



**A PHILOSOPHICAL ASSESSMENT ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF
CENSORING SOCIAL MEDIA TO REDUCE ITS NEGATIVE EFFECTS
THAT CREATE SOCIAL TURMOIL (WITH ESPECIAL REFERENCE
TO THE POST-EASTER ATTACK CONTEXT)**

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Sri Lanka, during the past few years, experienced several occasions of temporary censorship of social media in the aftermath of the disastrous events that happened in the country, mostly instigated by different ideological and religious points of view. The government took steps to censor social media to contain the negative effects of hate comments and false news that were spreading rapidly through social media, feeding into the fear, distrust and the unrest of the general public. In philosophical literary references, this situation has a similarity to the Platonic suggestion of the complete banishment of art in his ideal city state, advocated in his masterpiece; 'The Republic'. Plato supports a complete banishment of art, highlighting the dangerous potential of art to corrupt the minds of the people. The aim of this paper is to examine whether an external censorship of social media is effective in contemporary Sri Lankan society, as a means of reducing the negative after effects of disastrous events. In this paper, contextual analysis (related to the Easter attack on 21st of April 2019) will be used to examine the reaction of different parties in the post-Easter attack context and to examine how these reactions intensified social negativity. 'The Republic' by Plato will be used in the paper as a primary reference when tracing the similarity between the Platonic conception of the banishment of art in his ideal state and contemporary censorship of media. And the ideas of the postmodern philosophical thinkers; Jean Lyotard and Jean Baudrillard will also be used to explain the Sri Lankan social context at present. Thereafter, the primary data gathered through a sample of social media posts (posted in the aftermath of the April 21st Easter attack) will be critically and comparatively analysed to examine whether the censorship of art is an effective and desirable solution in contemporary society. However, external censorship of social media, as a means of reducing the negative effects of social media (especially in the aftermath of a catastrophic event like the Easter attack), is neither effective nor desirable in contemporary society. Therefore, internal self-regulation of media, in the form of a code of ethics, that everyone who uses media should follow, might be a better solution although the practicality of this suggestion is highly debatable.

Keywords: Social media, Negative effects, Censorship, Effectiveness, Post-Easter attack context

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