



Regulating Digital News Intermediaries

For Prelims: Article 19

For Mains: Need to Regulate Digital News Intermediaries

Why in News?

Recently, Canada introduced a Bill that **seeks to make Internet platforms** such as Google and Facebook pay news publishers for use of their content.

What is the underlying Idea?

- The bill seeks to **regulate digital news intermediaries** “to enhance fairness in the Canadian digital news marketplace and contribute to its sustainability.”
- The legislation is **expected to produce four outcomes**.
 - A framework that supports fair business relationships between digital platforms and news outlets.
 - Sustainability in the news ecosystem.
 - Maintenance of press independence.
 - Diversity within the news landscape.

What is the Nature of Publisher-Platform Relationships?

- **Use of Tools and Strategies:**
 - Their relationship has till recently been largely about how **publishers can use tools and strategies to better use the reach** provided by these platforms.
 - **Google and Facebook provide much of the traffic** for a lot of traditional news publishers.
- **Making Money:**
 - All over the world the platforms are **able to make much of the money from this arrangement** while publishers struggle.
 - The publishers also **have to contend with frequent changes to the platform algorithm**, which comes with the real threat of them losing a large amount of readers all of a sudden.

What is the importance of Such Law for India?

- **About:**
 - The Canadian order on the issue is likely **to boost the chances of India’s news publishers getting a fair revenue-sharing system** in the country.
 - India in December 2021 said that it **had no plans to make tech giants, such as Facebook and Google, pay local publishers** for news content.
 - However, following a **complaint by Digital News Publishers’ Association (DNPA)** the [Competition Commission of India](#) ordered investigations into Google earlier in 2022.

- In the process of the order, the watchdog did take note of the legislations in Australia and France.

- **Need to Regulate:**

- India, once the **world's largest unconnected country**, will soon be one of the world's biggest internet-enabled nations, with over 800 million online.
- Technology will **likely be a big part of our economy**, accounting for almost a fifth of our overall output.
- Unregulated social and digital media could **pose a threat to India's rise as a trustworthy and responsible nation**, as also Indian democracy, the world's largest.
- These challenges can be **addressed by regulating social media efficiently** and modernizing our laws and institutions.

What is the Status in Other Countries?

- Google and Facebook **face legal battles over compensation for using news content worldwide.**
 - They also face antitrust lawsuits from regulators and publishers.
- With news publishers in Australia, the UK, the **European Union**, and France having enacted or planning to enact laws to enforce a fair revenue-sharing model, the tech giants seem to be fighting desperately to hang on to their alleged monopolistic system to rake in huge revenues.

Source: TH

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