

Battle on Fake News: WhatsApp among the College Students in Chennai

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Abstract

WhatsApp has become a suitable victim for everything its wrong in India right now. Another move to stem the spread of fake news and misinformation through its instant messaging app, which marks “unusual” links sent on chats as “suspicious”. The Students are forward more text, photos, and videos than any other country. This study examined college students’ use of WhatsApp for spearing fake news among their circles. The study was conducted from various college Students in and around Chennai are St. Peter’s College of Engineering and Technology, DG Vaishnav College and St. Thomas College of Arts and Science. Survey method is adopted in order to analyse the usages of WhatsApp for battle on fake news among the College students in Chennai. The purpose study to know the impact of fake news changing the learning style, aggressive nature, conflict, reliability, breaking relationships, Socioeconomic status, etc.

Keywords: Fake News, WhatsApp, College Students

Introduction

The famous quote about the fake news “We live in a time of fake news - things that are made up and manufactured”- Neil Portnow.

The Chennai city is also known as Madras, the capital of the Tamil Nadu State, India. Which has a very ancient cultural tradition and civilization with a mixture of both new and the old. The Chennai city is the metropolis and the fourth largest state in India. Chennai is the biggest industrial and commercial center in South India and a major economic and educational center. The City Chennai is the sixth most populated in India.

WhatsApp now has approximately 2 billion monthly active users who are exchanging nearly 60 billion messages in a single day, Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg announced. The company Facebook-owned messaging platform of WhatsApp currently has over 200 million monthly active users in India.

The shocking significances of fake news are seems around the world, but in recent times India has affected them mostly, with the spread of misinformation on WhatsApp resulting in the deaths of 12 people in the last few months. WhatsApp have taken a number of measures to stem the find of fake news, from making short films to handing out grants to support research into the issues.

Review of Literature

An Article published on Business Line (BL) “WhatsApp lists measures to tackle fake messages” on 4th July 2018. WhatsApp company has informed Indian government authorities that it is taking a huge number of steps to solve the fake messages on WhatsApp platform, including testing and finding a new label in India that shows the message has been forwarded versus composed by the encoder. They are raised apprehensions about the forceful fallout of the fake messages on WhatsApp platforms. The Government of India and we are horrified by these terrible acts of violence

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and wanted to respond quickly to the very important issues you have raised. We are plan to added new protections to safe the people from adding others and groups, which they had left and a form of misappropriation we think it is important to correct. They launched a new setting that enables administrators to decide who gets to send messages within individual groups. It helps to reduce the spread of unwanted information's into group conversations as well as the forwarding of tricks and other.

They also been testing a new tag in India that makes when a message has been forwarded and composed by the encoder. It could help as an important sign for recipients to think before forwarding messages because it lets a user know if the content they received was written by the people they may know or a rumour from someone else. They plan to launch this new feature.

Facebook recently published a paper exactness how it is dealing with government backed efforts to stimulus politics in other countries, or what it is called "Information operations." The findings refute the notion that bots **are the primary distributors of fake news**. Maximum of false intensification in the context of information operations is not driven by automated processes, but by coordinating people who are dedicated to operating inauthentic accounts.

The Oxford University last year find that, previously found that Twitter bots were conveying messages may be false, on behalf of groups on either side of the Brexit campaign, and for the candidates in the US presidential election. Boots programmed to work in favour of Brexit, and of Donald Trump, drowned out their opposition **in both their numbers and in the volume of messages, the researchers found**.

Impact of WhatsApp Fake Messages in India

Fake messages on WhatsApp and social media platforms are killing people in India. The female cop Rema Rajeshwari is fighting back. The photos and videos, but you don't check if they're real or fake, you just forward them. Please tell them don't spread these false messages. when the unknown people come to your village, don't take the law into your hands. Don't kill them."

Local musicians are already singing about the evils of fake news when the police superintendent Rema Rajeshwari's convoy rolls up to the dusty village square in one of India's poorest communities. Don't believe these things may be a performer cries out to the crowd. The blue cap and stiff khaki uniform the Rajeshwari climbs onto a makeshift stage in front of hundreds of village Peoples. She is there to try and stop the spread of fake WhatsApp messages in her district that warn of child kidnappers.

In India, WhatsApp misinformation have caused rural

village peoples to patrol in anxious groups on the lookout for anyone they don't diagnose. These mobs have already killed many people in May and June. Because of fake news the least six people died in WhatsApp-related mob attacks in eastern Assam, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu. There is also bubbling tensions over Hindu vigilante groups, they have targeted and killed Muslims.

The days after being they approached by the Indian government over the spread of fake messages leading to several execution deaths across the country. The messaging platform WhatsApp has come up with solution for users to avoid false information. WhatsApp have more than 200 million users were using regularly in India. They came up with advertisements in key Indian newspapers to tackle the spread of Misinformation in what is its first effort to combat a flurry of fake messages that prompted mob executions across.

The Facebook owned messaging company WhatsApp is stepping up the battle against fake news with a big change that will affect anyone that uses the app as it limits people is ability to forward messages to large groups. The idea is that, it will make it harder for things to "go viral" and will stop the spread of sensationalised fake information's.

The TIME said that, WhatsApp's Fake News Problem Has Turned Deadly in India. The evening of June 8, 2018 a 29 year-old sound engineer and a 30-year-old business man were on their way to a north-eastern state Assam the picnic spot, when they stopped at a village to ask for directions. The village people had been said, in a video circulating on the WhatsApp. The child kidnappers were roaming the country. Believing these strangers were the ones they had been warned, the village people formed a large mob and before the men could convince them otherwise they are going to beat them to death.

Nandagopal Rajan, the new Media editor at The Indian Express said, This is really happening at the edge of technology. In India has had a 4G revolution in the past one and half year and that have seen around 200 million people were start to using the internet mostly on their smart phones. It impulse the WhatsApp has suddenly ended up in the hands of a lot of first-time users. India is WhatsApp's largest market; the number is today is likely much higher. WhatsApp was designed as a messaging platform for exchange individuals or small groups in India it has taken on a life of its own. Many Indians are use WhatsApp not as a messaging platform. But as a ingesting platform users creates lots of groups so they receive an endless text and video messages, memes and random jokes and stories directly to their devices.

Purpose of the study

The study is conducted with an aim to understand the

Spread of Fake News on WhatsApp usage among the various College students and to get their opinion on reducing reliability on WhatsApp.

Objectivities

The research was based on the following objectives:

- To know the time spent in using the WhatsApp messenger.
- To explore the features of WhatsApp used the most by youngsters
- To get the students opinion on spreading fake news on WhatsApp
- To know the impact of Fake News
- To explore the challenges encountered by the respondents in using WhatsApp

WhatsApp

The App, started in the year 2009, The WhatsApp messenger was purposely created by Brian Acton and Jan K.oum (2009) to make communication and the distribution of multimedia messaging more easily and faster. It works with internet connectivity and helps its users to stay in touch with their friends and relatives. This makes its users getting touch with each other, it also helps them to create personal and private groups, transfer to unlimited text, images, videos and audio messages. The previous studies have proved that, WhatsApp is the most popular instant messenger service used by youth and students. The students are giving more importance to friendship, social lives and family relationships make use of WhatsApp in a large scale. The acceptance of WhatsApp among youth has brought a maximum profit among service providing organizations. Since it works on internet data plan free to users. This is the reason why WhatsApp is so popular among youth, it allows them to send unlimited messages to their friends and family members without any cost in the use of their smart phones. The application is very easy to use after downloading. Sometimes it gives an opportunity to their users can create and forward the fake messages.

Research Methods

The study uses online survey method and is restricted to College Students in Chennai region. A questionnaire was developed with both close-ended and open-ended questions to assess the demographics of Students, their usage of WhatsApp details, Purpose of Usage, important of WhatsApp, Impact of Fake News on WhatsApp, and intensity of Fake News on WhatsApp. The open-ended questions gave the samples a chance to express their views about Fake News on WhatsApp messenger and to list out some of the problems that they ignore the most in the app. This gave the researcher to gather more information regarding WhatsApp messenger and College Students

use of its forwarding fake news that would not have been said with closed ended questions. The researcher taken selected sampling to identify the samples for the study. College Students in Chennai region, who use WhatsApp Messenger and are users of WhatsApp messenger were facing the problems for fake news taken for the study.

Sample Size

The population under study was youth, especially college going students in the state of Tamil Nadu in Chennai, India. Since the population was so high and the researcher was unable to get data from the whole population, questionnaire was distributed to 150 college students in the age group of 18-22. The respondents for the study were students who were users of WhatsApp for forwarding Messages and spreading fake news. The Colleges are St.Peter's College of Engineering Technology in Avadi, DG Vaishnav College in Arumbakkam and St.Thomas College of Arts and Science in Koyembedu were selected randomly.

Data Analysis

The Study including students age, course of study and the year of study were collected. Then the Users were asked to rank the level of usage of WhatsApp messages on a scale. To determine the usage and spreading fake news of WhatsApp among youth, they were asked about the number of messages send and received in a day. They also asked the average time spent on WhatsApp. To determine the intensity of spreading fake news on WhatsApp, the number of conversations, the number of people with whom they interacted and the time spent on a regular basis were asked. 200 questionnaires were administered with 75 boys and 75 girls those who are college going in Chennai region.

The samples were allotted for three different colleges equally who are all using WhatsApp frequently, i.e., for St.Peter's Engineering college of technology were selected 50 students (Boys -25 & Girls -25), for DG Vaishnav College were selected 50 students (Boys -25 & Girls -25) and the same like St.Thomas college of arts and Science also.

College Students in Chennai use WhatsApp mainly for communication and to update their status on a regular basis. The instant and universal use for social co-ordination and updating makes more and more possibilities to given youth download the app and use. Many studies in India have proved that youth make use of WhatsApp tools to communicate with their friends and family. the smart phone industry has undergone their price shift. People can buy smart phone at reasonable price. The need to get in touch with their friends and family members has made the youth become a 24/7 user of WhatsApp in Chennai. The useful features were available the speed of sending and receiving messages are added an advantage of WhatsApp.

The Students are receiving WhatsApp Messages always continuously. 140 out of 150 respondents rated mobile as a necessity of their life. Most of the college students use WhatsApp to chat with friends and their intimates followed by relatives. Majority of the youngsters agreed that they converse with more than 40 people a day through WhatsApp. Majority of respondents rated 5 on a 5-point scale for the features of WhatsApp like instant messaging, forwarding the messages and updating profile status using images, text and Videos on a regular basis. The convention of WhatsApp messenger gives unlimited audio files and video files were given 3 on 5-point scale. They were receiving fake news and unwanted forward messages per day in given 4 on 5 Point Scale.

Table 1. Time spent in Using WhatsApp in a Day

Sl. No.	Time Duration per day	No. of respondents	Percentage
	Less than half an hour	13	8.67
	1-2 hours	18	12.00
	2-3 hours	42	28.00
	3-4 hours	56	37.33
	More than 4 hours	21	14.00
Total		150	100

The above table-1 represents the data relating to the respondents WhatsApp usage time in a day. It is clear that majority of the respondents 56(37.33%) using WhatsApp 3 to 4 hours in a day, then 42 (28%) 2- 3 hours. The table shows that majority of the respondents are Moderate addictive to WhatsApp usage.

IMPACT OF FAKE NEWS ON WHATSAPP

■ Fear ■ make them to forward ■ loss of reliability ■ No impact

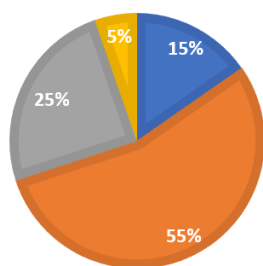


Figure 1. Impact of Fake news on WhatsApp

The above Figure-1 shows the Impact of fake News on WhatsApp the respondents. It is clear that majority of the respondents presents fake news are 55% make them to forward fake messages, then 25% loss their reliability towards the messages. The figure shows that majority of the respondents are forward the fake messages their contacts and groups.

Findings

College Students in Chennai region considers WhatsApp as an alternate for text messaging social networking sites. They found that it as a perfect tool for intimate social relationships and it as a perfect medium to update their status and images instantly to their groups and followers and for exchanging their photos, videos, and audios at a very fast pace, and as a tool for instant communication, with unlimited messages and unlimited size of sending messages. The most of respondents also consider it as creates more tension and stress. But in the battle of fake news the respondents are not accepting the reliability of real messages. The limit of its restriction on misuse of fake information of WhatsApp. The government has started a promotion drive based on providing learning material offered by WhatsApp to create awareness among students, government and others around in the issue on battle of fake news.

Problems of Fake News

- The message like unimaginable one as Indigo Airlines is giving 2 free tickets to everyone, Amazon offering you free pen drives and Gambling, etc,
- WhatsApp makes people get access to phone numbers and images of unknown people, just because they are a part of group forwarding unwanted messages.
- Threatening Messages like the name of god, the name of mother sentiments, etc., to make people to forward to the other people and groups.
- To create the fear among the people via sending false information like Whether reports.
- The rumours about actors and politicians.
- Without WhatsApp, Today's youth and students feels like something is missing in them if they are not found to be online with friends and relatives. Always they want keep their mobile phones in their hands in 24/7.

Conclusion

The college students are must aware of battle of fake news on WhatsApp to avoid to forward they received. The governments also taken much more steps to control these kind of social media issues. The Ministry of Information Technology and Electronics elevated their concerns about their concerns of the fake messages on social media platforms. The Government of India as perplexed by these dreadful acts of violence and wanted to respond quickly to the very important issues. We believe that, it is a challenge for the government and technology companies to work together to reduce the problems on WhatsApp fake messages. The government must try to work hard to educate people about how to stay safe fake messages on smart Phone Apps. They must regularly put out information that explains how to stop spreading fake news and tricky

messages. They plan to run long term public safety ad campaigns in India with their reliable sources and given its importance to us at WhatsApp. The people must allot the time and attention to read the published new educational materials around misinformation and attend the conduct of news literacy workshops.

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