

No use denying Dorsey's revelations

It is true that Twitter's history is not very great and it has been accused of discrimination and bias in its working. There is a view that Twitter under Dorsey leaned more towards the liberal than the conservative side on social and political issues and that this reflected in its treatment of content. The new owner, Elon Musk, has corroborated it. There are also charges of lack of transparency and accountability in the working of the platform. These charges are there against other social media platforms also.

But Twitter's history of bias does not necessarily make Dorsey's comments about what it faced from the Indian government false. The government also has a history of intolerance of criticism and heavy-handed action against critics, dissenters and the media. Dorsey, no longer at the helm of Twitter, has no need to "brush out" Twitter's history by inventing a false history of government in India. A democratic government should in any case act with greater responsibility than a private company. The charges Dorsey has made are in line with the record of the government and the perceptions about it. The government's relations with social media platforms have always been fraught, though the government and the ruling party have put them to much use and achieved great political success. According to reports, a third of the legal demands that Twitter received to block content came from India. The government has tried to regulate social media intermediaries in many ways. While social media platforms should abide by the law of the land, the government has to ensure that these laws are in accordance with the rights of citizens, including freedom of speech. It should act fairly, too, with public interest as its guide.