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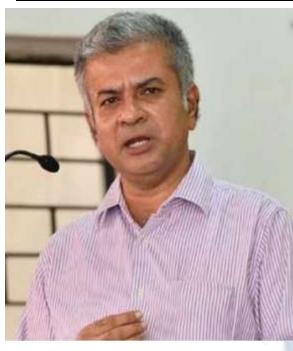
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WHITE BLACK LEGAL is an open access, peer-reviewed and refereed journal providededicated to express views on topical legal issues, thereby generating a cross current of ideas on emerging matters. This platform shall also ignite the initiative and desire of young law students to contribute in the field of law. The erudite response of legal luminaries shall be solicited to enable readers to explore challenges that lie before law makers, lawyers and the society at large, in the event of the ever changing social, economic and technological scenario.

With this thought, we hereby present to you

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICING AND COMMUNAL VIOLENCE

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Abstract

Studies on how social media affects law enforcement has emerged in criminology, sociology, and communications, among other fields. In spite of their wisdom, there isn't a single, comprehensive body of information about this relationship. This article summarises research on social media's consequences for practices and perceptions of order maintenance in an effort to synthesise existing work, add consistency to the area, and guide future scholarship. It accomplishes this by outlining how the technological affordances of social media both enable and restrict law enforcement. Emerging technologies help the police better regulate public perception of them and the social world by providing new avenues for surveillance, risk communication, and impression management. However, they also offer hitherto unheard-of abilities to keep an eye on the police and to reveal, disseminate, and organize against perceived injustices, such as racial profiling, brutality, or other acts of indiscretion. Examining these topics is likely to improve understanding of current trends in inequality, organizational communication, social control, and group action. Future research directions are also investigated.

INTRODUCTION

In the age of information technology, the rapid proliferation of social media platforms has revolutionized communication, connectivity, and the dissemination of information across the globe. While these platforms have facilitated unprecedented opportunities for expression, interaction, and awareness, they have also exposed society to new challenges and risks. One such pressing concern is the intersection of social media, policing, and communal violence. The convergence of these elements has given rise to a complex and multifaceted landscape where the virtual realm intersects with real-world dynamics, often blurring the lines between responsible online behaviour and its potential real-

world consequences.

Social media platforms have evolved into powerful tools that empower individuals to voice their opinions, share experiences, and mobilize communities around shared interests. However, the ease and speed at which information spreads on these platforms can also amplify disinformation, hate speech, and incitement to violence. Communal violence, characterized by conflicts between different social, religious, or ethnic groups, has found a new breeding ground within the virtual sphere, as online narratives can quickly escalate into offline clashes.[1] This phenomenon underscores the need for effective social media policing a concept that entails monitoring, regulating, and intervening in online spaces to prevent the propagation of harmful content and the incitement of violence.

Addressing the intricate relationship between social media, policing, and communal violence requires a comprehensive understanding of the underlying dynamics. This involves examining how misinformation spreads, the role of echo chambers and algorithms in shaping online narratives, and the challenges law enforcement agencies face when attempting to balance freedom of expression with public safety concerns. Additionally, it is essential to explore the ethical implications of social media policing, such as potential infringements on privacy and freedom of speech, as well as the potential for biased enforcement that disproportionately targets certain groups.

As governments and tech corporations struggle to reduce the negative effects of unrestrained social media use, the phenomena of social media policing comes into play. Governments frequently find themselves in a dangerous situation, trapped between their duty to promote freedom of expression and their duty to protect citizens from violence. It can be difficult to strike a balance between both of these objectives, and it's not always clear where the boundary should be. Governments run the risk of limiting free expression and violating civil liberties when they step in too strongly to regulate social media. On the other hand, if they do not take prompt action to stop hate speech and false information, they run the risk of permitting racial violence to grow unchecked.

The definition of hate speech and the parameters of appropriate discourse are two major challenges in the field of social media policing. It can be difficult for technology corporations to create explicit

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[1] https://www.insightsonindia.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Impact-of-Social-Media-on-Society.pdf

and globally applicable content moderation policies because what constitutes hate speech is frequently subjective and context-dependent. This ambiguity can result in charges of bias and censorship as platforms struggle with the delicate issue of establishing a balance between safeguarding users from harm and supporting their freedom to express a variety of, sometimes divisive, viewpoints.[2]

The issue is further complicated by the global nature of social media. As in one cultural setting, what can be viewed as hate speech might be accepted as political speech in another. In such situation Tech companies must handle these cultural nuances while attempting to maintain a set of regulations that are uniform across all of their platforms.

Concerns are also raised about the use of algorithms in social media policing. The use of algorithms to find and delete explicit hate speech and violent content might be useful, but they can also unintentionally magnify pre-existing biases. For instance, algorithms that prioritise interesting information may unintentionally promote sensational or extreme viewpoints, escalating tensions and violence among communities. For Tech companies, finding the ideal balance between automation and human supervision is a constant issue.

Governments have recently attempted to use legislative measures to hold digital corporations responsible for the information on their networks. This has sparked discussions about the proper function of the government in policing online expression. Others worry that government involvement could result in censorship and the silencing of dissenting voices, while some contend that governments should play a more active role in establishing clear criteria for content regulation.

Ultimately, a wide range of players, including governments, tech corporations, civil society organisations, and individual users, are accountable for solving the complicated issue of social media policing and its link to intergroup violence. There is not a single answer that works for everyone, therefore the problem is to find a solution that upholds the right to free speech while halting the spread of hate speech and disinformation that can trigger intergroup conflict. The solution to this problem must include both education and media literacy. Giving consumers the tools to examine online content

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[2] https://www.imsuc.ac.in/images/pdf/MediaDiscourseandIndianSociety.pdf

critically can help lessen the impact of false information and hate speech. Promoting critical thinking and digital literacy can help people become more discerning online information consumers and less prone to manipulation.

In the digital era, there is a complex and urgent problem at the junction of social media policing and intergroup violence. Social media carries a lot of hazards when it comes to the transmission of hate speech and false information, even though it has the potential to raise minority opinions and promote beneficial social change. It is a difficult task that necessitates cooperation from governments, tech corporations, civic society, and individuals to strike the correct balance between freedom of expression and the prevention of intergroup violence. We must be vigilant in supporting the values of free speech and open discussion as we navigate this changing environment while simultaneously striving to reduce the potential harm that can result from unrestrained social media use.

Social Media's Impact on Society and Communication

Social media has become a powerful transforming force in recent years, drastically affecting how people, groups, and civilizations connect, communicate, and engage. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok, among other platforms, have revolutionised not only how we communicate information but also how we view ourselves and the world. Positive and negative effects of the digital revolution have altered society in previously unthinkable ways, with mixed results.

An ability of social media to link people across national and cultural borders is among its most remarkable impacts on society. Social networking websites enable people to communicate with friends and family members no matter where they are physically located, promoting a sense of connection among all people. This has been particularly important in the context of the twenty first century, where there is an increase in global mobility and migration. Social media offers a lifeline for preserving relationships and cultural links between people living in different countries, through the real-time sharing of customs, experiences, and tales.

Moreover, social media has democratized communication by giving individuals a platform to express their opinions, share their stories, and advocate for social change. Movements like

#BlackLivesMatter[3] and #MeToo have harnessed the power of social media to raise awareness about social injustices and mobilize collective action on a global scale. This newfound ability to amplify marginalized voices has the potential to drive meaningful societal change and hold institutions accountable. Social media's influence on society goes beyond simple connectivity and activity. It has significantly changed how we receive information, creating echo chambers where people are largely exposed to material that supports their pre-existing opinions. Due to a lack of exposure to opposing viewpoints and the growing importance of fact-checking, this might perpetuate biases and propagate false information.[4]

Furthermore, the emergence of influencer culture has influenced society ideals and goals by blurring the distinction between truth and imagination. People set up their lives on social media sites like Instagram to highlight the best parts, encouraging a culture of comparison and the pursuit of impractical ideals. As people struggle with emotions of inadequacy, this has had real effects on mental health.

Social media has a significant impact on communication as well. Text messages, emojis, and other transient information have expanded if not completely replaced the conventional modes of communication including face-to-face interactions and phone calls. While these new forms of communication are quick and convenient, they can also lead to misunderstandings and a loss of the subtleties that are expressed through body language and vocal tones.

The dynamics of both personal and professional relationships, have also changed as a result of social media. Online friendships and love interactions are becoming more widespread, and many people find their partners on social media sites or dating applications. On the other hand, the popularity of social media has made establishing personal boundaries more difficult as people struggle with problems like online abuse and the hazy line separating personal life from public life.

Social networking has changed how we network, look for jobs, and present ourselves professionally. While businesses use social media for marketing and consumer engagement, platforms like LinkedIn give professionals a place to connect and share their skills. However, because personal information

[3] https://www.imsuc.ac.in/images/pdf/MediaDiscourseandIndianSociety.pdf
[4] https://entri.app/blog/social-media-and-its-impact-on-society-upsc-notes/

is gathered and used for financial gain, this digital environment has also given rise to worries about privacy and data security.

Moreover, social media has catalysed a shift in the way news and information are consumed and disseminated. The speed at which information spreads through platforms like Twitter can either fuel public awareness or contribute to the spread of misinformation and fake news. The traditional gatekeepers of journalism are now challenged by the rapidity of citizen journalism, which can be both a blessing and a curse for the veracity of news.

Social media has also introduced novel forms of communication, such as memes and viral trends, which often transcend language and cultural barriers. These phenomena serve as cultural touchpoints and have the power to shape societal discourse and attitudes. However, they can also trivialize important issues and contribute to a culture of superficiality.[5]

Social media has also been crucial to political activism and conversation. Political parties and leaders have used these venues to reach out to voters, disseminate their messages, and organise supporters. Greater political engagement and openness are made possible by technology, but it also exposes nations to the spread of misinformation and outside influence in domestic elections.

Echo chambers and filter bubbles have a strong effect in political discussions because people are frequently exposed to material that supports their pre-existing opinions, which exacerbates polarisation and makes it difficult to establish common ground.

The impact of social media on society and communication is still evolving, and its full implications are far from understood. As we navigate this digital revolution, it is imperative that we critically examine its effects on our lives, relationships, and the broader societal landscape. While social media has the potential to connect us, empower us, and raise our collective voices, it also poses challenges related to privacy, misinformation, mental health, and the erosion of traditional communication norms. Striking a balance between harnessing the benefits of social media and mitigating its drawbacks will be an ongoing challenge for individuals, communities, and policymakers alike.

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[5] https://communicationtoday.net/2014/06/30/social-media-impact-on-indian-society/

Ultimately, the way we navigate and shape this digital landscape will define the future of society and communication in the 21st century.

Beyond social and communication issues, social media has had a significant impact on a number of societal spheres. For instance, marketing and consumer involvement have undergone a paradigm shift in the commercial world. To reach their target audiences, businesses today make significant investments in social media campaigns, influencer relationships, and digital advertising. Highly targeted advertising has been made possible by the capacity to collect data on consumer preferences and behaviours, but it has also sparked worries about privacy and surveillance. These platforms' complex web of algorithms influences not just the material users see but also their purchasing decisions, raising moral concerns about the manipulation of consumer preferences. The educational landscape has also been transformed by social media. Teachers and educators incorporate digital tools and platforms into their teaching methods to enhance engagement and learning opportunities. Social media can foster global collaboration and cultural exchange among students. However, it also raises concerns about the digital divide, where students with limited access to technology are at a disadvantage. Additionally, there are concerns about the distraction and mental health implications of excessive screen time, particularly among younger users.

Social media's influence on society and communication is a complex and ever-evolving phenomenon that affects almost every part of contemporary life. The way we interact, communicate, and share information has been revolutionised, creating previously unheard-of potential for global advocacy and engagement. It also comes with a number of difficulties and moral conundrums, including issues with mental health, the deterioration of conventional communication norms, privacy concerns, and the dissemination of false information.

It is crucial that we critically assess the effects of this digital landscape as we continue to traverse it and try to capitalise on its advantages while tackling its disadvantages. Understanding the complexity of social media is essential to creating a future society that is more informed, connected, and balanced.

Communal Violence: Causes and Dynamics

Communal violence, characterized by clashes between different religious, ethnic, or communal groups, is a tragic and persistent issue that has plagued societies across the globe for centuries. Its

causes and dynamics are deeply complex, often rooted in historical, social, economic, and political factors. To gain a comprehensive understanding of this multifaceted phenomenon, it is essential to delve into its intricacies, exploring the various factors that contribute to its occurrence and the dynamics that drive its escalation.

At its core, communal violence often emerges from the deep-seated divisions and historical grievances between different communities within a society. These divisions can be exacerbated by economic disparities, unequal access to resources, and competition for limited opportunities. Scarce resources, such as land, jobs, or political power, can become focal points for communal tensions, as groups vie for control or a larger share of these resources. Historical conflicts, whether real or perceived, can also serve as tinderboxes, ready to ignite when triggered by even a minor incident. Violence within communities is significantly influenced by ethnic and religious identities. However, these identities can be a source of strength for people, giving them a sense of community and belonging.[6] However, when manipulated by extremist elements or exploited by political leaders, these identities can become potent tools for incitement.[7] The use of "us versus them" rhetoric that is motivated by racial or religious prejudice can dehumanise the "other" and make violence seem justifiable as a method of defending one's own group.

Political factors play an important role in communal violence, which cannot be understated. Politicians who are interested in power or who want to draw attention away from other problems may take advantage of racial tensions. This can entail utilising populist rhetoric to energise voters, aiding extremist organisations that support their goals, or remaining silent about incitement and violence within their constituencies.[8] In other instances, governments themselves might purposefully encourage intergroup violence as a way to keep things under control or draw attention away from structural flaws.

The dynamics of intergroup conflict are greatly influenced by the media and communication. Rumours, fake news, and hate speech can spread quickly through social media and traditional media outlets in the age of fast information distribution, escalating tensions and provoking violence. The

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[6] https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/social-sciences/communal-violence
[7] https://en.wikipedia.org/%20wiki/Communal_violence
[8] https://www.epw.in/engage/article/dangerous-speech-real-time-social-media-policing-and-communal-violence

idea of an impending threat brought on by misinformation can start a cycle of fear and revenge. Sensationalism and biased reporting can also contribute to community polarisation and the dehumanisation of the other.

Another important factor is how poorly law enforcement and the court system have dealt with intergroup violence. It sends a terrible message that violence is accepted or even encouraged when offenders escape punishment or obtain light terms. This lack of accountability has the potential to strengthen extreme forces and further erode community and state trust. Security force repression, on the other hand, might raise tensions and spark additional bloodshed.

Communal violence is also influenced by social and cultural variables. Traditional values and practises may occasionally encourage prejudice or discrimination against particular communities. Caste systems and social hierarchies, for instance, can foster tensions and violence. In addition, the socialisation of people within their own groups can result in the creation of prejudices and stereotypes about people from other backgrounds.[9]

The dynamics of intergroup conflict frequently follow a pattern that starts with simmering tensions and intensifies into conflict. The spark can be lit by a triggering event, which could be a small argument, a provocative remark, or a crime involving people from several communities. A cycle of violence frequently ensues after such an incident, with subsequent hostilities being sparked by retaliation and counter-retaliation. Extremists and hate groups may take advantage of the unrest to further their political objectives by encouraging violence.

Efforts to prevent and mitigate communal violence must focus on several key areas. First and foremost priority should be given to resolving the underlying causes of racial hostilities. This entails resolving economic inequalities, supplying marginalised communities with opportunity, and fostering intergroup communication and reconciliation. Communities must be given the power to find common ground and peacefully resolve conflicts rather than fostering differences.

In order to stop community violence, leaders and institutions must act responsibly and constructively.

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[9] https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2014/6/26/india-communal-violence-in-times-of-social-media

This entails avoiding divisive language, holding violent offenders accountable, and advocating for laws that support inclusivity and equality. The safety of minority groups should be a priority for security personnel, and procedures for early warning and reaction to racial tensions should be implemented.

In order to stop the spread of hate speech and false information that inspire racial and ethnic violence, media literacy and responsible journalism are essential. Education in critical thinking and media literacy can aid people in separating fact from fiction and avoiding the violent narratives that fuel conflict.

In addition to these measures, international cooperation and diplomacy play a critical role in addressing communal violence, especially in cases where conflicts have the potential to escalate into broader regional or global crises. The international community can provide mediation, peacekeeping, and humanitarian assistance to affected areas. Diplomatic efforts should focus on encouraging dialogue between conflicting parties and facilitating peace agreements that address the underlying grievances. Furthermore, international pressure and sanctions may be employed to hold governments accountable for their role in perpetuating communal violence and to discourage the manipulation of such conflicts for political gain. Communal violence is a deeply entrenched issue, but by addressing its root causes, promoting responsible governance, and fostering intercommunity understanding, we can work towards a world where the tragic cycle of violence gives way to lasting peace and harmony. Thus, communal violence is a complex and deeply rooted phenomenon influenced by a myriad of factors, including historical grievances, economic disparities, political manipulation, identity politics, and media dynamics. Understanding the causes and dynamics of communal violence is essential for preventing and mitigating its devastating consequences. Efforts to address this issue must involve a multifaceted approach that tackles the root causes, empowers communities, promotes inclusive policies, holds perpetrators accountable, and fosters dialogue and reconciliation. While communal violence remains a challenging issue, concerted efforts at the local, national, and international levels can make progress toward a more peaceful and harmonious coexistence among diverse communities.

The Nexus between Social Media and Communal Violence

The intersection of social media and communal violence has become a pressing issue in the digital age, as these platforms increasingly shape the dynamics of conflict among different religious, ethnic,

or communal groups. While social media's ability to connect people and amplify voices has the potential for positive social change, it also holds a dark side, as it can facilitate the rapid spread of hate speech, misinformation, and incitement to violence. This intricate and evolving relationship between social media and communal violence demands a comprehensive examination of the factors, mechanisms, and consequences that underlie this nexus. By delving into the complexities of this phenomenon, we can better understand how social media influences the dynamics of communal violence and explore potential strategies to mitigate its harmful effects.

The role of social media in communal violence is multifaceted and can be understood through various lenses. It serves as a catalyst, amplifier, and mediator in the process, influencing both the causes and consequences of communal violence. To unravel this intricate web of influence, it's essential to explore the following key aspects:[10]

1. *Dissemination of Hate Speech and Misinformation:* Social media platforms provide a powerful and instantaneous means for individuals and groups to disseminate hate speech and false information, often with a divisive agenda. The virality of such content on platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp can quickly escalate tensions and incite violence. Understanding the mechanisms by which these platforms facilitate the spread of harmful content is crucial for addressing the issue effectively.

2. *Echo Chambers and Filter Bubbles*: Social media algorithms often prioritize content that aligns with a user's existing beliefs and preferences, creating echo chambers where individuals are exposed primarily to like-minded perspectives. This can lead to the reinforcement of existing biases, the isolation of individuals from dissenting viewpoints, and the polarization of communities. Exploring how these algorithms contribute to communal violence by amplifying extremist narratives is essential.

3. *Anonymity and Mobilization:* The anonymity afforded by social media platforms allows individuals to engage in hate speech and incitement to violence without fear of immediate consequences. This anonymity can embolden extremist elements and facilitate the rapid mobilization of individuals for violent actions. Examining the mechanisms that enable online radicalization and mobilization is crucial for understanding the nexus between social media

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[10] https://journals.indexcopernicus.com/api/file/viewByFileId/565582.pdf

and communal violence.

4. *Role of Influencers and Leaders:* Influential figures, including political leaders and social media influencers, play a pivotal role in shaping public opinion and perceptions. Their statements and actions on social media can either contribute to peace and dialogue or exacerbate communal tensions. Analyzing the impact of influential voices on communal violence dynamics is essential.

5. *Monitoring and Moderation*: Social media platforms employ content moderation policies and algorithms to detect and remove hate speech and violent content. However, the effectiveness of these measures, potential biases, and the challenges of striking a balance between freedom of expression and preventing violence warrant careful examination.

6. *Mobilization and Coordination*: Social media platforms enable the rapid mobilization and coordination of individuals and groups involved in communal violence. Understanding how these platforms are used to plan and execute acts of violence, as well as strategies for disrupting these networks, is crucial for conflict prevention.

7. *Crisis Mapping and Early Warning Systems:* Social media can be harnessed as a tool for monitoring and responding to communal violence. Crisis mapping and early warning systems utilize social media data to identify potential conflict hotspots and provide timely interventions. Evaluating the effectiveness of these tools and their ethical implications is a critical aspect of the nexus between social media and communal violence.

8. *Countering Online Hate and Extremism*: Strategies for countering online hate and extremism include counter-narratives, digital literacy programs, and initiatives to promote tolerance and dialogue. Assessing the impact and effectiveness of these interventions in reducing the influence of extremist ideologies on social media is vital.

In addition to understanding the mechanisms and dynamics of social media's role in communal violence, it is essential to recognize the broader context within which these interactions occur. Communal violence is influenced by a myriad of factors, including historical grievances, economic disparities, political manipulation, and cultural tensions. Social media amplifies and interacts with these pre-existing conditions, making it challenging to isolate the singular impact of these platforms. Consequently, comprehensive research must consider the interconnected nature of these influences and their combined effect on communal violence dynamics.

Moreover, the global and borderless nature of social media platforms means that communal violence can transcend geographical boundaries. What begins as a local conflict can quickly attract international attention and involvement through the digital realm. The influence of external actors, both state and non-state, in exacerbating or mitigating communal violence through social media requires in-depth analysis.

As societies grapple with the complexities of the nexus between social media and communal violence, it becomes evident that multidimensional approaches are necessary. These approaches should encompass legislative measures, ethical guidelines for tech companies, digital literacy education, intergroup dialogue initiatives, and international cooperation. While social media is a powerful tool that can amplify voices, promote dialogue, and facilitate social change, it also demands a nuanced and vigilant response to mitigate its potential for harm. Ultimately, understanding this complex relationship is essential for navigating the digital age's challenges and opportunities and working toward a more peaceful and inclusive global society.

Law Enforcement Strategies to curb the menace of violence through Social Media

In the digital age, the rise of social media has brought both immense opportunities for communication and information sharing and significant challenges, including the proliferation of hate speech, incitement to violence, and the spread of extremist ideologies. To address these threats and curb the menace of violence through social media, law enforcement agencies must navigate the complex landscape of cyberspace while upholding the principles of free speech and privacy rights. The Information Technology Act, 2000 (IT Act), serves as a foundational legal framework in India to regulate digital activities, including those on social media platforms. Within this context, law enforcement strategies need to encompass a multifaceted approach that includes legal, technological, and collaborative elements to effectively combat the misuse of social media for violent purposes while respecting the rights and freedoms of individuals.

Legal Framework and Jurisdiction: The IT Act, 2000, is the cornerstone of India's legal framework for addressing cybercrimes, including those related to social media. However, the Act has evolved over the years to accommodate the changing digital landscape. One of the key challenges for law

enforcement agencies is to establish jurisdiction over online offenses that often transcend geographical boundaries. In cases involving social media platforms, which are typically global entities, determining the appropriate legal jurisdiction can be complex. The Indian legal system must cooperate with international counterparts and develop mechanisms for cross-border investigations and prosecutions.[11]

Identification and Prosecution: To curb violence on social media, law enforcement agencies must employ digital forensics and cybercrime units equipped with the expertise to trace the source of harmful content and identify perpetrators. The challenge here is not only technical but also legal, as privacy laws and encryption methods can pose obstacles to investigations. Striking a balance between privacy rights and the need to investigate and prosecute individuals inciting violence on social media is a delicate task. The IT Act needs to be updated to address these nuances and provide law enforcement with the necessary legal tools while respecting individual privacy.

Collaboration with Social Media Platforms: Given the global nature of social media platforms, cooperation between law enforcement agencies and these companies is essential. Social media companies should have reporting mechanisms in place to swiftly respond to complaints about hate speech, incitement to violence, or extremist content. While these platforms have community guidelines and content moderation policies, effective enforcement and reporting mechanisms need to be enhanced to ensure the prompt removal of harmful content. The IT Act should include provisions that mandate such cooperation while also safeguarding the rights of individuals and avoiding overreach.[12]

Awareness and Digital Literacy: To prevent violence through social media, law enforcement agencies should collaborate with educational institutions and civil society organizations to promote digital literacy and awareness. This includes educating users about the risks associated with sharing extremist content or participating in online hate speech. A well-informed public can serve as a line of defence against the spread of violent ideologies on social media. The IT Act should incorporate provisions for public awareness campaigns and digital literacy programs to address this aspect comprehensively.

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[11] https://www.cla-india.com/post/information-technology-intermediary-guidelines-and-digital-media-ethicscode-rules-2021-analysis

[12] https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/%20news/economy/%20policy/india-plans-to-regulate-social-mediaas-it-can-cause-disruption/articleshow/%2071695590.cms

Monitoring and Surveillance: While respecting privacy rights, law enforcement agencies should engage in targeted monitoring and surveillance of individuals or groups known to engage in violent activities on social media. However, strict oversight and accountability mechanisms must be in place to prevent abuse of surveillance powers. Any surveillance activities should be conducted within the boundaries of the IT Act, ensuring due process and adherence to legal safeguards.

Rapid Response Mechanisms: The rapid spread of extremist content or incitement to violence on social media demands equally rapid responses from law enforcement. Timely reporting, analysis, and intervention are crucial to prevent offline violence stemming from online incitement. Law enforcement agencies should establish dedicated units tasked with monitoring social media platforms in real-time and taking swift action when necessary. The IT Act should include provisions that mandate these rapid response mechanisms while safeguarding civil liberties.

International Cooperation: In an interconnected world, international cooperation is imperative to combat the global reach of online violence. India should engage in bilateral and multilateral efforts to share intelligence, best practices, and strategies for countering online extremism and incitement to violence. The IT Act should be flexible enough to accommodate international collaboration and information sharing while ensuring data protection and privacy rights.

Cybersecurity and Resilience: To curb violence via social media, law enforcement agencies must strengthen cybersecurity measures to protect critical infrastructure and data from cyberattacks and cyber threats. Collaborative efforts between the public and private sectors are essential to enhance cybersecurity resilience. The IT Act should include provisions that encourage public-private partnerships and the sharing of threat intelligence to bolster cybersecurity efforts.

The nexus between social media and violence poses significant challenges for law enforcement agencies. The Information Technology Act, 2000, serves as the foundation for addressing cybercrimes, including those related to social media. However, as technology and online threats evolve, the Act must adapt to provide law enforcement with the necessary tools to combat online violence effectively while respecting individual rights and privacy. Law enforcement strategies to curb violence through social media should be comprehensive, collaborative, and forward-thinking, encompassing legal, technological, and educational elements to create a safer digital environment for

all.

The Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021[13], or IT Rules, have recently undergone a new amendment from the Indian government. This amendment grants the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) unrestricted authority to establish a "fact check unit" to identify false or misleading online content. After this the "safe harbour" immunity enjoyed by social media intermediaries may be revoked, subjecting companies to criminal punishment if they fail to stop users from hosting or posting warned information. The impact on India's civil rights and right to free speech may be detrimental.

The new rule gives the Union government the authority to censor information by using intermediaries and determining what information is fake. However, this is being criticized as through this the freedom of speech and information that the constitution guarantees may be violated by this.

In the internet age, the propagation of false information and fake news is a serious issue. It may have negative effects on people, communities, and even entire countries. The Indian government has amended the IT Rules in an effort to remedy this problem. On the other hand, questions have been raised over how these revisions may affect the freedom of speech and expression.

Conclusion

The complex and evolving relationship between social media policing and communal violence represents one of the most pressing challenges of our digital age. Social media platforms, with their unprecedented reach and influence, have emerged as double-edged swords, capable of both uniting and dividing communities. While these platforms offer opportunities for marginalized voices to be heard and for rapid mobilization during crises, they also provide fertile ground for the proliferation of hate speech, misinformation, and extremist ideologies that can inflame communal tensions and incite violence.

The effectiveness of social media policing in mitigating communal violence hinges on a delicate balance between safeguarding freedom of expression and curtailing the spread of harmful content.

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[13] https://www.meity.gov.in/writereaddata/files/Revised-IT-Rules-2021-proposed-amended.pdf

Governments and tech companies alike face the formidable task of navigating this terrain, and their approaches have far-reaching implications for civil liberties and societal stability. Striking the right balance requires nuanced content moderation policies, clear guidelines for determining hate speech, and mechanisms for addressing cultural and contextual nuances.

The nexus between social media policing and communal violence represents a multifaceted challenge that demands a comprehensive and nuanced response. While social media offers unprecedented opportunities for connectivity and positive social change, it also poses significant risks when it comes to the spread of hate speech, misinformation, and extremist ideologies. Striking the right balance between freedom of expression and violence prevention is a formidable challenge that requires the collaboration of governments, tech companies, civil society, and individuals. As we navigate this evolving landscape, it is imperative that we remain vigilant in upholding the principles of free speech and open dialogue while also working to mitigate the harm that can arise from unchecked social media use. Only through such concerted efforts can we hope to harness the transformative potential of social media while safeguarding the fabric of our diverse and interconnected societies.