



Insignificant Control Mechanisms and Spread of Communal Hatred on Internet

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Abstract

Since the advent of Internet, the world has witnessed major changes in all aspects of life. It has generated a lot of opportunities and businesses. It has become an integral part of our lives. Sharing or searching an information has become a lot easier. Today, the world is just one-click away. It facilitates people to reach out to the larger audience, share their views and ideologies to more and more people instantly without being physically present and with complete anonymity. However, it is double edged sword; the misinformation, extreme views, bigoted opinions, fake or morphed multimedia, hatred towards other groups/communities can also be propagated with equal speed and anonymousness. A lot of anti-peace organizations are running their websites, softwares, social media pages or/and accounts and fueling the flames of hate and extremism and spreading their propaganda all over the world. The aim of this study was to discuss the issue of communal hatred on internet with real people belonging to different groups/communities/genders. These people were requested to fill out online survey and share their experiences and views in this regard. This study emphasizes the urgent need for some strong control mechanism to counter this spread.

Keywords: Internet, Information, Anonymous, Ideologies, Opinions, Extremism, Misinformation, Fake, Propaganda, Hate, Communal, Control Mechanisms.

Introduction

Today, the role of internet in almost every protests, movements and even riots cannot be denied. The Internet and particularly social media has become a tool used to mobilize and many times misused to polarize people. Social media applications have a long history of playing a major role behind movements or protests, sometimes for a good and sometimes for a dangerous causes. The Arab spring (2010), Muzaffarnagar (2013), George Floyd murder/accident case a.k.a. Black lives matter (2020), Basirhat (2017), Capitol Hill (2021),

Bangalore Riots (2020) and infamous MeToo campaign are very few examples where social media and internet played a significant role.

Internet has become a virtual battleground where heated discussions are taking place. Since, these tech organizations require money and resources in order to successfully run their companies, they need more active users. Therefore, in an effort to provide better services and keep their users active and engaged, they serve contents based on individual interests and ideologies. This sometimes leads individual to come across those places where they meet people with same ideologies. These ideologies sometimes can be extreme and bigoted. Fake information, morphed multimedia, extreme views and opinions are constantly being spread and many of the times under the veil of religion. Vulnerable persons are being influenced by these materials and this sometimes make them more extreme. Influenced by these online garbage sometimes they get involved in offline extreme crimes.

According to National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data; In the year 2020 India reported: 578 cases of Fake News on social media which is 204% more than preceding year and 495% more than the cases reported in 2018, 26 cases of Cyber Terrorism which is 116% and 23% more than the cases reported in 2019 and 2018 respectively, 356 cases of Politically motivated cyber crimes which is 12% and 63% more than the cases reported in 2019 and 2018 respectively, Seven cybercrime cases related to Terrorist Recruitment which is 12% less and 250% more than the cases reported in 2019 and 2018 respectively, 165 cybercrime cases related to Inciting hate against Country which is 236% more and 24% less than the cases reported in 2019 and 2018 respectively.

Several measures are being taken by governments, organizations, law authorities to prevent this spread but this measures seem to be less effective. What is being sent, what is being received, what is being read, what is being watched all these are being monitored and regulated solely by these private organizations. They do not easily let governments and other organizations have control over their data, either because they have promised their customers “privacy” or these governments can even misuse this data. These companies are not constrained to obey the law and regulations of each country, because each country has its own law. Altogether, there are very few steps seems to have been taken to counter this issue.

This paper aims to discuss and study the impact of hatred being spread on internet. The participants were asked if they have ever experienced communal hatred on internet and they feel the need for stronger mechanisms to counter this issue. The study invited participants from different communities and genders, the findings show that this toxicity is not restricted to any particular community or gender.

Method

This research has followed both Qualitative and Quantitative approach to collect and then analyze the data. The data collection method was Primary in this study. There were 36 random participants involved in this study belonging to different communities. A questionnaire was generated using Google Form and a link to this form was shared with participants. The answers collected through this questionnaire were analyzed manually.

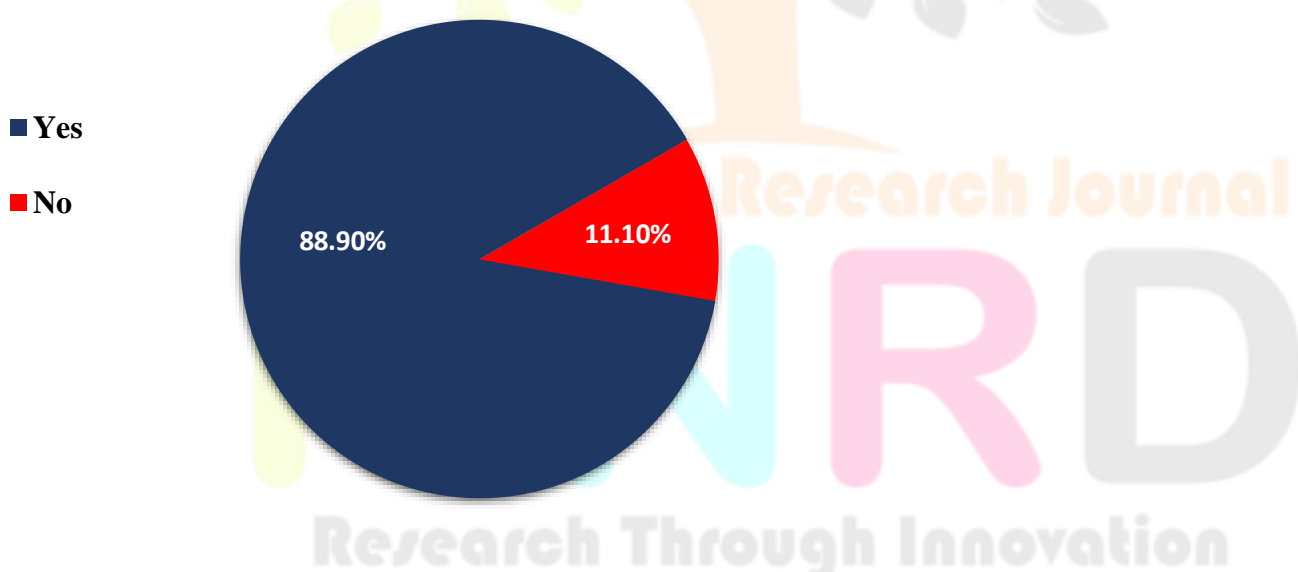
Participants were assured that their data/answers would not be revealed to anyone and their answers would not be altered.

Result

There were total 36 participants of different age group, questionnaire was generated using Google form and these participants were requested to answer that questionnaire.

Out of 36 participants, 88.9% (32 participants) confirmed that they somehow found content on Internet at least once that hurt their religious sentiments, ethnic identity or racial identity. In addition, 11.1% (Four) participants responded that they never encountered any such content.

Q. Have you ever read, received or viewed anything on Internet that has hurt your Religious beliefs, Ethnic identity or Racial Identity?

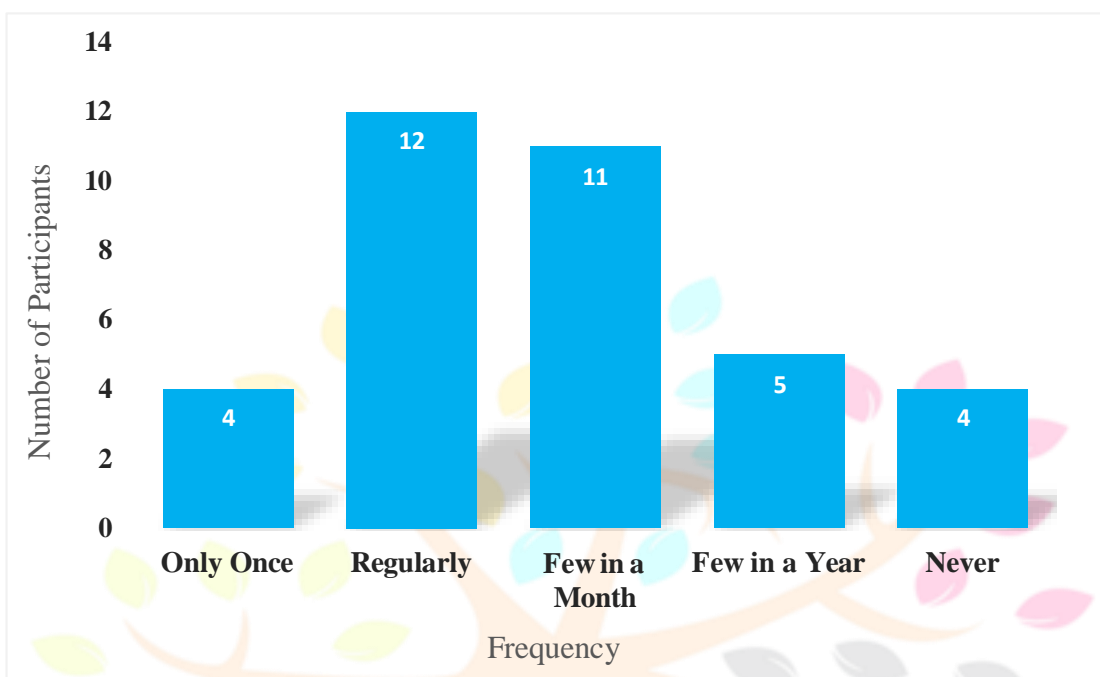


Further, participants responded on how often they encounter such items. Out of 36 participants: 11.1% (Four) participants responded that they encountered such content only once, 33.3% (12) participants responded that they encounter such contents Regularly, 30.6%

(11) participants responded that they encounter few such contents in a month, 13.9% (Five)

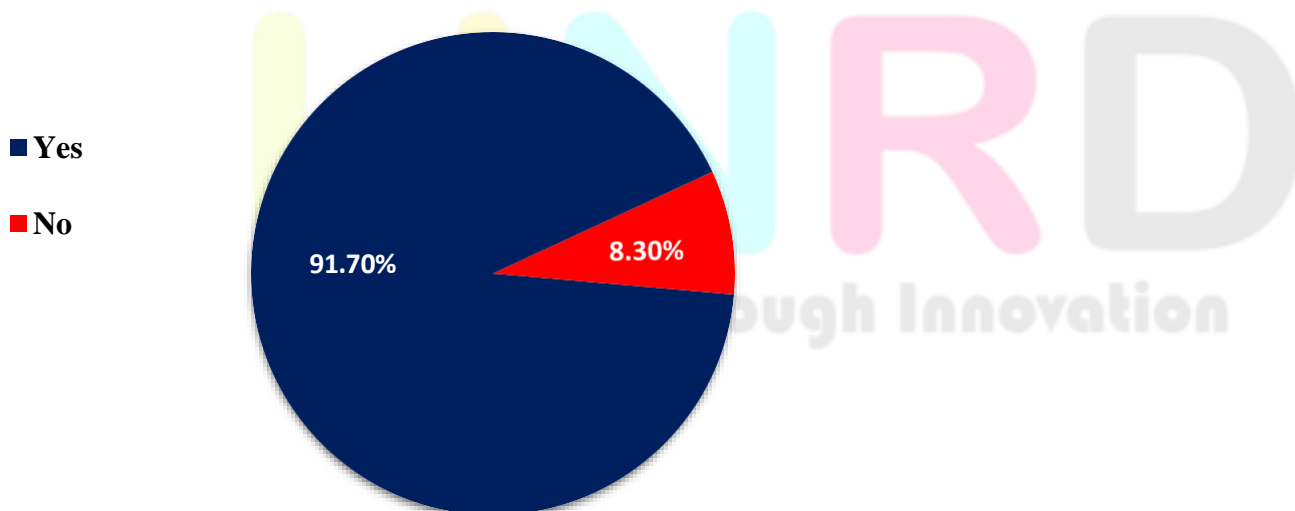
participants responded that they encounter few such contents in a year, 11.1% (Four) participants responded that they never encounter such contents.

Q. How often do you encounter these materials?



Out of 36 participants: 91.7% (33) participants agreed that stronger control mechanism is needed to tackle this issue. Moreover, 8.3% (3) participants responded that they did not feel the need for stronger control mechanism.

Q. Do you think there is a need of a stronger control mechanism on internet to counter the spread of these materials?



Conclusion

In today's world, the Internet users are growing exponentially. The Internet has provided a platform for everyone to express their views and ideas to more people. But it has also become a fertile ground for communal hate and violence. The Internet is not centralized and therefore has no common regulation to be followed by service providers and organizations. This study aimed to discuss this issue and emphasize the need to tackle this problem. There is a need to create a common platform where every countries can contribute in resolving this issue and frame common regulation. Intergovernmental organization can be formed or new body can be incorporated under existing such bodies like UNSC, UNODC, Interpol, etc. This organization may frame a general law which will be followed by every country and organizations. The key members can be selected by election process. This organization may summon any country (representative) or organization to hold them responsible and take actions against them.

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