



PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS
OF
MR. K. R. P. REDDY
AT THE
84TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
OF
THE INDIAN NEWSPAPER SOCIETY
30TH SEPTEMBER 2023
THROUGH VIDEO CONFERENCE
2022-2023

Good Morning Ladies and Gentlemen!!

It gives me immense pleasure to welcome you all to the 84th Annual General Meeting of The Indian Newspaper Society for the Financial Year 2022-23, being held today through virtual mode. I am happy to note that a good number of members are attending this Annual General Meeting.

Covid pandemic is a bygone situation, however, we are still reeling under its economic effects, although best efforts are being initiated from time to time by all members to accelerate growth.

As we all know the present geopolitical situation between Russia and Ukraine has created challenges for newsprint in terms of its availability & logistics. However, we hope this challenge would soon come to an end.

Print is still considered to be the most credible media. Having said so, I must add that Print media is essential for the success of Democracy embodying tradition, credibility, and depth of storytelling which have stood the test of time. This also provides a tactile and immersive experience, fostering a deeper connection with the readers.

Our potential to grow and be relevant will depend upon our ability to move with the changing times, while understanding the need to innovate and adapt to harness the power of technological advancement.

The role of the media, particularly print, in such a dynamic environment is of paramount importance. As the Fourth Estate, we carry the responsibility of upholding the

principles of truth, transparency, and responsibility, while embracing the winds of change that are reshaping our industry.

This is an ideal time for us to critically look at ourselves and ensure greater participation and contribution on our part in the initiatives of the Society for the betterment of the Print Media Industry at large.

During the year under consideration, the Executive Committee of the Society has been very active. The activities of the Society for the year 2022-23 have been outlined in the Annual Report but I would like to highlight few of the points which are critical to Print Media.

NEWSPRINT: During the year, due to various global political and economic factors, the price of newsprint has seen great fluctuations. Availability/delivery schedules are still a challenge. I would also like to add that the Society continues to pursue the matter with the Government for withdrawal of 5% customs duty on newsprint.

CATEGORIZATION OF NEWSPRINT: I am happy to share that due to the persistent efforts of the Society; the Bureau of Indian Standards has acknowledged the difference in quality between the imported and domestic newsprint and notified newsprint specifications of two different grades in December, 2022. This categorization strengthens the argument of the Society that the domestic newsprint quality does not compare with the imported newsprint i.e. Grade 1 which is not manufactured in India. Hence no Customs Duty should be levied on the import of newsprint.

9TH RATE STRUCTURE COMMITTEE: During the year, several meetings were held, the latest being on 21st August, 2023 with the Secretary, I&B for revision of rates of Government advertisements by Central Bureau of Communication (erstwhile DAVP). During these meetings data/ information pertaining to member publications were submitted to the Rate Structure Committee. Also, as and when called upon by the Committee, clarifications and additional information was furnished by the Society.

During the last meeting with the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting officials, following issues were also discussed:

- Withdrawal of customs duty on Newsprint
- Consideration of separate rates for e-papers on the basis of Comscore.
- Extension of CBC rate contracts until 31.03.2024.
- Pending dues of Publications

I urge the Ministry that before placing the final recommendation of the 9th Rate Structure Committee, they must empathetically analyze and take into consideration the current economic viability of the publishers in India.

ADVERTISING COMMITTEE: Business and payment status of all Advertising Agencies is being efficiently monitored by the Advertising Committee under the Chairmanship of Mr. H.N. Cama and respective Regional Chairmen.

INVESTIGATION AGAINST GOOGLE BY CCI: Your Society has filed a complaint with the Competition Commission of India (CCI) against Google. It was stated

that Google is allegedly abusing its dominant position in the Indian online news media market. It was highlighted that the producers/publishers of news which are made available in digital format, are not being paid a fair value for their content, despite them having invested heavily in creating appropriate content for the customers, who search for news items using the Google platform. The Digital sub-committee of the Society is continuously focusing on the developments of CCI investigation and other related subjects.

DIGITAL PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION ACT 2023: The Executive Committee of the Society, in its meetings, has noted the quick changes taking place in Technology, Artificial Intelligence and the effects it will have on print media industry at large. Recently, the Government of India has notified the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023. The intent of enhancing data protection is laudable, but it appears that several clauses within the Act might inadvertently impact the Print Media industry, which plays a crucial role in disseminating information and upholding democratic values.

IT RULES, 2023: The Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology issued the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Amendment Rules, 2023 (IT Amendment Rules, 2023). Your Society urged the Government to withdraw this notification and requested to hold widespread & meaningful consultations with the stakeholders before coming out with any notification which would have serious implications and ramifications on the profession of media, and its credibility. The matter of IT Rules is still pending with the Honorable Supreme

Court of India and your Society is keeping a vigil on the proceedings and if need be, will move the Court at an appropriate time.

PRESS AND REGISTRATION OF PERIODICALS BILL, 2023: On 01.08.2023, the Press and Registration of Periodicals Bill, 2023 was introduced in Rajya Sabha which has been passed by house. This bill will replace the existing Press and Registration of Books (PRB) Act 1867, which governs the registration of print and publishing industry in the country. Your Society is keeping a close vigil on the matter.

INS TOWERS, MUMBAI: I am extremely happy to share with you that our prestigious INS Building in Mumbai, now known as INS Towers, is operational. Several member publishers have already occupied and have started functioning from the premises.

Now, I would like to place on record my personal thanks for the support I have received during the course of my tenure as the President from my colleagues, Deputy President - Mr. Rakesh Sharma, Vice President - Mr. M. V. Shreyams Kumar and Honorary Treasurer - Mr. Tanmay Maheshwari.

I also owe many thanks to all the Chairmen of Regional Committees and Sub Committees and members of the Executive Committee for their unstinted support throughout the year.

I would also like to express my sincere thanks to Mr. H. N. Cama, Mr. Naresh Mohan for their valuable guidance and support, especially in the Bombay Building matters.

As many of us are aware, Mr. Naresh Mohan has left the Board after an illustrious tenure spanning decades with the Indian Newspaper Society and the print industry at large. His unwavering commitment, dedication and expertise have left an indelible mark on our organization. His departure leaves a void and his legacy will continue to be a source of inspiration for us. We express our gratitude for his invaluable contributions and wish him the very best in the journey of life ahead.

Finally, I convey my sincere thanks to the INS Secretariat led by Secretary General Ms. Mary Paul who has put in untiring efforts throughout the year.

I thank all of you once again for giving me an opportunity to lead this prestigious Society.

Thank you,

K.R.P. Reddy
President



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