. 11) is what supports the Freedom of speech in a beneficial manner. The most beneficial of freedom of speech is that everyone has their own say. No one is detached by the right, everyone is entitled to it. The restrictions put on the right are only to reduce the harm that others may inflict on groups of people. The right has done more good than harm, though it is not an excuse to try and reduce the damage being caused.

The Freedom of speech act has proven to be a debatable argument on whether or not the act itself should be limited by Governments. It should be safely said that the limiting of the Freedom of Speech has clearly reduced verbal violence such as hate speech, racism, hatred against religion etc.

across the spectrum. With these reductions, the true nature of Freedom of Speech can truly be witnessed. Acts and Laws that reduce that limit the act also play a huge role in maintaining social relations between groups. The nature of Freedom of speech had given too much power to the people. We can see now how the introduction of new legislations that these powers have been reduced. As the Freedom of Speech continues to be a given right, there may be more restrictions put on to it to better suit the publics need and to reduce the harm caused by the speech by the people. By this, the future is seeking to be positive as the right can be used in the proper manner that it was intended to be used for.