THE SHRINKING PUBLIC SPHERE: HUMAN RIGHTS, DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP & MOBILITY IN TIMES OF CRISIS

by

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ABSTRACT

The world is undergoing a significant crisis in the overall human rights landscape, marked by an alarming shrinking of civic space, where civil society organizations and those who hold dissenting views face an ever-increasing degree of repression, monitoring, and legalistic attempts at containment. As democratic backsliding gathers momentum worldwide, governments are using highly sophisticated measures, including everything from funding regulations to digital monitoring and harassment of human rights activists, to restrict freedom of association, assembly, and expression. This overall shrinking of civic space is an effort to silence any form of critical inquiry, accountability, and political opposition. This study will examine the complex relationship between the attempts by governments to restrict dissent and civil society's attempts at protecting human rights, with the overall thesis that the preservation of civic space is essential to the maintenance of democratic integrity and the attempts by governments to restrict dissent and civil society's attempts at protecting human rights, with the overall thesis that the preservation of civic space is essential to the maintenance of democratic integrity and the upholding of international human rights standards.

Keywords: repression, critical inquiry, harassment of human rights activist, freedom of association, assembly.

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INTRODUCTION:

The current era experiences a fundamental change which affects how people establish and maintain their public spaces especially during emergency situations including pandemics and political unrest and international wars. The public sphere functions as a space for free speech and democratic participation and public discussion yet its boundaries keep shrinking because governments expand their authority and digital monitoring systems increase and social divisions grow. The situation creates major threats which endanger human rights protection and digital citizenship rights and international travel rights through its implementation in a globalized system which maintains numerous limitations. Civil society organizations encounter increasing restrictions because governments enact regulations which limit their funding while they treat activism as a criminal offense for national security purposes and public order maintenance. The government actions reduced citizen rights which enable people to demonstrate their opposition while they reduced the public areas where people can show their disagreement with the system. The government needs to suppress dissenting opinions because it harms democratic principles while it destroys the systems which protect human rights. Simultaneous crises have worsened problems with migration and refugee situations and statelessness issues. Border closures and restrictive immigration policies together with xenophobic narratives have created obstacles which prevent vulnerable populations from accessing their fundamental rights and protections. Stateless persons face increased difficulties because the lack of legal acknowledgment and protective measures against their status forces them to live outside established social and economic and political systems. The digital space which people once viewed as a free and democratic environment now serves as a battleground between different interests. The expansion of hate speech together with misinformation has created human rights violations because it leads to discrimination and violence and social division. The concept of digital citizenship establishes its importance in this situation because it requires users to demonstrate online responsibility while developing their digital skills and understanding the need for rules which protect free speech and prevent harmful situations. The declining size of public spaces shows how governmental authority interacts with social conflicts and emerging technologies. The study needs to evaluate methods for human rights protection and advancement during times of emergency and governmental monitoring and technological change. The research aims to investigate these processes through the examination of civil society and protest movements and migration patterns and digital security issues which demonstrate the need for rights-based governance and worldwide collaboration.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

The concept of the public sphere has developed through various historical timelines because it serves as a fundamental component of democratic governance and human rights discussions and public involvement. The system has changed because different periods of crisis created new ways for people to interact with each other and with governmental authorities.

1. Origins of the Public Sphere and Early Democratic: Thought The modern concept of the public sphere exists today because Jürgen Habermas created it by describing a public space where citizens conduct rational-critical discussions which operate independently from government and market forces. The Enlightenment period gave birth to this concept which received its fundamental ideas from John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau whose work emphasized individual freedom and equal rights and participatory government. The 17th and 18th centuries saw Europeans establish coffeehouses and print media and salons as public spaces which allowed citizens to participate in political discussions which created the foundation for democratic participation and civil society. The initial development of the public sphere faced restrictions which prevented women and lower-class individuals and marginalized groups from participating in public life.
2. Development of Human Rights Frameworks: The public sphere experienced expansion when human rights became recognized after the American Revolution and French Revolution brought about major political changes. These movements established liberty and equality and freedom of expression as their core rights. The most significant milestone in modern human rights history came after World War II with the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations in 1948.[2] The document established essential rights which included freedom of speech and assembly and movement rights as fundamental elements necessary for a society to function.
3. The Rise of Civil Society and Democratic Movements: The 19th and 20th centuries saw the evolution of civil society organizations and labour unions and grassroots movements which fought for rights and social justice. The public sphere expanded through movements which enabled marginalized groups to engage in political discussions while they fought against government control. The public sphere faced severe limitations during periods of authoritarian rule and emergency situations

[2] Universal Declaration of Human Rights, GA Res 217 A (III), 10 December 1948, arts 2, 13, 19 and 20.

because governments used censorship to suppress dissenters while they imposed strict laws that limited citizens' rights.

4. Historical aspects of migration and refugee situations and statelessness extend back to ancient times: The processes of conflict and colonization and geopolitical transformations have continuously shaped human mobility throughout history. The 1951 Refugee Convention and international asylum laws emerged after World War II when millions of people lost their homes following World War I and World War II. The combination of new nation-state formation and decolonization movements and border management practices caused massive groups of people to lose their nationality and become refugees. For example: Partition of India (1947) Ongoing refugee crises in different regions the developments showed how easily migrants and refugees could be harmed because they faced both public exclusion and the loss of their fundamental rights.
5. The Digital Public Sphere: emerged from the development of the Internet in the 20th century which created new technological systems. Facebook and Twitter (X) operated as platforms which allowed users to share their views while using the Internet as a public space to create social movements and access worldwide information. The time period produced three main developments which resulted in the information landscape became accessible to all people Digital activism increased through movements like the Arab Spring People began to participate more in government through digital platforms The system brought about new problems which included monitoring people without their knowledge and creating security risks for personal data and giving systems power to control user activities.[3]
6. The public sphere has experienced substantial decline since recent decades according to multiple instances of crisis including the COVID-19 pandemic which brought about the following three restrictions: Emergency laws which limited both movement and assembly rights States implemented higher levels of digital surveillance Governments enforced stringent measures against civil society organizations and protesters Online platforms experienced a propagation of false information together with hate speech Governments across the world imposed restrictions justified by public health and security concerns but these measures often led to long-term implications for civil liberties.

[3] OECD, "Human Rights in the Digital Age," https://www.oecd.org/en/topics/sub-issues/human-rights-in-the-digital-age.html.

7. Contemporary Challenges: Misinformation, Hate Speech & Digital Citizenship The digital era: has created a situation where people cannot determine when their freedom of expression ends and harmful content begins. The rise of misinformation, fake news, and hate speech has, undermined democratic discourse Targeted vulnerable communities Threatened social cohesion and human rights This situation has created discussions about how to regulate online platforms and hold them accountable while defining digital citizenship, which requires users to act responsibly in online environments.

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK:

1. Civil Society, Dissent and Shrinking Civic Spaces: Civil society functions as a vital democratic component because it connects citizens with their government through its various organizations including non-governmental bodies and media outlets and grassroots initiatives. The system enables people to take part in government activities while creating mechanisms that ensure officials will answer for their actions and citizens can view governmental processes. The constitution and international agreements such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which guarantees freedom of expression and association and assembly rights, recognize these rights as protected freedoms.[4] Recent times have seen a decline in civic spaces because of increased government control and monitoring and the implementation of laws that limit civic activities, including the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act.[5] Governments use national security and public order as reasons to impose restrictions, which actually function to control opposition and restrict democratic processes. The situation creates a chilling effect that restricts free expression rights and diminishes civil society organizations' power to hold government entities accountable, which results in violations of fundamental human rights.
2. Migration, Refugees and Statelessness International law: recognizes mobility as a fundamental human right which includes both Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and all other international legal systems. Global crises have produced major changes to migration patterns which result in more restrictions on movement and create greater risks for people who have been displaced. The 1951 Refugee Convention defines refugees as people who need protection from persecution

[4] International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, adopted 16 December 1966, entered into force 23 March 1976, 999 UNTS 171, arts 19, 21 and 22.
[5] Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act 2010.

and who must receive protection according to the non-refoulement principle.[67] The majority of countries, including India, operate without complete refugee protection systems which creates legal uncertainty for refugees.[89] Stateless persons who are protected under the Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons face extreme difficulties because they lack both legal identity and essential rights.[10] The COVID-19 pandemic and its associated events made these vulnerabilities more visible because border closures and deportations and discriminatory practices created barriers that prevented these groups from accessing public spaces and judicial systems and civic engagement.

3. Digital communication: it has grown to enable people to share hate speech and misinformation, which endangers human rights and democratic debate. International law prohibits hate speech, which incites violence and hate against individuals or groups according to Article 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Misinformation spreads through social media and unverified sources, which creates barriers to public understanding and drives people apart from each other. The phenomena produce actual outcomes that include communal violence and minority stigmatization and institutional trust decline.[11] Indian laws like the Information Technology Act and Information Technology Rules establish online content control mechanisms.[1213] The need to control harmful speech conflicts with the need to protect free speech rights because excessive control creates opportunities for censorship and power abuse.
4. Digital Citizenship and the Shrinking Digital Public Sphere: Digital citizenship has developed into an essential element of current public spaces because it requires people to engage with online environments after they have gained necessary knowledge about their online activities. Digital platforms such as Facebook and Twitter (X) have created new avenues for expression, activism, and civic engagement. State authorities have begun to implement control mechanisms through surveillance and algorithmic

[6] Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, adopted 28 July 1951, entered into force 22 April 1954, 189 UNTS 137.
[7] Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, adopted 31 January 1967, entered into force 4 October 1967, 606 UNTS 267.
[8] Citizenship Act 1955.
[9] Foreigners Act 1946.
[10] Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, adopted 28 September 1954, entered into force 6 June 1960, 360 UNTS 117.
[11] Tehseen S Poonawalla v Union of India (2018) 9 SCC 501 (India), https://www.scobserver.in/reports/tehseen-poonawalla-union-of-india-tushar-gandhi-plain-english-summary-of-judgment/.
[12] Information Technology Act 2000.
[13] Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules 2021.

systems which now govern these platforms thus restricting unrestricted information exchange.[14] The right to privacy, which Article 21 recognizes as a fundamental right has become a crucial element of digital rights discussions. The Digital Personal Data Protection Act establishes regulations for data usage while safeguarding individuals against unauthorized data handling.[15] Data surveillance together with internet shutdowns and opaque platform management practices create ongoing issues that reduce the size of the digital public sphere despite existing protection measures.

5. Interconnection: Crisis and the Shrinking Public Sphere Governments enforce movement and assembly and expression restrictions during national emergencies and political instability and pandemic outbreaks, which cause the public sphere to contract its boundaries. The authorities can defend their actions through legal frameworks, but they must follow the three principles which require that actions must meet both legal standards and real needs through reasonable methods. The crisis has ended in most situations yet the authorities continue to impose restrictions which establish permanent limits on personal freedoms. The implementation of these measures creates severe negative effects, which impact marginalized communities that include migrants and minorities and activists and journalists.

SOCIAL ASPECTS:

The public sphere reduction needs multiple social system analyses because its reasons extend beyond legal and political constraints. Social factors within a community such as poverty and illiteracy and gender discrimination and caste hierarchies and lack of awareness all develop together to determine how people engage in civic duties and use their legal rights. Most societies in the world especially developing nations like India, create permanent obstacles that prevent marginalized groups from participating in public life. During crisis situations, the government restricts its activities and social disparities increase which leads to stronger exclusion of people from society. Through their work with civil society organizations and community networks, these organizations help people become aware of issues and assist them in taking action, while they also provide support to vulnerable groups. The shrinking of civic spaces through government regulations and political activities results in diminished social support systems which causes people to participate less in public activities and organizations. The public itself decides to stay silent because the government prevents them from speaking

[14] Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, "Digital Space and Human Rights," https://www.ohchr.org/en/topic/digital-space-and-human-rights.
[15] Digital Personal Data Protection Act 2023.

about their problems through its policies, which creates an atmosphere where citizens fear to voice their opinions. The public needs to speak out against injustices. Digital platforms create a new way for people to interact because these platforms establish a digital public space which exists independently of physical borders. The environment experiences this effect because social inequalities exist through the digital divide which restricts technology and internet access to significant parts of society. Social media platforms have increased the problems of hate speech and misinformation plus online harassment which specifically impacts vulnerable groups who belong to different religious and caste and gender and ethnic backgrounds. Public discourse gets disrupted by these social phenomena which also serve to strengthen existing social biases and power imbalances. Digital citizenship develops into a societal understanding which people attain through various educational programs and ethical practices. Digital literacy education together with social responsibility training stops people from spreading false information while they use the internet because they do not know the dangers. Digital spaces need regulation to protect public rights but excessive control will restrict people from expressing themselves and participating in social movements which will lead to a smaller public space.

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HUMAN RIGHTS & CIVIL SOCIETY, DISSENT & SHRINKING CIVIL SPACES:

Human rights and civil society are inherently linked because civil society serves as an essential system for achieving, safeguarding, and advancing fundamental human rights. Civil society includes non-governmental organizations and activists and journalists and community-based organizations which function independently from the State to maintain accountability and transparency and open public participation in governance processes. International treaties establish the legal framework that protects these freedoms through international agreements

which include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights that secure fundamental rights such as freedom of expression and freedom of association and peaceful assembly rights. The public sphere exists because these rights empower people and groups to express their issues while they challenge those in power and shape legislative choices. The democratic system depends on dissent because it serves as a fundamental right. Citizens use this ability to examine government practices and bring attention to unfairness and fight for social transformation. Throughout history dissent has played a vital role in driving human rights progress starting from anti-colonial movements until present-day efforts for equality and justice. Dissent obtains protection through Article 19 of the Indian Constitution which permits reasonable limitations on its practice within the framework of constitutional democracy.[16] The current trend of employing legal and administrative tools to suppress dissenting voices causes apprehension about the decline of democratic principles. Authorities use national security laws and public order laws and foreign funding regulations to block protests and suppress activists and restrict civil society organizations from operating. People and organizations lose their ability to freely participate in public life because civic spaces continue to decrease. The process of shrinking public spaces occurs through multiple methods which include the implementation of restrictive laws and the practice of surveillance and the act of censoring content and the shutting down of internet access and the establishment of laws which make dissenting views illegal. The Foreign Contribution Regulation Act establishes strict conditions that restrict non-governmental organizations from performing their activities according to its current regulatory framework. Security laws enable authorities to make arrests and extend detention times because they use their power to implement undefined security measures, which results in people fearing to express themselves and participate in public demonstrations. The decreasing availability of civic space brings a major risk to both democratic oversight and legal system operation from a human rights viewpoint. When civil society becomes weaker, the state gains more power which creates opportunities for officials to misuse their authority while violating citizens' rights. The marginalized groups which include minorities and women and people from low-income backgrounds face the biggest impact because they depend on civil society organizations for their needs to speak up and get help. The government uses its power to silence dissenting voices which creates an environment of terror that makes people afraid to speak out and participate in democratic processes. Civic space experiences greater restrictions during emergency situations which include pandemics and political unrest.

[16] Constitution of India 1950, arts 14, 19 and 21.

Governments establish emergency regulations which limit people's ability to move and gather and express themselves to protect public security. The measures require legal justification but they must follow three essential principles which include legality and necessity and proportionality. The authorities use these restrictions to achieve their primary goals but they extend control over public spaces beyond their intended use.

MIGRATION, REFUGEES & STATELESSNESS WITH THE EMERGING HATE SPEECH, MISINFORMATION & HUMAN RIGHTS:

The present world faces urgent human rights issues through three main social phenomena which include migration and refugees and the existence of stateless people. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights declares that all people possess the right to move freely between different locations and across international boundaries. The ideal becomes unachievable because of three main factors which include immigration control measures and political unrest and economic disparities. The 1951 Refugee Convention defines refugees as people who deserve protection from persecution yet they encounter asylum denials along with detention and substandard living conditions. Stateless persons who fall under the Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons represent the most defenceless group because they lack all forms of legal recognition which prevents them from obtaining fundamental human rights including education and healthcare and job opportunities. The existing vulnerabilities of these groups face additional challenges because increased hate speech and misinformation have become more common in present-day digital environments. The public sees migrants and refugees as dangers which threaten national security and damage economic stability and destroy cultural heritage. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights prohibits hate speech which creates hostility and violence against these communities while disrespecting their rights and protection.[17] The public sees false information and fake stories which spread through social media and digital platforms as tools that create distorted perceptions about people while they spread xenophobic beliefs. People use these false narratives to link migrants with criminal activities and infectious diseases and terrorist activities which they use to support their discriminatory policies and practices. The combination of mobility and digital communication technologies has created a situation which makes it difficult to safeguard human rights. Misinformation during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis created a major impact which increased negative attitudes towards migrant communities

[17] Pravasi Bhalai Sangathan v Union of India (2014) 11 SCC 477 (India), https://www.casemine.com/judgement/in/5609af5be4b014971141626d.

because people blamed them for spreading the virus and causing economic problems. The situation resulted in social exclusion which affected how governments reacted by enforcing tighter border restrictions and providing less humanitarian support. The public debate suffers from an information deficit because harmful materials spread rapidly which prevents people from making informed decisions about public matters and their rights to fair treatment in policy development. The current situation demonstrates to human rights advocates that states need to protect their citizens but must also safeguard their vulnerable community members. States possess the power to control immigration while keeping public order but they must follow their worldwide duties to protect human rights and end all forms of discrimination. The spread of hate speech and misinformation undermines these obligations by normalizing exclusion and weakening empathy toward displaced persons. The law prevents refugees and migrants from participating in public life which results in their social and political exclusion from society.

CASE LAW ANAYLSIS:

Indian Case Laws

1. *National Human Rights Commission v. State of Arunachal Pradesh*:

Facts: Local groups in Arunachal Pradesh were threatening violence against the Chakma refugees who faced eviction from their homes.

Judgment: The Supreme Court of India held that: Refugees are entitled to protection under Article 21 (Right to Life). The State has a duty to ensure their safety and dignity. Significance: The decision established that refugees possess human rights even when India lacks official refugee legislation. The decision confirmed that fundamental rights apply to non-citizens as well.[18]

2. Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India

Principle: The Article 21 scope extended to cover all procedures which met standards of fairness and justice and reasonableness.

Relevance: The law applies to migrants and refugees who face Deportation and Detention circumstances. The law requires that state actions must operate under non-arbitrary conditions.[19]

[18] National Human Rights Commission v State of Arunachal Pradesh (1996) 1 SCC 742 (India), https://www.refworld.org/jurisprudence/caselaw/indsc/1996/33491.
[19] Maneka Gandhi v Union of India (1978) 1 SCC 248 (India), https://indiankanoon.org/doc/1766147/.

3. The case *K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India* (2017) resulted in the court's decision to declare privacy rights as fundamental rights protected under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution.[20] The law protects both citizens and migrants from two main threats which include surveillance practices and unauthorized use of their personal data. The digital environment needs this protection because it serves as a critical tool to combat both misinformation spread and the use of personal data for creating false profiles.
4. *Shreya Singhal v. Union of India*:

Facts: Challenge to Section 66A of the IT Act.

Judgment: The court declared Section 66A to be unconstitutional. The court confirmed that online users have the right to express their thoughts.[21]

Relevance: The case establishes a precedent for: Free speech analysis of false information Government censorship restrictions which do not allow complete control.

INTERNATIONAL CASE LAWS:

1. *Hirsi Jamaa v. Italy:*

Facts*:* Italy returned migrants to Libya without assessing asylum claims. Judgment: The action violated the principle of non-refoulement.[22]

Significance: The system provides refugees with strong protection against two threats which include forced return and inhuman treatment.

2. The case of *Soering v. United Kingdom* establishes that deportation should not occur when a person faces treatment that qualifies as inhuman or degrading.[23] Refugees and stateless persons will be protected by this law which strengthens human rights in deportation cases.
3. *Handyside v. United Kingdom*

Judgment: Freedom of expression grants protection to: All ideas which cause offense or shock or create disturbance.[24]

Relevance: The case serves as a critical element for: Free speech rights and Hate speech regulation efforts to achieve their necessary balance The court confirmed that the article 10 rights of the applicant need protection through these restrictions. The court confirmed that the

[20] K S Puttaswamy v Union of India (2017) 10 SCC 1 (India), https://www.scobserver.in/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/1-266Right_to_Privacy__Puttaswamy_Judgment-Chandrachud.pdf.
[21] Shreya Singhal v Union of India (2015) 5 SCC 1 (India), https://indiankanoon.org/doc/110813550/.
[22] Hirsi Jamaa v Italy App no 27765/09 (ECtHR, 23 February 2012), https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/fre?i=001-109231.
[23] Soering v United Kingdom (1989) 11 EHRR 439 (ECtHR), https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-57619.
[24] Handyside v United Kingdom (1976) 1 EHRR 737 (ECtHR), https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-57499.

article 10 rights of the applicant need protection through these restrictions. The court asserted that the main right which needs protection under article 10 requires protection through these particular restrictions. The court determined that article 10 protected rights of the applicant required these specific restrictions for their protection. The court determined that article 10 protected rights of the applicant required these specific restrictions for their protection. The court asserted that the main right which needs protection under article 10 requires protection through these particular restrictions.

POLICY CHALLENGES & RECOMMENDATIONS:

The public sphere associated with human rights and digital citizenship and mobility suffers from declining access which creates complex policy problems that emerge from the conflict between government authority and personal autonomy. The main problem security agencies face involves finding a solution which unites national defence together with community safety while preserving essential human rights. Governments commonly use security threats as a basis to impose limitations on citizens who want to express their thoughts and assemble peacefully and move about freely during emergency situations. The absence of specific guidelines which define reasonable limits results in organizations imposing unnecessary restrictions which lead to the silencing of opposing views while making it difficult to maintain democratic governmental oversight. The lack of complete legal protections for refugees and stateless individuals in India creates major problems because the country fails to honour its international obligations which include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 1951 Refugee Convention. Displaced people face a risk of discrimination and detention and exclusion from their fundamental rights because of this legal void. The digital world faces a serious threat to human rights and social harmony because misinformation and hate speech spread rapidly through its networks. The Information Technology Act and the Information Technology Rules establish existing regulatory frameworks, but their actual implementation generates problems related to overreach and censorship and transparency issues. The Government needs to create rules that handle dangerous content yet still permit people to use their freedom of speech rights. The digital divide prevents many people from accessing digital spaces which creates the digital public sphere, thus deepening social inequalities that exist in society. People tend to avoid exercising their rights because they fear being watched or facing retaliation which creates difficulties for data privacy and state surveillance. Civil society organizations face a critical policy challenge because governments restrict their independence through financial and regulatory barriers which block their human rights advocacy work.

Citizens have fewer chances to engage in public activities because civic space has decreased, which also creates fewer checks on governmental authority. The rise of populism together with majoritarian narratives creates an environment that promotes xenophobia and intolerance against migrants and refugees, which results in the establishment of exclusionary policies that violate human dignity.

The solution to these problems requires implementation of a Rights-based approach that uses multiple dimensions. Governments need to establish rules that permit fundamental rights restrictions only when they meet three requirements of legal authority essential need and reasonable limits which must be supervised by courts to prevent abuse. The country needs to create a complete national legal system which protects refugees and asylum seekers according to international human rights standards, which will enable their safe protection and successful integration into society. Digital regulatory frameworks require systems that promote transparency and accountability together with due process standards, which mandate social media companies to implement unbiased content moderation systems that protect users' right to free speech. Digital literacy development needs to occur because it acts as an important defence against false information while it motivates citizens to practice responsible online behaviour. Public awareness campaigns and educational initiatives enable individuals to assess information with critical thinking skills, which helps them to resist harmful narratives. Strengthening data protection laws, such as the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, and ensuring their effective implementation helps to safeguard individuals against unauthorized surveillance and their personal information being misused. Governments need to establish a supportive environment for civil society organizations through three actions: they should reduce regulatory obstacles, provide funding access, and create protective measures against activist harassment. The solution to cross-border problems which include migration and digital governance plus human rights protection requires international dialogue and international cooperation. States and international organizations together with civil society organizations must work together to create policies which support democratic values while including all members of society. The protection of public spaces needs a precise equilibrium between freedom rights and regulatory measures which must protect human rights and create inclusive solutions for all people during emergencies.

CONCLUSION:

The research study of "The Shrinking Public Sphere: Human Rights Digital Citizenship and Mobility in Times of Crisis" demonstrates an ongoing legal battle which emerges from

conflicts between three interconnected domains of law and social dynamics and technological advancements. The public sphere which people once viewed as a free space for citizens to engage in democratic discourse now faces increasing restrictions because of government control and online content management and prevailing social and political conflicts. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and other international and national legal systems still protect basic human rights. But their implementation during emergencies shows inconsistent results. The discussion shows that democratic societies require civil society and dissent as fundamental components but authorities tend to suppress these elements during security and public order emergencies. The two groups of migrants who include refugees and stateless persons experience systematic exclusion because of their limited legal protections and growing public hostility toward foreigners. The public sphere now has digital platforms which allow people to join public discussions. But these platforms create new dangers which include government surveillance and false information and hate speech attacks. These threats endanger both human dignity and the bonds that hold society together. The public sphere has diminished beyond a legal problem because it shows a fundamental societal problem that exists due to existing inequalities and government failures and the impact of technological changes. The state must find a way to protect its legitimate interests while safeguarding the fundamental rights of its people. The process demands three essential elements which include constitutional rules and judicial monitoring and dedication to worldwide human rights regulations. Civil society needs development while people require digital skills training and governments must create programs that protect their at-risk citizens. Democratic societies depend on free public space which allows people to express themselves and participate while maintaining their human dignity. The solution requires an active approach which protects rights while stopping freedom loss and creating chances for every person to take part in meaningful activities. Human rights and justice values need balanced and continuous work to cope with the challenges of our modern world which faces multiple complicated problems.

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