EFFECTIVE MEASURES TO CONTROL MENACE OF FAKE NEWS PROPAGANDA AND MISUSE OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS DURING ELECTIONS IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Political parties and candidates use various mediums and tools to reach to respective voter base and tries to influence them in order to vote for them or for their political ideology or party agenda. Apart from Print media, with the evolution of Internet technology and free of cost availability of various social media platforms, it is very easier to get connected to individual voters. Not only text or image, but with technology evolution PPT, PDF, GIF, Memes, Audio, Videos are disseminated instantly to targeted audience on various social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, what’s app, blogs, forums, etc. Authenticity of such information is very hard to fix. Fake news and misinformation campaigns have adverse effect on conduct of free and fair and transparent election process in democratic set up. To conduct elections in free and fair manner the misuse of social media platforms needs effective controls. The paper provides insight to various types social media misuse and effective measures to control such menace.

Keywords: Election, Election Campaign, Elections in India, Fake News, Menace, Social Media.

1. Introduction:
Electioneering process is core to the democracies, and freedom of expression to all including the media, voters, and candidates is the heart of the democracy. Canvassing or propaganda by the political parties and their candidates to reach out to the people is central to the electioneering process. Political parties and candidates use various tools to reach to the voters and influence to vote for them for their ideology or party agenda. Earlier, it was occurring with various technologies and public meetings, but now, advances in the field of Information Technology and the Internet have changed the nature of communication and information dissemination in society. Social media platforms/ networks (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Myspace) and various Internet platforms (Web blogs, Web portal, YouTube) are now being used for electioneering and canvassing during elections. Now, it has become easy to send messages within a fraction of seconds, less cost and direct reach to the audience. Further, platforms also provide anonymity and no tracing of messages, which has tempted the various people and groups to spread fake news through social media networks and influence the opinion of the voters during elections. Influencing the elections with fake news using social media network is a major issue for maintaining free and fair nature of elections in democracies. To understand the issue of social media and fake news through it, a brief understanding
of the concept of cyberspace and social media should be explored.

1.1 Internet and Cyberspace:
The Internet is nothing but connected devices talking to each other. Internet with connected devices and personas has created a new space called cyberspace. Cyberspace can be defined as “an operating environment of the interdependent network of digital technology infrastructures (including platforms, the Internet, telecommunications networks, computer systems, as well as embedded processors and controllers), and the data therein including physical, virtual and cognitive domains”. (Development Concepts and Doctrine Centre, 2013).

The applications of Information and technology in many areas of life like financial transaction, communication, social information exchange, news, politics, and academics are growing. The cyberspace is impacting the life in a more meaningful way. Internet and Cyberspace have two levels, one is a surface network, which accesses available information in public domain from various sources (websites, blogs, forums, News portals, audio, and video portals) and gives to the user using various internet search engines (Google, Yahoo, DuckDuckGo). There is another internet level which is called deep net, only users which are connected to this network are able to access the information, most of the intranet networks and commercial companies work through this network. The third layer is a hidden network and websites is called dark web, which is used for criminal activity and secret communication by various users. The various parties and candidates for messaging during electioneering activities are also using this deep net. Cyberspace and the Internet are growing day by day, as penetration of fiber optic and cellphone network is reaching the rural and hinterland. In India presently there is more than 1100 million telephone connection (mobile and fixed line) and more than 500 million internet users through broadband and cellphone in the urban and rural area combined (Telecom Regulatory Authority of India, 2018). Thus, more and more voters and now coming on the online platform and are being connected to cyberspace. Internet and cyberspace have changed the dimensions of the society for communication, information and news dissemination. Parallel studies also show that cyberspace and social media has a profound change in the interpersonal relations of society in political discourse. Singh (2016) also found that Social media outlets are essential to politicians and political parties, enabling them to gain support, encourage participation and have an open and continuous dialogue.

1.2 Social Media Networking Sites:
Social Media Networking Sites/platforms are those applications over the Internet, which are developed for peer- to –peer communication or group communication. There are various forms of social media communication platforms like microblogging sites (Twitter, Plurk, Twitxr), social networking (Facebook, Vcontecti, LinkedIn), RSS feeds, Video sharing sites (YouTube, Viddler, Metacafe), aggregators sites (Google, Digg), Photo sharing (Flickr,
Picasa, Snapchat, Instagram), Publishing sites (Wikipedia, blogger, slide share), search engines (Google, Yahoo, Bing). Thus, every kind of content is shared through social media platforms in vary varied platforms. Cambridge Dictionary defines it as "Websites and computer programs that allow people to communicate and share information/content on the Internet using a computer or mobile phone". The reach of the social media sites increases due to its flexibility and facility to form immediate close groups of users. Social Media allows forming virtual social groups, one to many communication, one to one communication, and close group communication. Nowadays, Social Networking Sites are one of the most important mediums of communication among voters and political parties. Social media are new information network and information technology using a form of communication utilizing interactive and user-produced content, and interpersonal relationships are created and maintained.

1.3 Instant Messaging Applications:
Apart from above social media networking sites, In India, Instant Messaging Applications, which provides encrypted peer to peer communication and one to group chats or broadcast are very popular. Applications like WhatsApp, We Chat, Hike, Telegram, Messenger, BBM and IMO, QQ and Line are more used for communication. These applications provide encryption and non-traceability of original information creator or disseminator hence mostly used for fake news spreading. India has largest subscribers on WhatsApp, totaling more than 200 million users in February 2017. While the application is designed as a messaging platform for one-on-one or small groups message exchanging application. The application encrypts its messages end to end and gives peer-to-peer messaging service (Nugent, 2018). The message traceability is not provided by the platform so it is difficult to trace the original creator of the message, so this platform is mostly used for spreading fake news.

1.4 How the Social Media is different from traditional Print and Electronic Media?
As compared to the traditional media, social media is different in many aspects. First and foremost is anyone, who have social media account, can post information to anyone and any audience as compared to traditional print and electronic media where only publication houses and few TV news channels can only print information. Another point is there is no editorial or owner control over content in social media, as platform companies don’t restrict any content unless it violates privacy and security policy of social media platform, whereas in traditional media editorial board have strict control and verification of the information. In social media, information can be disseminated to a particular targeted audience or person, which is not the case with traditional media. The speed of information transmission is very fast in social media, which is not in case of print media.

1.5 What is Fake News and how it is circulated over Social Media?
Fake news and social media have become alternate words due to rampant use of social
media for spreading fake news due to its easy and instant information sharing technology. Fake news problem there are two terms; ‘news’ and ‘fake’. Fake news is not itself a new phenomenon. When combined with online social media, it becomes powerful and makes it possible to do targeted, audience-specific manipulation of cognitive biases and heuristics. In other terms, it has been defined as “the deliberate presentation of false or misleading claims as news, where the claims are misleading by design” (Gelfert, 2018). Collins English dictionary defines the fake news as “false, often sensational, information disseminated under the guise of news reporting”. Claire Wardle (2017) identifies 7 types of fake news 1. Satire or parody ("no intention to cause harm but has the potential to fool"). 2. False connection ("captions don't support the content"). 3. Misleading content ("misleading use of information to frame an issue or an individual"). 4. False context ("when genuine content is shared with false contextual information"). 5. Impostor content ("when genuine sources are impersonated" with false, made-up sources). 6. Manipulated content ("when genuine information or imagery is manipulated to deceive", as with a "doctored" photo) 7. Fabricated content ("new content is 100% false, designed to deceive and do harm").

Fake news is a form of public disinformation and distortions of the communicative process and has to be seen from this context. The spread of fake news is not limited to social media but it equally spread through traditional media also and it is nothing but part of the intentional miss /disinformation campaign. Sometimes the content is presented in such a way that it resembles the legitimate media content. Fake news creates the cognitive biases, confusion, and misbeliefs in the society, which in turn may hamper the opinion-making of the voter during the electioneering process.

As the social media provides the anonymity, openness and reach, hence it is mostly used. On the Internet, it is very easy and visible to create websites/ blogs/news portals or social media account and reach to the targeted audience or everyone who is connected. Technology platforms provide immediate transmission of information and real-time communication experience with all kind of content (video, audio or text or mix).

1.6 Impact of Social Media Fake News on Elections:
Propaganda through Social media networking sites and data collected from these sites has been used for targeted campaigning during elections. Impact on the election campaigning, voter engagement, and opinion forming has been explained through the 2014 Indian elections, 2016 USA presidential election, and Ukraine general election. There is a positive and negative impact of Social media on the election process. Twitter has become one of the dominant political communication and campaign tool in India and other democracies also. Young adults than older adults to use social media (Duggan & Brenner, 2013). Thus, the participation of youngsters in election voter engagement is more. A positive impact of
social Networking sites emergence has been that the youth is talking about the political issues. Social networking sites have been able to make a profound impact by means of news, interaction, learning, and marketing (Singh, 2016).

The impact of the social media is not limited to more participation and engagement of voters but it has also influenced the out of the elections. The spreading of fake news through social media has impacted the elections in a greater way. Impact of fake news through social media in elections was studied for 2016 US presidential election and results show that social media was an important source of news to 14 % of Americans and people who saw the fake news stories, half of those who recalled seeing fake news stories believing them as true. Fake news to have changed the outcome of the election to some extent in the US general elections (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017)(Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017b). Study of 2016 election also suggested that the effect was fake news was more in swing states. Twitter users got more misinformation, polarizing and conspiratorial content than professionally produced news in the election. It was also found that users also have shared more political and fake news content and it has been concluded that in swing states misinformation level of fake news was higher in swing states (Howard, Bradshaw, Kollanyi, & Newdert, 2017). Fake news spread during the election has also impacted the elections in Ukraine also. The fake news propaganda was the main election influencer during the general election in Ukraine by adversary nation-state (Haigh, Haigh, & Kozak, 2017). A parallel can be drawn in Indian set up also that states having mixed political, religious and caste presence may receive more misinformation or fake news campaign.

How people discuss on Social media about election candidate? In this regard, the study conducted in 2012 elections shows that at that social media activity of the candidate less resulted in the attention of public (Hong & Nadler, 2012). Indian elections, political parties, and voters are also using social media. The use and impact of the social media can be understood from the study conducted during the 2014 general elections about the use of Twitter as a political campaign tool by political parties. New-and-upcoming parties used Twitter for self-promotion and media validation and established parties used it to supplement their offline strategies and boost their propaganda on online platforms. The effect of social media can be understood by the fact that winning the party ‘s success is significantly associated with twitter engagements (Ahmed, Jaidka, & Cho, 2016). Impact of the social media networking sites and the Internet is visible and effective, it’s direct on individual and on society. The election process is end to end is impacted, from voter engagement, voter registration, opinion making, mass movement, voter turnout and voter's decision to vote for a particular party or candidate due to targeted information or advertisement. As the battle for power in future shifts to the digital domain, policymakers will face increasingly complex
threats against democracies during elections. Technological advances in artificial intelligence (AI), automation, and machine learning are making this asymmetric war very sophisticated. Social media platforms and Technology like big data, data harvesting are fueling, as this influence operations, as these technologies are less expensive and very impactful (Polyakova & Boyer, 2018). The content can be disseminated through many types like video and audio and text in real time. Thus the impact of not only social media but also new technologies in the field of computer science and information technology is having a profound impact on the election process in democratic societies.

Technology platforms are the new intermediary institutions for our present politics setup. The traditional organizations of political parties and the legacy media will take time to realign with it. These institutes are not created with democratic values but are the technological platforms. So these platforms are being misused for political gains. It is important to note that social media and internet search engines have applications in all walks of life, the intersection of this technology with democratic process and values is critically important for democracy (Persily, 2018). Technology facilitated the disruption in democratic governance in the first instance, but if used in with proper checks and balance it will surely help to strengthen the democracy and its election procedure for healthy society and politics. Technology alone is not going to change the outcome; the historical and sociological forces threatening democracy are also important stakeholders.

1.7 Challenges of Internet, Social media and fake news for free and fair Election:
Following challenges are faced by the electioneering agency, political parties, candidates and other concerned stakeholders. The challenges have been considered from infrastructure, software, electioneering process, opinion formation, and crimes during election perspective.
1. Fake News: Generation and Spreading the fake news
2. Cyber Crime and other social Media related scams
3. Hacking of the election commission, political parties, and candidates information infrastructure and systems
4. Social Engineering of voters and candidates for opinion formation
5. Online Transactions and Expenditure during election using social media.

1.8 Misuse and objectionable Acts: In Elections over Social Media
Misuse of Objectionable acts carried out during election using social media are as following:
1. Fake News: As social media gives control of the dissemination of information and making of various online groups to the user, thus every user is capable to send information anywhere in the world and to the targeted population. As there is no central control or editor to the information, many disgruntled elements spread the fake news to manipulate the process of electioneering. Fake news is the biggest threat to the electioneering process in democratic society.
2. Defamation and Shaming: Defamation or causing harm to the reputation of a person or thing. Running defamatory campaign or shaming the candidates and party through an army of social media entities to create a negative opinion about a particular party or candidate is rampant in elections. These campaigns are targeted and messages are sent to a particular audience for opinion creation.

3. Trolling: A social media troll, who creates conflict on social networking sites by posting messages that are controversial or inflammatory with the intent of provoking a negative reaction from users or group of users. This is used deliberately to provoke the party or candidate to commit the mistake in public place.

4. Cyber Bullying: Many times the political activists and candidates are targeted and intimidated for expressing their voice. Social Media or electronic communication is used to bully/ intimidates a person, by sending messages threatening nature is cyberbullying. These messages are much targeted and are sent to silence the opinion of opponent or activist against candidate or party or any nation-state.

5. Psychological Operations (PSYOP) to Opinion Building: These are planned operations/information campaigns in which, controversial or piece of information is circulated among public or selected audience to influence their choice, opinion, emotion or behavior. To such operations requires huge manpower, finance, coordinated efforts, and content building, but in the election, such operations are planned to target any religion or cast or group to exercise a particular behavior or choice.

6. Coordinated and Syndicated Dis/Misinformation Campaigns: False or inaccurate information, which is deliberately intended to deceive or mislead the rival or public or media. Various agencies and groups who are opposing the election or want to disturb the election always run misinformation campaign. Political warfare against democratic countries has evolved from overt to covert influence activities by a nation state as part of the asymmetric battle strategy. Adversary nation states are playing covert and overt influence operations using social media (Polyakova & Boyer, 2018). Apart from nation-state local parties also create such a campaign to mislead the rival party.

7. Social Engineering: Use of various deception techniques and manipulating person behavior to gather personal information or confidential information behavior by using information available on social media for fraudulent use or getting control over persons social media accounts or financial accounts. This technique is used to hack the accounts of the particular person in the election process to influence the opinion or behavior of voters.

8. Data Harvesting and Data Analytics: Various malicious apps and scrapers are designed to call the information from voters or opposition parties and then this data is analyzed to run a targeted campaign to manipulate the opinion or behavior of the person. It is also observed that, available Data of election commission is harvested and which is analyzed for targeted misinformation campaigns.

9. Bots and Artificial Intelligence tools to generate and spread the fake news: Bots and
artificial intelligence tools are basically used for creating fake profiles and fake information to spread over social media. The intensity and spread can be defined using these tools. These tools keep no trails so very difficult to detect and trace back by law enforcement agencies.

1.9 Measures to Control the Misuse of Social Media during Elections:
Measures are suggested considering the Protection of information assets and election process, Prevention of crime and misuse of social media, Detection, and investigation of crimes and misuse of social media and Mitigation from the possible incident and Responding to it in a coordinated manner.

2. Fake News: Mechanism to Detect and Prevent
As fake news and misinformation/disinformation campaigns are generated on daily basis, so there is a need to create a regular, interactive and responsive mechanism for detecting and preventing. ‘Crowdsourcing’ can be a very effective tool. Taking help from citizens active on Social Media might be useful in reporting malpractices and misuse. Experiment by Ukrainian media may be worth emulating by the election commission. Stopfake.org is a web portal and created to stop the fake news in Ukraine elections by some proactive journalists. People were asked to submit the articles which people feel fake or suspicious were uploaded on the site and editorial team was reporting after fact-checking whether the article is true or fake propaganda. Countering the fake news campaign over social media, which is nothing but peer to peer propaganda, can be countered by fact-checking as work practice by journalists, is good for counter-propaganda (Haigh et al., 2017). Taking submissions from crows or peoples and doing fact-checking and reporting has produced good results.
Election Commission should create an interactive online presence and create a large network of online users to report the fake news and misinformation campaigns on social media. As part of the arrangement for detecting and preventing the fake news during electioneering process, it is recommended to Create of Web Portal to report fake news from the public, voters (Crowdsourcing), parties and internal team of Commission (MCMC). The verification process will be robust and
- MCMC will have an Expert member for SM and online news
- The team at Commission or MCMC will review the content for effect on elections. Then send for fact-checking.
- Counterchecking Facts Report from the concerned department within 48 hours to commission
- Commission to post the correct content or actual stand of the department. Will also ask the department to put it in public Domain

3. Blocking / taking down the fake News content: As per IT Act
FakenewsandMisinformation/disinformation campaigns cause very deep and disturbing effects the voters and total electioneering process. It is necessary to take down the content, which is fake and influencing the electioneering process. Information
Technology Act 2008 has the provision of blocking the content in India, which may be used by the election commission to block the fake news content during elections. Section 69 A of IT Act, 2008 details about Power to issue directions for blocking for public access of any information through any computer resource (Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, 2008). To use the provisions of the act is it suggested that, any content on SM or Internet which can has a negative effect on voting or elections or halt the electioneering process or cause violence, MCMC committee will cross check the content and then will recommend for blocking to the commission. EC having quasi-judicial power will direct the committee under Ministry of Electronic and Information Technology for blocking it, as per GoI notification of 2011. It is also suggested that Election commission under its quasi-judicial power take hearings of the platforms, which are used by the fake news creators to spread it, to take down the content. Making member from the law enforcement agency member of the MCMC will smoothen the process of legal recourse for crime registration and investigation.

On preventive count, Election commission should also issue advisories for the general public through its web portal, Social Media and other media to sensitize the voters about reporting such news to the election commission and other authorities

4. Protection of Digital assets of Commission

Protection of digital assets of the commission and political party is necessary to prevent the cyber-attacks.

- Election commission information assets and systems should be declared as Critical Information Assets as per IT Act
- To protect IT Assets, as Section 70 of IT Act 2008, Computer Systems of State Election Commission should be declared as protected systems.
- This will attract provisions of IT act for hacking and will also make CERT and NCIIPC take measures for the protection of IT assets of Commission
- This measure will attract regular Cyber Security Audits and Protection Measures

5. EC: Social Media Interactive Engagement with Voters:

Positive and constructive engagement with the voters is the key for free and fair election by the commission. There is every a possibility that voters may get influenced by the disinformation campaigns by various anti-poll forces, in such situation engagement with voter using social media provides necessary information to the voter to contribute to the democratic process.

- Social Media Team/ branch to be established at Commission with own and hired resources
- Social Media Policy to be prepared for Use of Social Media for information dissemination, training, and education.
- Social Media information dissemination for awareness planning should be done in three different phases: Non-election period, Election period and Post-election period.
• Content Development should be on a daily, weekly, monthly & annual basis. A Social Media calendar should be created by EC
• It should start at State Election Commission level first in the standard format, however, existing initiatives at the SEC and District levels should be allowed to continue
• The States, which are already using Social Media, may be consulted and a pilot implementation of the EC policy for use of Social Media may be implemented.
• The engagement should start in steps and phases. There should be a clear list of its do’s and don’ts.
• Schools and colleges with social media support should be considered on priority. What’s app groups, Facebook groups, workshops, seminars, webinars will enhance more participation
EC should proactively participate on the Social Media platform to engage, empower and mobilize voters.
6. Regulations and Monitoring of Social Media for Elections
Three Front Strategy needs to devised for regulating the use of social media by the parties and candidates.
1. Declaration by Parties and Candidates about the use of social media
2. Internet Information Monitoring and Analytics of Social Media
3. Expenditure and Advertisement on Social Media and related Regulation

6.1. Declaration by Parties and Candidates about the use of Social Media
Use of Social Media in elections by Political parties and candidates is immense for canvassing and voter engagement. To regulate and keep information about the activities of the party and candidates election commission should make it mandatory for parties and candidates to declare it to the commission. Following measures are suggested.
• Candidate and party to give in writing to EC about official social media Use, Mode of information dissemination, Social media Accounts, and Platforms
• Considering proxy accounts which may be used by political parties/contesting candidates, the authenticity of Social Media accounts should be limited to the declared social account details furnished by the contesting candidates. It will also help to detect the impersonating attempts and take action.
• Separate Annexure in Nomination form of the candidate should be added with a subhead indicating different Social Media platforms used by the candidate:
  • Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, BlogSpot, etc.
  • Commercial websites, news portals, and blogs
  • Mobile advertisement networks and Online advertisement networks
  • Influencer payouts and IT Cell team or agents appointed
  • Pre-certification for non-paid and paid advertisements on Social Media used by contesting candidates/parties by the Media Certification and Monitoring Committee of the commission and approval number should
be displayed in the footnote of the advertisement and message.

6.2 Information Monitoring and Analytics of Social Media
Election commission needs to monitor and understand trends of fake news, misinformation campaign during the election to effectively conduct free, fair and secure electioneering process. Following interventions are suggested.

- Establish Online Internet Information and Social Media Monitoring Lab with tools and technology; Software or devices should be installed for real-time tracking or ‘listening’ to Social Media conversation.
- EC should create in-house /-hired team that will look after monitoring and action as per EC rules.
- Social Media Coordinator - should be appointed from EC, who will be the nodal figure of Social Media communication with District and other agencies
- Media Certification and Monitoring Committee (MCMC) may be restructured to include a Social Media, cyber security and Law Enforcement Expert as a member.
- Special Audit Team- to be appointed from within EC for social media audit of parties and candidates for pre, during and post-election use of social media.

6.3. Social Media and Internet: Expenditure Declaration and Auditing
There is no explicit arrangement is present set up to evaluate the money spent on invisible actions of social media. Following interventions are suggested for considering expenditure on social media to be assessed during elections.

- Expenditure declaration and Monitoring for Social Media Use and Advertisement of Content and cost aspects, for tracking, can be segregated in the following manner during elections -
  o Content can be passed on to MCMC committee for approval
  o Cost can be passed on to the District expenditure monitoring committee for approval
- An expense account statement for all declared Social Media handles/accounts should be provided by the contesting candidates/parties to support the same.
- New Guidelines to Social Media to paid advertisements under the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) like television media to be considered an expenditure account.
- Social Media and online advertisements expense should be simultaneously declared in the book of account for expenditure. Non-compliance will lead to action under appropriate laws.
- Social Media / online advertisements must have the agency name on the advertisements and are to be provided to the DEO/ CEO.
- Press Information Bureau, Government of India / Director General of Information and Public Relations, Government of Maharashtra to give ‘notional cost/rate ' of Social Media advertisements.

7. Online Transactions
The digital transaction using digital technology like payment wallets and gateway services is another challenge. The corruption has shifted from cash to these
platforms. The misuse of these platforms for bribing voters needs to be stopped. For that regulation, mechanism is needed.
- Peer to peer information exchanging platforms for money transfer are being exploited, there is a need to design regulation from the regulator for a code of conduct by these platforms and coordination with election commission during elections.
- Wallet Money transfer platforms should share bulk transfer or suspicious transactions or abnormalities. Banks and wallet companies need to be involved in monitoring transactions to keep a check on the transactions for bribing voters.

8. Cyber Security Observer:
Election Commission, Political parties, Candidates and all other relevant stakeholders are using more and more electronic equipment’s, Information Technology and Internet for electioneering, information dissemination, communication, voting, reporting, and analytics. The possibility of misuse cannot be ruled out, in view of this, it is suggested that a special Cyber Security observer from Law enforcement Department be appointed to oversee the process with assistance from experts.
- Cyber Security Observer for state elections to observe and evaluate the cyber security measures taken for protection and security of data and digital assets.
- Role and SOP of his conduct need to be in accordance with his nature of duty and reporting will be to EC
- The observer will scrutinize complaints from candidates, parties and citizens about influence operations, online social media abuse, online fake news, hacking and data protection before passing on to EC and LEA
- The observer will also supervise hacking attempts in election commission IT resources, manipulation and social engineering in the digital domain
- Cyber Security measures of the Digital tool, software, hardware and data used for electioneering needs to be supervised.
- This will ensure independent opinion about cyber security measures and will also ensure investigation into cyber-attacks during elections.

9. Election Cyber Security Awareness Campaign
The commission should highlight awareness about the digital systems of the commission, social media, and its use and misuse during elections.

Cyber Hygiene: The concept of basic Cyber Hygiene during elections like Do’s & don't should be taught to the party activists, candidates and voters. A well-coordinated and continuous campaign with the involvement of civil society, various NGO working in this field should be started before each election

Digital Literacy: Study conducted with the intent of online content regulation for fake considering the governance capabilities available with presently with institutions in Brazil, Germany, and India. The study recommended a balanced approach with more digital literacy and awareness about social media to journalist and users(Marda & Milan, 2018). Literacy about social media and digital systems is very important for that following intervention are suggested.
Crowd Sourcing of Ideas for social media, fake news, and online payments literacy. Interactive Involvement of voters is central to this approach.

- Seminars and workshops for use of social media and security at Village, Block, and District level.
- Election commission to arrange expert and all Stakeholders workshops

10. Expert Study Group
As many stakeholders are involved in the process of electioneering. Views of various democratic institutions, media houses, and social media platforms need to take into consideration for free and fair election. Multi-stakeholder involvement is concrete solutions that are implementable, resilient to time and acceptable to all stakeholders. Private companies, civil society, the government should work together to work out a solution for this. (Marda & MIlan, 2018). For the same, a multi-stakeholder approach to control the fake news is suggested.

- Multi-stakeholder Expert group for study and recommendation should be set up to prepare the SOP and changes in the Model Code of Conduct to use social media during the election by voters and party.
- Members from Academic, Government, Police, Cyber Security Experts, legal luminaries, Media, Auditors, others agencies should also be included in the group.

Conclusion
Free, fair and transparent elections are core to the healthy democracy. India is world’s largest democracy and use of Internet technology election campaign is crucial in present times. Use of technology for campaigning is no harm but its use to generate and disseminate fake news propaganda for misinformation campaigns or to change narrative or for character assassinations is very harmful for democracy. Instant messaging applications are mainly used for fake news dissemination. Technological, operational and legal measures are required to control the menace of online social media platform. Effective coordination and cooperation among various stakeholders in the election process is crucial for effective control.

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