



Detrimental Effects of Social Media and Distortion of Facts in Society

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ABSTRACT

While positive integration of social media improves the network, the negative impacts create problem with dissemination of correct information hence the trust of the people on traditional journalism reduces and the society become more divided. Some of the identified credible news source overpowers and start to supply false and/or conspiracy news and theories during the crises that alters the behavior of the masses and thus erodes the principles of democracy. Disinformation is controlled by machines rather than quality information hence deeming it worse because it contributes to social issues and exaggeration of mental disorders due to invoking unattainable goals. Solving these problems requires media literacy, reasonable policies of platforms, and the emphasis on the reliable information. The absence of such actions, is a serious problem to the social media because it leads to disruptions of the culture of tolerance in a society and the decentralizing of the strength of society.

Keywords: social media, information. Society, fake news, public behavior, media literacy, mental health.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Free 4G Network was a successful realization that made the process of Digitalization in the country complete. The use of these social media platforms increased over time and as technology continues to progress and most people get the internet. As simple as this, anything within reach incurs a disruption, in any other period of time, any time added to the period of time will show an increase in the number of Internet users. Of course, when something comes in contact with many people of many kinds, it just leads to distortion of it. This used to be facts through social media which unfortunately turns out as something manipulated by people these days. These are some signs which in one way or the other are distorted and altered in order to present the people with a wrong perception of the reality and in the process, lead to opening of ambiguities. In the modern days, one can easily replace one picture, split a video and paste some photos using A. I or even create fake pictures and videos with the help of the same In many a times using A. I the public becomes violent, riots, fake images and videos, wrong judgments, controversies such as defamation etc. can occur.

1.2 ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE SPREAD OF MISINFORMATION

For this analysis, 2476 active Facebook users in the age group 18 to 89 years who agreed to participate in the research were contacted through exposures to advertisements. They were paid for 'decision-making' questionnaire, in which they devoted approximately 7 minutes completing the questionnaire. Quite strikingly, the authors were able to find out that the consumption of such fake news in the social media accounts of the consumers doubled or even tri – folded¹.

Peculiarly, what is seen in online social media as large-scale digital fake news is regarded by the WEF as one of the most significant challenges to the survival of our civilization. Currently, Google has plans of developing the trustworthiness score to assist users rank search outcome. Facebook has proposed what could be referred to as a user-based approach where users report any wrong information so that the newsfeed algorithm can be altered. However, this problem raises controversy due to the issues regarding possible risks of threats to free speech, and the correctness and effectiveness of the recommended algorithms.²

Social media also have the responsibility of setting standard morality since people emulate whoever they see and learn a lot They can also use artificial intelligence technologies to make fake and convincing content and advertisements. Unfortunately, these advertisements can quickly spread to millions of people if they are not reported and, at times, even if they are. Deepfakes that can completely trick everyone are within the realm of possibility for A. I.

¹ <https://today.usc.edu/usc-study-reveals-the-key-reason-why-fake-news-spreads-on-social-media/> (last visited on July 18, 2024).

² <https://www.pnas.org/doi/full/10.1073/pnas.1517441113> (last visited on July 18, 2024).

Algorithm of social media that exhibit content according to people's likes and dislikes is known as echo chambers. As a result, a child is exposed to more content that is similar if he or she follows an influencer that promotes misogyny. They see more if they engage with that information, and so on. This continues up until all they see is this hated or this misogyny. An echo chamber created by an algorithm means that the content the user gets will align with their stance. It is thus difficult for persons to open up to other systems and ideas as a way of developing a broader outlook. This will show that they are probable to disperse and become even more defensive when cornered.³

If a person participates in the content of one side, there is no way he can be informed of the suffering side or the view of the other side. This is how echo chambers also negatively impact a person's point of view and preference⁴.

- Ofcom also found that 79 per cent of those children, aged 12 to 15 years, said news they were always or mostly true a family member provided them with news updates⁵.
- It is for this reason that 28% of children between the age of 12 and 15 get their news from TikTok (Ofcom)⁶.
- According to the survey on the parents' and legal guardians' attitudes, 60% of them are concerned that a stranger may either 'swindle, fraud, deceive, or mask as ' their child⁷.
- According to the survey, four in every ten kids between the ages of nine and sixteen are ambivalent about the reality of what they have witnessed. The second most common response, next to 'too much time on the computer', was this⁸.
- The programme News Wise developed by National Literacy Trust also helped children enhance their literacy in the media. This aspect reveals that the extent to which children were able to identify news as either true or false improved from 49. 2% to 68% in the said period. This exemplifies why media education needs to be prioritized⁹.

2 ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN POLITICAL EVENTS:

There is no one way in which social media contributes to political unrest since it is a complex and multiform phenomenon. Social media is used in the organization, communication, and dissemination of information but at the same time are sources of tension and uprisings. Social media can impact political riots in the following ways:

- Organization and Communication: It is very easy, on social networks, to gather a group of like-minded people and start a conversation. The social media platforms that protestors can leverage for planning events, giving information and calling for support include the following; Twitter, Facebook and messages among others¹⁰.
- Information Spread: Entertainment: Using of social media in spreading correct and wrong information. Elections are usually characterized by political instabilities and when fake news or rumors are spread during such times, emotions are raised and possibly more bloodshed could be experienced¹¹.

³ <https://www.internetmatters.org/issues/fake-news-and-misinformation-advice-hub/learn-about-fake-news-to-support-children/#:~:text=Social%20media%20is%20changing%20the.net%20to%20spread%20disinformation%20online> (last visited on July 18, 2024).

⁴ <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2020/10/15/64-of-americans-say-social-media-have-a-mostly-negative-effect-on-the-way-things-are-going-in-the-u-s-today/> (last visited on July 18, 2024).

⁵ <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/media-use-and-attitudes/attitudes-to-news/news-consumption/> (last visited on July 18, 2024).

⁶ *Ibid*

⁷ Hamid Reza Hatamabadi, "Evaluation of Factors Influencing Knowledge and Attitudes of Mothers with Preschool Children Regarding Their Adoption of Preventive Measures for Home Injuries Referred to Academic Emergency Centres," *16 International Journal of Injury Control and Safety Promotion* 244-259 (2014).

⁸ <https://www.berghahnjournals.com/view/journals/girlhood-studies/9/3/ghs090305.xml> (last visited on July 18, 2024).

⁹ <https://www.internetmatters.org/issues/fake-news-and-misinformation-advice-hub/learn-about-fake-news-to-support-children/#:~:text=Social%20media%20is%20changing%20the.net%20to%20spread%20disinformation%20online> (last visited on July 18, 2024).

¹⁰ Shelley Boulianne and Sangwon Lee, "Conspiracy Beliefs, Misinformation, Social Media Platforms, and Protest Participation" *16 Media and Communication [Online]*, 30-41 (2022).

¹¹ <https://mitsloan.mit.edu/ideas-made-to-matter/mit-sloan-research-about-social-media-misinformation-and-elections> (last visited on July 18, 2024).

- Amplification of complaints: It might also be a way through which distressed populations could express their grievances through the social media platforms. It may bring good in society since people will be more productive, but it can also worsen the situation and create segregation with tendencies to employ violence among those who are on the opposite side¹².
- Surveillance and Monitoring: Through the use of the social media, the governments and other authorities can monitor and track the movements of protestors. This may be the case and raise privacy concerns and may amount to infringements of the freedom of speech¹³.
- Radicalization: To sum up, one can state that thanks to all the mentioned social media platforms, extremist opinions can prevail and people can become even more radicalized. Moreover, these platforms may also be used by the radical organization to mobilize their followership with the potentiality of violence¹⁴.
- Censorship and Control: The governments might also block certain websites or use social networks to disseminate only the information that they want which is also an obstacle for the protesting population¹⁵.

Thus, the impact of social media on political riots is not a constant, it can be positive in a given setting, area, and depending on the details., while it can contribute positively to activism and practically any agenda for change, if not managed appropriately and with ethical standards in mind, can in fact result in aggravation of existing conflicts. In light of this, technology corporations, policymakers, as well as individual users contribute to the social media's differing impacts on political events.

3 CASE STUDY:

3.1 INDIA

Considering the multiple violent incidents as well as increasing intercommunal tensions stem from the furthering of fake news and other kinds of polarizing content thus, it could be reasonably stated that India is one of the most suitable countries for researching the role of social media in the given phenomenon. The trends in sociopolitical polarization of the audiences on social media and the associated changes in attitudes in the population make the analysis of the country interesting and distinct, as it is rather politically and demographically diverse. Fake news, bigotry and extremism on the social media platforms has increased tensions within the societies, and overall likelihood of violence to the religious and minority groups since such groups are categorized resulting to societies' split. Thus, social media has been more on being a tactical tool that the Indian political players have used to galvanize their supporters and drive change. Political polarization and hostility in varying demographics have been accredited to social media I said. However, the material that is considered to be shameful or which everyone has a split opinion on gets trending on social networks in India within the shortest time and insults escalate and issues in the physical world follow the trend. It is possible to make a conclusion that studying the case of India, the dynamics of social media influence the polarization of the society, and thus, we can see that academics should provide more elaborate approaches to the matters connected with the presence of fake news and segregation of society in reference to the digital environment present in the modern world¹⁶.

3.1.1 Manipur

The ethnic crisis that was witnessed in the Manipur state in may 2023 was as a result of strained relations between the Meitei ethnic group and the Kuki-Zo tribal group. The direct cause was a judgment by the Manipur High Court which advocated the ST status for the Meiteis: the act enthused a controversy from the tribal groups owing to apprehensions of job reservations and land rights. This degenerated into conduct of violence, arson, and provocation to force people out of their homes across the state¹⁷.

The conflict also revealed other concerns of; economic imbalances, property disputes, and political power. Most of the Meiteis are found in the Imphal Valley and thus have a political ascendancy in the state administration. Whereas the Kuki Zo communities who mostly resided in the hill tracts felt inadequate and neglected. Drug trafficking, issues related to immigrant illegality and the availability of armed organizations in the region also contributed to increasing the level of violence. This unfortunate event culminated to a crisis of lawlessness given that more than 150 people were killed and many more thousands rendered homeless. The central government sent out its armed forces to regain order but the situation continued to be sensitive. The

¹² <https://www.civildaily.com/news/impact-of-social-media-on-public/> (last visited on July 18, 2024).

¹³ <https://freedomhouse.org/programs/emergency-assistance-and-thematic-programs>(last visited on July 18, 2024).

¹⁴ <https://bipartisanpolicy.org/blog/demystifying-social-media-algorithms/> (last visited on July 18, 2024).

¹⁵ Rituparna Banerjee, "Can Governments Control Social Media? or Can Users?," *Indian Express*, Nov. 19, 2019, available at: <https://indianexpress.com/article/technology/opinion-technology/can-governments-control-social-media-can-users-6127244/> (last visited on July 18, 2024).

¹⁶ Anindita Borah and Sanasam Ranbir Singh, "Investigating Political Polarization in India Through the Lens of Twitter" 16 *Social Network Analysis and Mining* 24 (2022).

¹⁷ <https://www.reuters.com/world/india/why-is-indias-manipur-state-grip-ethnic-violence-2023-07-21/> (last visited on July 18, 2024).

situation in Manipur revealed the tentative of ethnic peace in Northeast of India and the problem in searching for a solution for indigenous people's issue in the multicultural context. Manipur restricts the posting of violent contents in the form of videos and or photographs on social media¹⁸.

The Manipur government says it is being used to mobilise agitators, which may aggravate the law-and-order situation: It averred that it had learned of reports that such pictures were allegedly being circulated to "provide impetus and/or incite mobs of agitators and demonstrators which may further fuel a deterioration of the law-and-order situation in the State"¹⁹.

The government said that violators will be booked and prosecuted without any exemption and at the same time called the public into coming forward and reporting such people with any information they would have. This is because small Internet connection windows have time and again resulted in the revelation of heinous crimes from the ethnic conflict period that were committed many months ago in several of the given cases resulting in retaliatory escalation of violence or large-scale anti-government demonstrations²⁰.

This ethnic strife between the Meitei dominating valley and the Scheduled Tribe Kuki-Zomi hill people started on May 3 this year. Up to the time of this writing, scores of 180 are the number of people who have been reported dead in the violence²¹.

An order given by the home department on Wednesday stated that such videos and pictures that depict persons or properties being harmed or injured, public, and private properties being damaged were being circulated through the WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, X (Twitter), etc. In addition to this, bum sites being sent through bulk SMSs. The Home department order said: "The State government, after going through the matter thoroughly compared the said act of spreading such videos / images / pictures as a positive measure to restore normalcy in the State". It said no one in the State should Possess or share any such videos, pictures or materials on any electronic device- mobile phone, laptop, computer, Tablet, etc. The government also said that if anyone is in possession of such materials, then such person should hand this over to the nearest Superintendent of Police, regardless of station jurisdiction for necessary legal actions. If anybody uses the technology for promoting violence/ hatred, then appropriate action will be also taken under the sections of the Information Technology Act and rules and the IPC. The general public has also been warned about such elements and activities and has been asked to report to the Superintendents of Police of their respective districts any information they may possess on such people/activities²².

Thus, the Indian case indicates that social media present certain difficulties, particularly within culturally and politically diverse contexts, regarding the riots in Manipur. The administration has realized that social media contributes to instability, that is why it has forbidden the sharing of violence there. The adversaries of Narrative Consensus are the echo chambers for they exaggerate the division in the great and popular narrative dichotomy. Due to social media being the primary tool for organizing riots, the proper requisites are shown for behavior and the proposal of the content moderation policy. Having utilized the above approaches in an attempt to investigate the likely negative effects of social media on a conflict region and map out technological solutions, legislative actions, and educational campaigns to mitigate detrimental consequences, the case reinforces the previous findings of this research. Thus, it is realized that the mitigation has to be accomplished through a combination of both government and tech industries²³.

3.2 MYANMAR

The Rohingya issue of 2017 is a sad example of how social networks affect ethnic tensions and real-world violence. This social media giant, which remains Myanmar's most widely used social network and first stop for information and news, played an enormous role in the polarization that had catastrophic consequences. Facebook in Myanmar gradually became a platform that would allow the circulation of 'hate speech' and fake news primarily in relation to the Muslim Rohingya population. Soon, there were more stories on the site which were unwelcoming to the Rohingya people and advocating violence thanks to the poor monitoring and intervention of the site's favicon. was shown to be effective means for it by extra-reactionary and chauvinistic movements as a result of which more hatred and hostility towards the Rohingya people were initiated. Failure to control misinformation and conspiracy theories resulted in the aggravation of hatred, which had severe offline consequences²⁴.

In Myanmar truth and intention were not properly portrayed in Facebook by hate speech and false information resulted in massive bloodshed and forced migration. Many Rohingya Muslims died and hundreds of thousands were uprooted and forced to flee to Bangladesh, an adjoining nation. This aspect became evident due to criticism from the UN and others where some pointed out that the determination of the conflict was owing to the involvement of

¹⁸ <https://www.reuters.com/world/india/why-is-indias-manipur-state-grip-ethnic-violence-2023-07-21/> (last visited on July 18, 2024).

¹⁹ Karan Mahadik, "As Manipur Govt Bans Circulating Videos, Legal Experts Raise Censorship Concerns", *The Quint*, Oct. 13, 2023, available at: <https://www.thequint.com/news/law/manipur-government-order-social-media-ban-censorship-concerns-latest-news> (last visited on July 18, 2024).

²⁰ *Ibid*

²¹ <https://www.reuters.com/world/india/why-is-indias-manipur-state-grip-ethnic-violence-2023-07-21/>(last visited on July 18, 2024).

²² <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/manipur-bans-sharing-of-videos-or-photos-of-violence-on-social-media/article67409441.ece>(last visited on July 18, 2024).

²³ *Ibid*

²⁴ https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/fake-news-on-facebook-fans-the-flames-of-hate-against-the-rohingya-in-burma/2017/12/07/2c1fe830-ca1f-11e7-b506-8a10ed11ecf5_story.html (last visited on July 18, 2024).

Facebook. The Myanmar case makes it clear of how imperative it is for social media companies to take an active stand and respond to systematic conflicts and violence of war. It also illustrates how challenging it may be to perform on content control especially in places that have different political and cultural views. The Rohingya crisis become a warning and puts a pressure to reconsider what social media companies agreed to be responsible for, in those areas where its effects are felt not only in the virtual space but also in the real world²⁵.

3.3 RUSSIA- UKRAINE WAR

With the help of social networks, Russia and Ukraine have become practicing the art of warfare in a hybrid conflict, filling the Internet space with fake documents and messages to influence the world's communities. Especially, youth prefer to use social networks as a source of news more and more often citing its speed, availability, and interactivity. Meanwhile, in the Arab World the primary source through which the youth obtain their news is through social media which stands at 61% outcompeting the Online sources, Newspapers, and Magazines that only possessed 34% and 9% respectively. Although, this leads them to propaganda and fake news, particularly in the Ukrainian conflict issue, both Russia and Ukraine have been active in the manipulation of peoples' perception through social media. For instance, Russian sources staged the Ukrainian president Zelenskyy as having run to another country when, in fact, he addressed people from Kyiv. The same as Russia, Ukraine employed historical allusions, for instance, the caricature of Hitler who approved Putin. Also, real events are faked, for example the fake report of the death of an American activist, and actual videos, for example a battle scene, which was at first attributed to Ukraine, but which, in fact, took place in Mali in 2019. Political preferences and media diet of the public also has a say when it comes to opinion making. There exists decreased credibility of main media in the Arab nations, this is because the fake news resulting in sharing of fake news by the users unawares. As laid down by the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), people consciously turn to media that supports their political stance, hence confirming their beliefs through the media content. The theory will explain why most of the time Arabs, while sympathizing with Ukrainians, highly support Putin. These attitudes have been shaped by the post-Arab Spring tendencies, showing Putin as a person who is fighting against the west and is sympathetic to Arabs' causes, while Zelenskyy is seen as another brain-washed western puppet²⁶.

Regarding the position of the Arab public towards the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, it can be stated that there is no clear preference in the Arab street. In a poll only 1/3 those surveyed were able to establish clear position, 2/3 had no position, 18% supported Ukraine while 16% supported Russia. This indifference may be due to the fact that the war is far away from here and does not seem to be an European war. More to the point, the described audience will not become carriers of undue opinions, opening them to propaganda; therefore, they should embrace media literacy – to decipher the information they are fed²⁷.

Journalism and media industry is very important to address false information and nurture accurate information. Nevertheless, people begin to lose confidence in traditional media, but move to social media which is considered more autonomous. This shift further worsens the impacts of fake news, especially in crises such as the Russia- Ukraine war. The constant application of propaganda reduces people's reliance on media outlets and makes it difficult to address or form foreign policies or lasting peace²⁸.

Thus, it is possible to conclude that social media as the means of news dissemination during the Russia- Ukraine War hint at both the opportunities and dangers of networking. Arab world's young generation, which virtually interact with social networks, are more vulnerable to effects caused by propaganda, including alteration of their beliefs and views on politics. Another factor that adds to this comes with a decline in the public's faith in the mainstream media which only aggravates the need for strong, credible and bias-free journalism. Solving these issues demands an encyclopedic approach to media education and citizens' united commitment towards creating a populace armed with enough information to combat the anomalies and emerging fictions of the age²⁹.

3.4 SRI LANKA:

Social media plays a significant role in the processes that took place in Sri Lanka both before and after the tragic Easter Sunday bomb explosions that affected churches and hotels in 2019 And248. The Facebook and WhatsApp messages have been widely employed in the organizing and radicalizing process by the extreme groups. These forums evolved into places for the dissemination of radical ideologies, which means it became possible to mobilize people and coordinate their actions. Thus, social media went beyond the coordination dimension to encompass the fast spread of inaccurate information and rumours concerning the attacks and their authors. Due to this dispersal the public was generally afraid and uncertain which precipitated into complicating the efforts of the police in dealing with the consequences. In response to the spreading of the inaccurate information and promotion of possible violence, the Sri Lankan government made their incredible decision to the temporary block some social media platforms. This reactivity revealed

²⁵ <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/rest-of-world/fake-news-online-hate-swell-indonesia-anti-rohingya-sentiment/articleshow/107376366.cms> (last visited on July 18, 2024).

²⁶ <https://www.thecairoreview.com/essays/social-media-as-a-propaganda-tool-in-the-russia-ukraine-conflict/> (last visited on July 18, 2024)./

²⁷ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/10/24/analysis-russia-ukraine-war-view-from-saudi-arabia> (last visited on July 18, 2024).

²⁸ <https://www.imf.org/en/Blogs/Articles/2022/03/15/blog-how-war-in-ukraine-is-reverberating-across-worlds-regions-031522> (last visited on July 18, 2024).

²⁹ *Ibid*

the delicate balance that governments have to try and establish between upholding free speech and, apprehensively, public order, and security in the course of an emergency. The situation in Sri Lanka shows the need for using proper countermeasures that can be illustrated by the Example of how extremists are actively using the social media for radicalization as well as for the planning and co-ordination of their attacks. Furthermore, it shows readers some of the hard-hits that Governments have to endure when it comes to nature of grants to social media services in emergency situations. Thus, it can be stated that in such cases the need to maintain public security also means a thin line between protection of individuals' basic rights to freedom and minimizing potential acts of violence stemming from false information³⁰.

4. REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS AND LEGAL CONSTRAINTS AIMED AT MANAGING SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITIES WITHIN INDIA.

4.1 Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021:

The government of India released the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 on May 26, 2021. These regulations mean to moderate various online intermediaries including social media platforms, digital networks and over the Top (OTT) players like Netflix and others. Such regulations pay much attention to evaluations and offer a detailed description of intermediaries. They also include such provisions as the mandate of Grievance Officers, Resident Grievance Officers, and Nodal Contact Persons. It is imperative to file monthly, quarterly or annual compliance reports along with immediate reaction to the court orders or government directives concerning illegality. These include self-regulation of the new-age digital media institutions and the Over-The-Top (OTT) players, message origin tracing for major platforms, and voluntary user verification for the social media players. As it is claimed, these regulations have been criticized because of their purpose irrespective of the proclaimed aim for addressing the problems such as speech and privacy. Due to the fact that the rules underlying these regulations evolve with time, it is crucial to monitor the existence of any changes in them occasionally³¹.

4.2 Section 69A of the Information Technology Act:

For maintaining public order, sovereignty, integrity, defense or security of the state the Government of India can blocking or disable the information on computer resources under the section 69A IT Act 2000. The filed blocking order may be provided by any official or MeitY designated officer for various reasons – one of which may be related to security risks to the nation. While the primary idea behind it is to fight against cyber threats and protect national security, people are concerned that this could be used as an excuse to limit the freedom of speech. Basically, it means that the administration should not act in a disorderly fashion, especially when enacting the procedures that involve communicating with an interministerial committee, which will ensure relative openness and responsibility. However, controversies regarding the regulation of the internet content are not ceased in India, and emerging legal issues that require a reinterpretation of Section 69A³².

4.3 National Security and Public Order:

The laws managing the social media accord the principles jurisdictional powers to regulate the social media content that is deemed to be potentially demanding the restrictions to public order and national security. The government and the social media companies have the responsibility of assessing such content. Officials may act to risk in relation to content and the platforms may be ordered to remove or limit the given posts or profiles. As for the cpolice's use of personal data, it is expected that social media companies would collaborate with law enforcement on nationwide security-related investigations, and, therefore, emphasize the joint responsibility for the safety of the digital world. This, the challenge is to find the right balance between privacy and freedom of speech on one side, and security that is needed on the other. This requires an adaptive and collaborative approach from the regulatory sphere, as well as platform providers and government bodies that would enable to strike a delicate balance between people's right to privacy and security concerns in the context of the digital environment³³.

4.4 Content Regulation and Removal:

Media enterprises working within the territory of India are bound by the nation's laws and regulations and are expected to delete information that violates the accepted community norms or the nation's legislation. Administrative orders originating from the courts as well as legal demands from the government allow them to demand for immediate modeling of content that is against the law or poses a threat to the public order. Similar to other countries experiencing increasing pressures for corporations to be held more responsible, this legal environment establishes significant importance in the execution of platforms' duties to block material. Moderation of content is a rather tense endeavor of seeking the middle ground between preventing harm and preserving the

³⁰ https://www.ipcs.org/issue_select.php?recNo=517 (last visited on July 18, 2024).

³¹ Information Technology Act, 2021

³² Information Technology Act, 2021, s. 69A

³³ <https://www.ais.gov.au/networks/social-media-principles> (last visited on July 18, 2024).

freedom of speech; it requires updating the rules fairly often. Such shifts evolve from a perpetual discourse between governments, civic society, and technology firms regarding how freedom of speech may be regulated while accommodating the public's interests in the social media age³⁴.

4.5 Fake News and Misinformation:

False information and fake news issue in India extends beyond social media networks, it also contains other media outlets. Various legal measures that have been undertaken to address these problems are serious and encompass a broad range of media. Again, the government does not rule out the possibility of harm, although it focuses on a less specific concept of maintaining public order and security of the state. Law enforcement agencies in collaboration with platform owners implement the laws, so interaction requires anticipation to maintain post's freedoms and avoid undesirable consequences. Legal processes must evolve because the nature of information sharing on the internet has shifted over time. Considering these steps taken by India, it is found that the actions taken mirror the core values of freedom of speech as well as responsible journalism in the fight against the menace of fake news needed to support the international community³⁵.

5. CONCLUSION

Since false information is an extremely complex issue, which deepens political polarization, its solution requires various actors to make multifaceted adjustments. It is crucial to promote free speech and regulate its negative consequences at the same time because disinformation threatens the stability of democracy and institutionalization. These are advocating for content filtering and algorithm reveal on different social platforms, promoting critique, and educating people on media. Specifically, it is dealing with false information delivered by third parties, which can be mitigated by assuring the consistency of community standards and users' reporting systems. Sticking to the rules of journalism professionalism, and recommendations regarding the diversity of the material are the essential elements of the proper management of the platform. The legal and regulatory system need to be strong and efficient, and the political advertising should not be a grey area and there should be penalties for spreading fake news. These endeavors are supplement by piece of legislation on the geography of a particular election, like the legislation on political commercials, and fact-checking during the progress of the election. Global problems can only be solved with the help of international cooperation in order to raise the number of fact-checking actions and prevent such manipulations. It is also stressed that one should respect other people's opinions encouraging people to contribute the search for truth through media analysis and critical thinking, factual verification in relation to the information found in media and active everybody for veritable debate and constructive dialog that unites people rather than divides them. All in all, combating fake news, creating a vigilant and engaged public in the era of digitalization, and building democracy must be solved by an effectively changing approach crossing educational, technological, legal, and diplomatic spheres.

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³⁴ Information Technology Act, 2021, s. 69A

³⁵ <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1871840> (last visited on July 18, 2024).

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