THE NEED FOR TRUTHFULNESS AND VERIFICATION OF NEWS IN ONLINE MEDIA

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Abstract: *Online media isn't something that is new to the contemporary society. Online media has its roots as early as 1996 through sixdegrees.com. As years progressed so did the technology and the online media platform. Ryze, Friendster, Orkut all came and had their time. Facebook and Whatsapp came next and have had become a part of our everyday lives along with Internet. As with every new platform there were hiccups for people to adopt and accept a new technology like new media. It is to be noted that the level of boundaries broken by new media is far and wide. The reach of new media is so much that it has gone on to even revolutionize certain areas predominantly for a variety of reasons and in various areas and avenues notably in the academia and awareness creation amongst people of all age groups and walks of life. Print media being a traditional form of media in India, has had its own trials and tribulations over the long course of the country's history. They had a tremendous impact especially during the freedom struggle and more so after independence. The print media for its part is known and is identified with certain aspects such as truthfulness, verification of facts and information, objectivity which are considered as the key elements of journalism. However as far as online media is concerned, it is very difficult to identify and verify real and fake news. New media has created a new form of journalism in fact called online journalism which is way more refine and advanced from the concept of citizen journalism. The current research paper looks at news articles by analysing the news reported as well as the reactions made to it by users in the comments section in online media by employing qualitative research approaches in the form of content analysis.*

Key Words: *Print media, news, online media, truthfulness, verification,*

1. INTRODUCTION:

1.1 Social media and information

Social media plays a vital role in the sharing of information online and is used to convey a variety of different types of information, including sensitive information, sensational information, political information, and casual information (Osatuyi, 2013). Information on social media has never been as extensive as it currently is, and it is only set to grow in the coming weeks, months, and years.

1.2 Social media and news

Social media broadens the scope and diversity of information that one can get from social media and sometimes may even lead to stories breaking before they appear in mainstream media outlets (Zubiaga et al., 2016).

1.3 User interaction and Web 2.0

Many people assume that because young people are fluent in social media, that they are equally well informed about the information that they find there. However, the Stanford Graduate School of Education (2016) conducted a study which shows the opposite. As a resultof the huge amount of information available online, millennials need to be taught and guidedso that they will be able to distinguish between legitimate and dubious sources.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

2.1 Social media and trustworthiness

Social media gives breaking news as they happen however it is not possible to know its trustworthiness (Zubiaga et al., 2016). Unlike library sources, social media provides information that can be contributed by users whose authority and trustworthiness is often unknown and difficult to evaluate (Kim et al., 2011).

2.2 Social media and fake news

People read by social media stream rather than by publication, which means that content is often divorced from context" (Chen et al., 2015). Kiernan R. (2017) quotes Rohampton that using social media to get news has

changed the way that millennials now consume that news (Rohampton, 2016). This is due to the fact that news and information is now integrated into their everyday lives, and they cannot help but be constantly exposed to it.

3.   METHODOLOGY:

The study employs qualitative research methodology in the form of content analysis. A total of 16 news articles that garnered intense interaction among users in Facebook in the last one week are analysed. The comments made by the users with regards to the news stories were analysed qualitatively through content analysis.

3.1   OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

*   To identify the kind of reactions given to news by the users.
*   To identify the news article that garnered maximum interaction among the users.

4. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS:

Table 4.1 No. of articles in Facebook

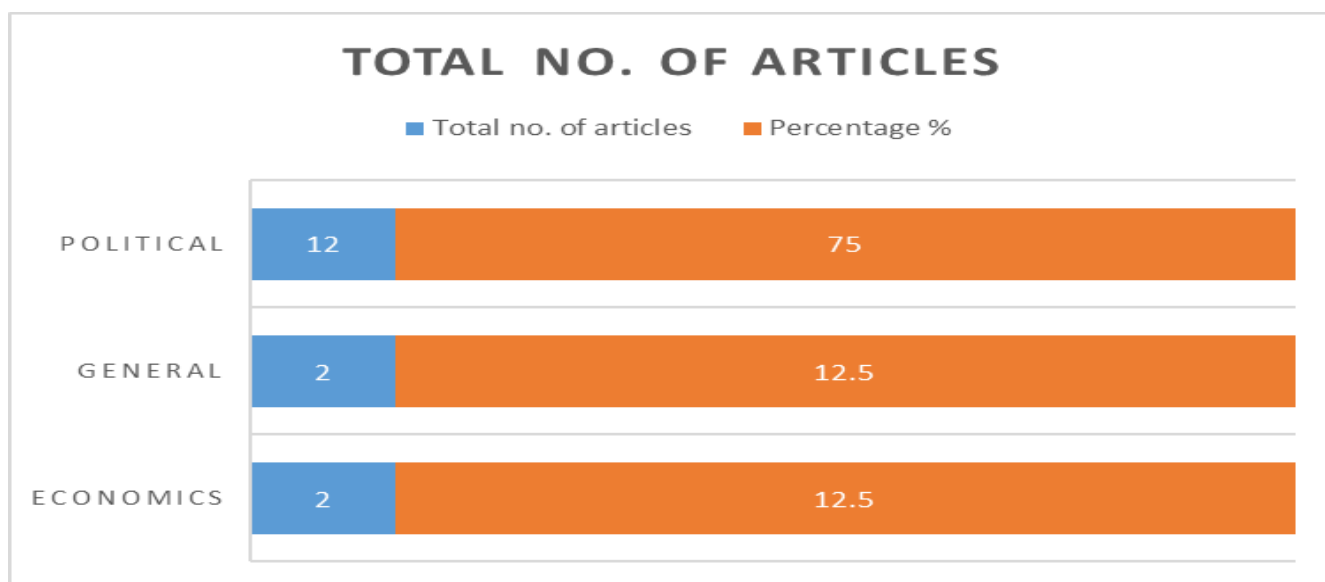| Categories	Total no. of articles	Percentage %
Economics	2	12.5
General	2	12.5
Political	12	75

Figure 4.1

There were plenty of news shared by various outlets in Facebook however, the following news items garnered more interaction among the users in the last one week in Facebook over other news stories. Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1 shows the various categorie sof news articles that garnered intense interaction among users in Faceboook. It can be inferrred that an iverwhelming majority of articles were Political in nature with 75%. Economics and General news articles were joint next with 12.5% each. This shows that people are more politically active through their

The first news story is about a women who was molested by an army personnel and was subsequently arrested after FIR was filed under relevant sections of the IPC post registration of complaint by the alleged victim to the railway police force. The story garnered a lot of angry reactions from most of the users followed by a few users who were so insensitive to react with the smiley reaction. There were a lot of users however who blamed the army on the whole for being perverted in nature and sexually starved whereas in reality it is just the act of one of the personnel belonging to the defence force who indulged in act of molestation.

The next news story was that of an alleged contention of former RBI governor, Raghuram Rajan to be the next chief of Bank of England. The news garnered undue attention even as users indulged in unfriendly banter and said that he doesn't deserve to be welcomed back to India and was seen as an act of treason towards the country and was bashing him as well as the central government of India. The truth was he was merely touted to be in the fray for the

top post although he didn't even apply. However, it is to be noted that this news was as old as a month yet garnered undue attention and interaction among the users.

There were a dozen news stories especially on the recently concluded legislative elections held in the state of Karnataka, India. All the news stories had thousands of users resorting to the highest level of trolling Rahul Gandhi, the Vice-Chairman of the Indian National Congress, a political party in India over his failure to win one of his prestige states and having lost power in various states over the past and for allegedly trying to put a show that he can become the next Prime minister of India. There were also a large number of users who said that it was great that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) didn't get a proper majority and was an indication of the fallout of the incumbent PM and his policies apart from his Hitler like ruling in the country.

5. CONCLUSION:

Truthfulness and verification of facts and information happen to be one of the key elements of journalism. However, in online media it is very much a challenge to maintain these crucial aspects of journalistic reporting in online media. The current research study was aimed to look into identifying the news story that garnered maximum reaction and interaction among users in Facebook. The study revealed that there were maximum reaction and interaction for political based news followed by the story of an army personnel resulted in maximum and undue reactions among users in Facebook. The research study helped the researcher to understand that despite many fold advancements in various fields especially in education and literacy levels of the people, there still exists a large group of people who indulge in undue reaction even before understanding the actual content of the news item shared and the inner meaning in it which holds the most crucial aspects.

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