



SURVEILLANCE AND THE ISSUE OF PRIVACY IN THE DIGITAL ERA

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ABSTRACT

The surveillance is considered as a vital tool of govern mentality which allows government agencies to have consistent watch over the activities and the identity of its citizens. The surveillance by governments can be traced back to first half of 20th century when world powers like the United States and Great Britain developed collaborative programmes to create mechanisms for systematic and clandestine surveillance of entire populations. The industrial revolution led to the development of sophisticated telecommunication networks that helped these countries to utilize communication channels to monitor and have surveillance of their citizens and their enemies. During the Cold war, America and Russia utilized their strategic and technological resources to monitor each other's activities through discreet surveillance programmes. The digital turn that took place with the beginning on the 21st century, revolutionized the concept of surveillance and governments today have switched over to advanced and more effective digital technologies to have greater access to the information about the interactions, activities, and identity of its citizens. In growing economies like India, the rapid growth in cellular and internet penetration has led to the extension of digital networks which facilitated millions of citizens to interact and communicate with each other. The maximum proliferation of digital networks and human interactions has enabled countries to deploy their security agencies, equipped with latest technologies to monitor their citizens through these digital networks. In growing context of advanced digital communication networks, there are debates going on over government surveillances of people over digital networks which are considered a gross violation of the citizen's 'right to privacy'. This paper discusses the government surveillance and the issue of privacy in today's digital era.