

General Studies – 3; Topic: Role of media and social networking sites in internal security challenges, basics of cyber security;

The Real Effect of Fake News

1) Introduction

- Fake news — the deliberate creation of factually incorrect content to mislead people for some gain — is becoming an increasingly serious problem.
- Fake news is viewed as a serious threat to the democratic process
- This era raised an issue of fake news going viral on social media and shaping the beliefs of people around the world.

2) Recent Incidents

- Pakistan's Defence Minister threatened Israel with a retaliatory nuclear attack, in response to a fake news report that the Israelis had said they would use nuclear weapons against Pakistan if it sent ground troops to Syria.
- A man fired an assault rifle in a pizzeria in Washington, D.C. after reading online that it was involved in a child trafficking ring linked to Hillary Clinton.
- In India, a fake story said there was a GPS tracking chip embedded in the new Rs.2,000 note.
- In countries like Myanmar, deceptive internet content has reportedly contributed to ethnic violence.
- it has influenced elections in Indonesia, the Philippines and elsewhere

3) Generation and spreading the Fake News

- Everyone with an Internet connection and a social media presence is now a content generator.
- Access to the web at all times has raised expectations for real-time news and constant entertainment
- competition among websites and social media platforms has sometimes resulted in the generation of fake news
- With platforms such as Facebook, that have hundreds of millions of users, news, fake or otherwise, spreads rapidly.
- Social Media platforms work depending on computer algorithm which is aligned with market interests; they are growing to be ideal platform for propagation of fake news.
- Most of the fake news stories are produced by scammers looking to make a quick buck.
- Facebook and Google, which have made it possible for fake news to be shared nearly instantly with millions of users and have been slow to block it from their sites.

4) Fake news gaining prominence

- No regulator in social media platform as we have in Print or Television media.
- Free service has given access to everyone to post whatever they want and thus create a trend in fake news spreading like wildfire.
- Everyone is in hurry to LIKE/SHARE/COMMENT rather than checking the authenticity of the news.

5) Impact

- While the news may be fake, its impact is real and potentially far-reaching.
- The abundance of fake stories during the U.S. presidential elections has raised concerns about their impact on election results.

- Mainstream media in India is more impacted by the phenomena of fake news
- Fake news sparks panic, raise conflicts and contentions among society as one see in the case of Cauvery dispute when malicious rumours and fake news led to the antagonism.
- Ex: in 2012 Assamese were targeted in Bengaluru because of fake news.

6) Solution

- Imposing hefty fines like Germany which is considering imposing a €500,000 fine on Facebook if it shares fake news
- Social media and news organisations can regulate themselves through rigorous internal editorial and advertising standards.
- Broad forms of what constitutes fake news need to be defined.
- News and social media companies have a moral responsibility to ensure that they do not misrepresent the facts to their audiences
- The best defence is common sense, a healthy dose of disbelief
- People should gather news and info from verified news outlets and sources.
- Effective and modern legislations are to be brought to effectively tackle fake news in modern platforms of Internet and social media.
- To implement the laws, a strong monitoring system, technological and capable human resources have to be put in place.
- Awareness campaigns on legal and social consequences of fake news.
- Actions taken against fake news should not put a curb on right of individual for free speech and expression.
- Facebook now needs a new Marshall Plan to tackle the crises of bogus information spreading like wildfire to its population of 1.8 billion monthly users
- Investing in fact-checking tools and processes that prevent the spread of hate and fake news on the internet
- It the people who have to take responsibility of caring, loving and developing society and stop spreading fake news.