

NEW MEDIA: CREDIBILITY, CONFLICT AND CRISIS

(A study based on Cases related with New Media)

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Once famous communication scholar Marshall McLuhan said that media is extension of men. It means human beings are capable of doing the things which might not be possible or intensity would be less if there would not be any media. Therefore technological changes and advancements have given us new form of media that is new media which give not only give us ample opportunities at the same time it is becoming a source of conflict. Worldwide penetration of new media has given a world wide exposure. There is abundance of exchange of information that is making us Global in nature. We are having a lot of information at our finger tip but the credibility of the content is at stake, therefore it's a crisis for the new media user who wants to make it as a tool for social mobilization, national unity and social change. Recently in different states of the country communal and social conflict occurred because content was manipulated. Students are also frequently visiting online information from Wikipedia which is also having misleading information. There are different WhatsApp users who are becoming a soft target for manipulated information. No doubt new media users base have been increased a lot but at the same time authenticity of the content is also important without which new media would not be able to sustain. Therefore this paper will present an insight about this important issue.

The role of new media in democracy is changing because democracy ensures equal right and unbiased flow of information to all the citizen of the country. Therefore it is having a strong impact on the youth of the country, but credibility of the content is at stake. Credibility is extremely important in today's climate of increasing political and ideological polarization ([OYEDEJI, 2010](#)).

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Now a day's information is being provided in such a manner that could change the mindset of the youth. Different software is being used for the purpose of manipulation of the information. Earlier when we used to see a picture then we used to believe that the picture was reflecting the truth, but because of the manipulations of the picture right now we cannot trust. These fake images tend to create problem for the individual as well as society. We are having numerous examples in which the images were manipulated. There are different cases in which the image of different political leaders was destroyed through morphing tool. It is a common phenomenon in which someone else's action is being fixed with someone else's face. It is very risky for the politicians and celebrities to build the image again.

Video is the easiest of platforms for fake news. It's so easy to misrepresent: just find any old video of a fight or a brutal killing on the internet, describe it as something recent and inflammatory, and send it out. In minutes, it goes viral, racing around on Facebook and WhatsApp."Therefore we are having several issues related with credibility in which videos of one country are being used in another country to provoke the citizen of the country. In north East, Kashmir and other parts of the India there are different groups that are making propaganda with the help of the videos and images. On 23rd June in "Tribune" it was reported that how Fake videos on social media 'wrongly' project Army in Kashmir. Therefore sometimes it becomes so vulnerable that it creates conflict in society.

As India's telecom regulatory commission says there are more than one billion active mobile phone connections in India, and millions of Indians have started getting online in a very short space of time. Therefore the content that is received by a large number of people could become very dangerous for the society and country if it is fake, manipulated or aimed at creating conflict and tensions. These messages in mobile phone are coming mostly through WhatsApp. Apart from valuble and motivation content there are several cases of misusing this platform. There was a case in which WhatsApp message created communal tension in Moradabad (Hindustan Times, July 5, 2015). There was a similar incident near to Nagpur where due to a WhatsApp group, posting of objectionable messages and then circulation of pamphlets calling for a social and economic boycott of a religious group in Narkhed, about 70 km from Nagpur, led to communal tension in the town (<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/whatsapp-messages>, August 14, 2017).

Keeping in view misuse of WhatsApp messages The Government took a decision to set up a social media hub for keeping an eye on online data, but it also became a controversy due to intrusion in privacy of individuals. This step was challenged in Supreme Court and the Supreme Court on 13 July 2018, Friday slammed the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting for their decision to set up a social media hub. Supreme Court said that this step would lead to a surveillance state where each and every communication on online platform will be monitored.

There is an end number of incidents and stories covered by different media houses which proves that different online content are also affecting individuals in society and creating religious and social conflict. Here I am going to discuss about another story covered by The Hindu on 25 June 2018-“A WhatsApp text circulating in some districts of Madhya Pradesh helped to inflame a mob of 50-60 villagers into savagely beating up two innocent men last week on suspicion that they were going to murder people and sell their body parts.”

Since WhatsApp used to encrypt the message which is not stored on WhatsApp server that is why only sender and receiver can read a message, but consequences of above mentioned incidents led to improvement and rectification in WhatsApp function. It is going to restrict the number of forwarding messages which is 5 at a time. Recently The Government has also summoned WhatsApp CEO in which The Government expressed his concern on non-credible and fake messages which creates problem for the society.

In Hyderabad, police arrested a man Rakesh who made ex-girlfriend's fake profile and put her mobile number on it and invited others to call her. (Oct 1, 2014, deccanchronicle). Because of this several people started calling the victim and harassing her. Following an investigation, the police traced the IP address, and found that Rakesh had created the fake account. This is just one of the examples. There are several cases in which fake profile of individuals are made. This is also happening with the celebrities. Therefore the credibility of these profile and platform is also at stake. There was a study conducted by international online research company Barracuda Labs which studied this problem and listed the common differences between fake and real profiles. For instance fake accounts generally have over 700 friends while real people average around 130. Fake profiles have 136 tags for every four photos while real people have about one for every four. (<https://blog.barracuda.com/tag/research/>). The result showed that fake and incredible profile and contents are such that could create environment of false visibility. Keeping in view

these incidents face book shuts 583 million accounts in crackdown on fake profiles, at the same time in the first three months of 2018; Facebook also deleted 837 million spam posts.

There are allegation of fake account and followers on Twitter also, that is why Twitter has started removing tens of millions of suspicious and fake accounts from its platform's follower counts in an effort to clean up the site. Specifically, it has removed and locked accounts — suspicious accounts it puts a temporary lock on until owners validate them and change their passwords. According to the New York Times, this change has resulted in users collectively losing tens of millions of followers. It has reduced the total combined Twitter follower count by an estimated 6 percent. Sometimes fake profile and message are also creating a problem for the individuals who are signing up with a social media site for fun, but it comes with its risks. Scammers try to convince different users of LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook and other social networking platforms looking for ways to trick users into doing something they wouldn't ordinarily do. Usually, these fraudsters are after their targets' profiles, money, or computer files. But some want something else. Some set their sights on users' identities.

On the other hand YouTube is also facing various problems that are related with fake, conflicting and non credible videos. Consequence of this incident is that “YouTube is ‘forcing’ all networks to remove creators that are at risk of violating terms of service (copyright issues, misleading thumbnails, etc). There are several cases in which videos different militant group also used you tube channel for the purpose of creating a terror among different person. Keeping in view the crisis situation that is being created by different militant groups you tube and Google made the policy, which state out the message,” We do not permit terrorist organizations to use YouTube for any purpose, including recruitment. YouTube also strictly prohibits content related to terrorism, such as content that promotes terrorist acts, incites violence, or celebrates terrorist attacks. If posting content related to terrorism for an educational, documentary, scientific, or artistic purpose, be mindful to provide enough information so viewers understand the context. Graphic or controversial footage may be subject to [age-restrictions](#) or a [warning screen](#).

After discussing different social media platform lets discuss about open source website Wikipedia which can be edited by all. As a source of information is also at stake because many

times users also manipulate the information. Especially different types of sentiments govern the content of Wikipedia. In Science it is fine but in social science and humanities they are a lot of difference in facts and opinion.

In spite of this there are professional and political blogs which are not for the credibility of content but these are becoming a tool of propaganda. Blogs and Social media has become a very convenient way for politicians to connect with the masses, which in turn gives rise to a lot of data being stored at various levels. US President Donald Trump has 52.6 million followers on Twitter, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has 43 million followers while Rahul Gandhi has around 8 million.(www.proschoolonline.com)

Conclusion & Suggestion

- Mechanism and software should be made which can ensure credibility of online content.
- Individuals should be oriented about the use of online content at the same time they should be trained properly about protecting their identity and content.
- Copyright law should be enforced properly at world stage because it hampers individuals' creativity.
- There should be unanimity in cyber law and this law should be enforced by well trained cyber police all over the world.
- Without affecting individual's privacy there must be a mechanism through software which can stop spreading conflicting and non credible message.
- At school and University level there should be orientation programs which deals with use, creation, precaution and liability of individuals about online and digital content.
- Different internet service provider like Google should established servers in India also & these service providers should employ more and more people who are having understanding of different social, religious, cultural, political & ethical traits and subject.
- At world stage internet infrastructure should be improved which can create a democratic platform for all the countries. In this way different views, perspective and ideology can be incorporated and credibility of the content can be ensured.

- Lastly security features of social networking sites, apps and websites should be enhanced so that individual's privacy could not be threatened at the same time in the name of privacy and culprit could not affect our society, nation and the world.

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