"Censorship is Governmental supervision and control of the information and ideas that are circulated among the people within a society. In modern times, censorship refers to the examination of books, periodicals, plays, films, television and radio programs, news reports, and other communication media for the purpose of altering or suppressing parts thought to be objectionable or offensive."

Censorship is the suppression of speech, public communication, or other information, on the basis that such material is considered objectionable, harmful, sensitive, or "inconvenient."... Governments and private organizations may engage in censorship.

General censorship occurs in a variety of different media, including speech, books, music, films, and other arts, the press, radio, television, and the Internet for a variety of claimed reasons including national security, to control obscenity, child pornography, and hate speech to protect children or other vulnerable groups, to promote or restrict political or religious views, and to prevent slander and libel.

Types of Censorship

Broadly speaking censorship has mainly been practiced in two forms – preventive and punitive according to whether it is exercised before or after the expression has been made public. As it has been exercised by different authorities or institution, hence there are terms like religious censorship, state censorship and private censorship

Preventive Censorship

It is the suppression of ideas, opinions, views, news, information, and artistic expression etc. by government officials, religious authorities, private pressure groups and corporations in advance or before the material has been made public. Its scope expands to books, magazines, newspapers, movies, stage plays, and radio programmes. It demands materials to be submitted before the authorities for scrutiny and thorough check before they are allowed to be made public.4 The authorities have full right to approve or disapprove materials as according to their nature and public interest. It is imposed only by law if
government believes that the idea or information which is to be publicly expressed or circulated is posing threat to public interest.

A more subtle form of preventive censorship is the court-ordered injunction preventing the publication of material that is alleged to be defamatory or to be an invasion of privacy.

**Punitive Censorship**

The growing resistance against pre-censorship resulted in its abolition. In western democracies relatively few restraints are imposed, particularly, by means of preventive censorship. The same is true in India. As in democracy, the constitution prevents prior censorship, the state must look for other means of control. And obvious alternative is the threat of punitive or post censorship. Post censorship, often resulting in seizure or banning, occurs after the work has been made public.

**Religious Censorship**

Religious censorship has existed for long time. After the fall of the Roman Empire in the fifth century B.C., the Roman Church exercised censorship for nearly the next one thousand years in the western world. By religious censorship, any material which seems objectionable is removed. Most often than not dominant religion or the religion followed by the majority forces limitations on the less dominant religion or the religion followed by the minority. Obviously, one religion may shun the works of another because they believe that the content is not appropriate for their faith. Religious

**State Censorship**

In recent usage censorship is practiced under the supervision of political authority over questions of political belief and social morality. In Protestant Europe, the national monarchies undertook the censorial function eagerly, as Catholic Church was forced to give it up. While in Catholic Europe the Church retained its censorial powers, the nation state generally supplemented or superseded these by separate political censorships.
Private censorship

Most often than not censorship is generally associated with official action, but a significant part is played by private organizations that attempt to ban particular books and other materials usually on moral grounds. They directly address to the potential readers or moviegoers and condemn the material as unworthy of patronage, they do not directly engage in censorship. They exert their efforts against distribution channels in order to eliminate the power of individual choice, and this is censorship. Often, they try to induce action on the part of public officials who have, in their eyes, or should have censorship powers.

Dr. Vasudha MC

Department of Sociology

JNC