Wiki leaks Revelations in Global Context—The War Between ‘Right to Publish’ and ‘Ethical Code of Conduct’

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WikiLeaks is an international non-profit organisation that publishes submissions of private, secret, and classified media from anonymous news sources, news leaks, and whistleblowers. Its website, launched in 2006 under The Sunshine Press organisation claimed a database of more than 1.2 million documents within a year of its launch. WikiLeaks describes its founders as a mix of Chinese dissidents, journalists, mathematicians, and start-up company technologists from the United States, Taiwan, Europe, Australia, and South Africa. Julian Assange, an Australian Internet activist, is generally described as its director. The site was originally launched as a user-editable wiki, but has progressively moved towards a more traditional publication model and no longer accepts either user comments or edits.

The wikileaks.org domain name was registered on 4 October 2006. The website was unveiled, and published its first document in December 2006. The site claims to have been "founded by Chinese dissidents, journalists, mathematicians and start-up company technologists, from the US, Taiwan, Europe, Australia and South Africa". WikiLeaks states that its "primary interest is in exposing oppressive regimes in Asia, the former Soviet bloc, Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East, but we also expect to be of assistance to people of all regions who wish to reveal unethical behaviour in their governments and corporations."

WikiLeaks posted its first document in December 2006, a decision to assassinate government officials signed by Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys." In August 2007, The Guardian published a story about corruption by the family of the former Kenyan leader Daniel arap Moi based on information provided via WikiLeaks. In November 2007, a March 2003 copy of Standard Operating Procedures for Camp Delta detailing the protocol of the U.S. Army at the Guantanamo Bay detention camp was released. Thanks to the era of instant information retrieval, Americans and the Western alliance have a huge problem: silencing Julian Assange as he brings to light 250,000 sensitive documents regarding national security.

Shock, embarrassment, disappointment and no small amount of anxiety have overwhelmed us in recent days.

The Wikileaks phenomenon is intricate, but suppose we reduce its ethical evaluation to two questions: is whistleblowing ethical, even when motivated by resentment and the desire to harm its target? And is Wikileaks’ facilitation of whistleblowing ethical, even if it might put at risk innocent people? A deontologist, convinced that telling the truth and never lying is an absolute must, is likely to appreciate whistleblowing as the right thing to do, independently of the reasons behind it. And a consequentialist may support Wikileaks as a means to maximise the welfare of the largest number of people, especially if risks are minimized by censuring sensitive information. So current answers in the mass media seem to converge: Wikileaks is a good thing. I am not entirely convinced.

Whatever may be the outcome of wiki leaks revelations, but the debate of right to publish and ethical code of conduct is something many of the political experts, journalists and academicians are debating. Wiki leaks ,many believe has crossed the journalistic code of conduct and more firmly buy this opinion that its not a journalism, but wiki leaks has done something which traditional journalism has not been able to do so far. Peeping in
the secured labyrinths of high profile political order of the world. It may or may not be ethically correct but the revelation has shaken many countries including U.S.A and India. As for as Indian part of revelation is concerned, former diplomat to India David Mulford has opined in a talk show with CNN-IBN that many of the cables are correct and Indian revelations are true to many extent.

The question now is whether to go ahead with these revelation trusting on the cables and then to realize the dirt in media and politics or just avoid the thought by saying that its unethical and what wiki leaks ahs done so far may be punished in the name of national security. The debate is on.

Many broadcasters thought that maybe the time for Radio is over with the introduction of i-pod’s and MP3 players but with the beginning of online radio, it is safe to assume that the Radio is making a come back.