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Research Article

Independent Journalism in the Digital Era: Combating Hate Speech for a Peaceful Society

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ABSTRACT

Digital disruptions toward the promotion of peace in society have never been witnessed before: hate speech, disinformation, and polarized narratives are all on the rise on social media. This paper explores this complex interplay between these digital disruptions and societal cohesion. Independent journalism, in particular, performs an important role in serving the purpose of promoting peace; hate speech breeds hostility; and disinformation muddies perceptions, making mistrust, social fragmentation, and even escalations in conflict their eventual byproducts. Independent journalism is therefore committed to fact-based reporting and neutral narration as the only weapons against such disconnections. This study explores independent journalism as an intermediary and agent of mitigation in curbing such social damage caused by the effects of digital disinformation and hate speech. Through successful case studies and a critical review of methodologies in counter-narrative journalism, the paper underscores what truth-driven media may serve: the development of dialogue, empathy, and peace-building in digitally mediated societies. The very conclusion here highlights the importance of independent journalism as crucial in rebuilding public trust to develop a digitally literate society in information streams it creates toward peace-oriented results.

INTRODUCTION

Today's ubiquitous information infrastructure, the Internet was the first iteration of what is commonly referred to as the National (or Global or Galactic) Information Infrastructure. Its history is intricate and encompasses a wide range of organizational, technological, and social factors. Additionally, as society moves towards using online technologies more frequently for electronic commerce, information gathering, and community operations, its influence extends beyond the technical domains of computer communications (Barry M. Leiner, 2009).

The connection between online hate and violence has gained significant attention in recent years, with numerous incidents worldwide highlighting the dangerous consequences of online hatred, from extremist-driven mass shootings to hate crimes incited by social media posts (Laub, Z. 2019). This link between online hate and real-world violence is well-documented, as evidenced by the Anti- Defamation League's (ADL) report in 2021, which revealed that most extremist-related murders in the United States in 2020 were tied to online platforms. The consequences of these dynamics extend far beyond the digital realm, posing a direct threat to public safety, social cohesion, and the principles of democracy. The virtual world, once envisioned as a space for dialogue and progress, has transformed into a battleground for ideologies and a breeding ground for extremism. Addressing this issue is not merely a matter of technological regulation but is vital for the preservation of democratic values and the well-being of communities worldwide. As we progress in this digital age, the need for proper regulations to mitigate online hate and its consequences becomes increasingly apparent. Policymakers, technology companies, and

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civil society organizations must collaborate to develop and implement effective strategies to combat online hate, disinformation, and misinformation. This research aims to shed light on the interplay of these factors and propose actionable solutions to peaceful coexistence in the digital world.

Social Media, its uses and Challenges

Social media has become an integral part of everyday life for individuals and organizations worldwide, and India is no exception. The increase in the availability of affordable smartphones and data plans has given rise to the usage of social media in India (Khan (2017). Studies have shown that India is home to many social media users, with platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, and Twitter being widely used (Banaji, 2019). The country's youth, in particular, has embraced social media for various purposes, from staying connected with friends and family to accessing news and information (Dey, 2018). These applications help in providing accurate information to citizens, engaging with the public, sharing updates on government activities, and soliciting feedback from the public (Srinivasan, 2020). Social media has been employed to disseminate important government announcements, crisis updates, and public health information, as seen during the COVID-19 pandemic (Government of India, 2020). It enables citizens to express their opinions and offers the government an avenue for gathering feedback, enhancing its decision-making processes (Thakur, 2016). Additionally, social media has facilitated government-citizen interactions and engagement in policy formulation (Pant & Baruah, 2018).

The use of social media by the Government of India also comes with its set of challenges and considerations like issues related to content creation, approval processes, and response mechanisms for comments and feedback (Sharma, 2017). government must also be prepared for crisis management and comply with legal and regulatory principles when using these platforms (Thakur, 2016).

Parallelism between digital infrastructure growth and digital violence

Online platforms or cyberspace offers freedom of communication and opinion expressions. However, today social media platforms are regularly being misused to spread violence messages, comments and hate speeches towards a person or a group on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, religion or political affiliation (Zhang & Luo, 2018). This has linked to a global increase in violence towards minorities, includes mass shootings, lynchings and more preferably ethnic cleansing (Zachary Laub, 2019). There have been 80% of people in European Union (EU) encountered hate speech online and 40% have felt attacked or threatened via Social Network sites (Gagliardone, Gal, Alves & Martinez, 2015).

Xenophobia or Islamophobia- A by product of social media?

According to the research on Aggression and violent behavior, there has been different types of online hate mentioned like Online religious hate speech, it is the use of inflammatory and sectarian language to promote hatred and violence against people on the basis of religious affiliation through the cyberspace (Albadi, Kurdi, & Mishra, 2018; Raileanu, 2016)36, and the most attacked religion in the world is Islam, motivated by islamophobia sentiments, favored by the cultural processes of globalization and digital media circulation (Horsti, 2017). The online racism, this is amplified within the social media environments. The anonymity and the greater accessibility of the internet has given an excellent platform for online racist attitudes. (Chaudhry & Gruzd, 2020). Gendered online hate, has been in rapid increase in online hate speech target on the basis of gender and sexual orientation (Dragiewicz et al. 2018). According to the 'Italian Hate Map project', women were the most insulted group having received 60.4% hateful Tweets and followed by gay and lesbian persons (10.3%) (KhosraviNik & Esposito, 2018). Another important category is Terrorism as an online hate trigger. Terrorism events have been frequently related to observable public social media reactions. Example like #StopIslam hashtags was used to spread racialized hate speech and disinformation towards Islam and Muslims after the 2016 March terrorist attacks in Brussels (Poole et al. 2019; Urnaiz, 2016).

The resulting behavior can be seen as deviant communication, as it may contravene widely accepted cultural standards, rules, or norms of social interaction within group contexts. (Watanable et al. 2018).

The Risk of Human Polarizations in Digital Sphere- A Global Perspective

Online hate speech has caused huge damage for individuals and society, there has been psychological harm, social exclusion, discrimination, hostility and violence (Gagliardone et al. 2015). Cyberbullying, trolling, revenge pornography, image-based abuse and hate crimes are rapidly on the verge of rise. Incidents like the recent white supremacist attacks in US circulated among racist communities online to publicize their acts, 2018 Pittsburgh synagogue shooter was a participant in the SM network gab (Kevin Roose, 2018), 2019 New Zealand Mosque shooting broadcasted the attack on YouTube. Online hate has disrupted peace and harmony, brought more divisions in the society. It is said YouTube may be one of the most powerful radicalizing instruments of the 21st century (Zeynep Tufekci).

Hate Speech in Digital Sphere- A Political Warzone

Social media platforms, particularly Twitter, have been frequently used to promote hate speech in recent years. Hate speech is any language that disparages an

individual or group of individuals because they belong to a particular group that is typically identified by their ethnic background, sexual preference, gender identity, or handicap, faith, political ideas, or association. (Kohatsu Sánchez,Federico Liberatore Collados, 2019). A study named "Coronavirus, Fear, and How Islamophobia Spreads on Social Media" was created by Awan and Khan-Williams in 2020. The writers of this paper examined Twitter, and demonstrated the development of anti-Muslim hatred. Similar to this, Soundararajan (2020) offered a thorough examination of how the COVID-19 epidemic hashtag "#Coronajihad" was used to incite Islamophobic hatred on In India, there are several social media sites, which also contributed to assault against Muslims. Aguilera-Carnerero and Azeez (2016) collected and studied tweets containing the hashtag "#jihad" utilizing corpus linguistic and critical discourse analysis techniques. Their research showed that communication on social media intensifies preconceptions and becomes more overt in promoting negative stereotypes of Muslims. Given that public officials interact using sites like Twitter, Islamophobia there is really troubling. For "political talk" in general as well as with the general public (Jungherr, 2016).

Curbing Online hate and Violence-A Government's Policy Perspective

Media plays a divisible role in spreading ideologies, religious fallacy and malicious paraphernalia during sensitive times. According to Article 19 of Human Rights considers various grounds for discriminatory hate need to be tackled and UN Human Rights committee also addressed to the Internet and mobile technologies and recommended the states to foster the independence and easy access to the individuals (M. O'Flaherty, 2012). In India judicial bodies and court system both function on the basis of information and inputs received from the majority of people and their elected representatives. The circulation and printing of hate contents are absolutely banned in India under different laws. It is essential to identify the contents and characters to protect the nation's wealth and image as a secular body (A. Jakubowicz et al. 2017). There has been a recent emerging trend on fandom, following the influencer blindly. Many of the representatives elected by people cease to adhere to the parliamentary behavior towards the countermen and these MPs, MLAs, Ministers involve in hate speech and spread of violence, and the fans of these representatives follow the similar behavior (Amita Charan & Jitendra Kumar Verma, 2020).

The rules held social media companies liable for actively identifying and deleting harmful content including hate speech on their website (Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, 2021). The platforms will introduce automated tools that help curb such form of harm, for example, hate speech and misinformation. In addition, the government has increased accountability by imposing the need to appoint an officer responsible

for grievance in regards to complaints presented by users (Chatterjee, 2022). Apart from these, the Indian legal system has sections 153A and 295A in the Indian Penal Code that prohibit hate speech which provokes enmity or hurts religious sentiments (Chaudhary & Sharma, 2021). Also, the government is taking initiatives that include partnerships with the social media companies to put up policies that are clear and speedy responses when hate speech is involved. However, critics argue that such policies sometimes threaten freedom of speech because they allow too much control by authorities (Kumar, 2023). Thus, the challenge remains to ensure online safety while preserving democratic freedoms.

New Media- A Potential Tool for Peace Building

Social networking sites have become integral to the daily lives of people worldwide, especially in the era of information and communications technology (Srivastava (2013). In an age where communication is central to building positive relationships between organizations and their public, various communication tools are employed to disseminate information and engage citizens (Tworzydlo, 2016). Today, social media has evolved into a robust and influential channel in this context, contributing significantly to peace-building efforts. Social media platforms have transformed how organizations and governments interact with their public. Graham (2014) emphasizes that SM enables real-time connections with citizens, making it a vital tool for disseminating crucial information to a global audience. This dynamic engagement fosters collaboration and inclusivity, essential components of peace-building. Khan (2017), Noordijk (2014), and Ismail (2019). Social media's impact on peace-building is not one-sided. It can both be a valuable asset and a potential threat (Hauer (2017). This duality has been collectively explored. On the positive side, social media can promote tolerance and peace by providing accurate information, empowering citizens, encouraging them to protest against violence, aiding governments in being more accountable, coordinating relief efforts, and fostering cross-border understanding and reconciliation (Larrauri (2015). On the contrary, when users share unverified content on social media platforms, it can disseminate misleading information, (Rohwerder (2015), hindering peace efforts and even promoting extremism and violent agendas (Sileshie (2014). This widespread use of social media platforms extends their potential impact on peace-building efforts(Khan (2017).

Conceptualizing Peace and Peace Building

As Tesfaye (2014)58 points out, peace encompasses more than the mere absence of war; it entails living a safe, secure, healthy, and prosperous life. The concept to include the absence of war and the presence of justice, law, access to necessities, and human rights (Galtung (1969). Based on this expanded definition, Galtung introduced two types

of peace: negative peace, signifying the absence of direct physical violence, and positive peace, indicating the absence of both direct and indirect violence, accompanied by justice for all (Williams, 2008). Conflict, arises from human interactions and is not limited to war and violence (Zvaita, 2016). Conflict can manifest on various psychological, sociological, and political dimensions. Political conflicts can range from inter-ethnic and intra-state conflicts to international conflicts (Julius et al., 2015). Furthermore, conflicts may result from the interplay of political, economic, social, and environmental factors (Folarin, 2014). There are three categories of violence: direct violence, characterized by actions diminishing one's capacity, such as killing or harming; structural violence, which occurs systematically by hindering equal access to opportunities and basic human needs; and cultural violence, prevailing through harmful social norms accepted by society (Galtung & Fischer,2013).

Peace-building is a process aimed at promoting nonviolence, equity, justice, and human rights (Oatley, 2011). It seeks to address the root causes of conflicts, reconcile differences, normalize relations, and establish institutions capable of managing conflicts without violence (Reychler, 2010). Peace-building efforts may begin before conflict arises, continue during conflict, and extend into the post-conflict phase (UNEP, 2009). These efforts encompass a wide range of activities to prepare communities for life after conflict and support lasting peace and reconciliation (Zvaita, 2016).

Communication is pivotal in peace-building, serving as a medium to promote nonviolence, understanding, and conflict resolution. However, how messages are disseminated can contribute to peace or conflict. Utilized appropriately, communication, mainly through social media and new communication tools, can be a powerful force for peace-building by providing up-to-date information, facilitating dialogue, and reducing tensions (Mutero, 2011; Hoffmann, 2014).

The Nexus of Journalism and Peace Building

Independent media outlets are known for their potential to contribute to peacebuilding through objective reporting, empowering communities with information, promoting dialogue, and fostering accountability, (Severin and Tankard, 2009). Independent media acts as a sentinel, shedding light on potential conflicts and facilitating a proactive response from the international community and local stakeholders, Lynch (2008). By highlighting the human consequences of conflicts, independent journalism can generate public awareness and support for initiatives aimed at resolving conflicts and building peace (Spear and Lee (2014). The independent journalism can be a powerful tool in educating citizens on media literacy, equipping them with the skills to critically evaluate information. Media literacy is an essential component of fostering a peaceful society by preventing the spread of misinformation and propaganda (Mellon, 2009). Access to truthful and independent information empowers civil society and can lead to pressure for accountability, a cornerstone of peacebuilding efforts (Brunetti and Weder ,2003). Peace journalism encourages journalists to highlight initiatives, dialogues, and peacemaking efforts, providing an alternative narrative to facilitate reconciliation and peacebuilding in conflict zones (Lynch and McGoldrick, 2000). Understanding the influence of media ownership is essential in assessing the potential impact of independent journalism on peacebuilding (McChesney,1999). While this presents new opportunities for independent voices, it also raises concerns about misinformation and polarization, highlighting the importance of media literacy and discernment in the digital age (Chadwick, 2017).

Theoretical Framework

Narrative Framing Theory- Narrative framing theory is a concept that focuses on how the way a story is presented can shape and influence the audience's perception and interpretation. The main proponents of this theory is Johannes C. P Schmid and Gregory Bateson. This theory can be a powerful lens through which to analyze and interpret the dynamics of online hate, misinformation, societal consequences, and the role of journalism in fostering peace in the digital realm. By using the narrative framing theory, the research topic can provide a nuanced understanding of the storytelling elements inherent in online hate and misinformation and the role of journalism in shaping narratives that contribute to or counteract these challenges. This approach can enhance the depth of analysis and contribute valuable insights to the broader discourse on promoting peaceful coexistence online.

Agenda-Setting Theory- According to the agenda-setting theory of McCombs and Shaw in 1972, what the public perceives to be important is actually constructed by the media, for it chooses which issues are covered. Independent journalism during the digital age can therefore use agenda-setting to prioritize the content that promotes peace while revealing the social impact of hate speech and misinformation through the agenda-setting approach. In this way, independent media can draw attention to challenges and consequences that will increase public concern regarding societal harmony (Weaver, 2007).

Spiral of Silence-According to Noelle-Neumann's spiral of silence theory, which was published in 1974, people may choose not to voice their thoughts if they fear that others may disagree with them. Peace-focused voices are muted in virtual settings where hostile and polarising narratives dominate (Noelle-Neumann, 1974). By amplifying pro-peace tales, independent journalism can counter this and encourage people to end the cycle of isolation surrounding peace activism (Hayes et al., 2006).

Research Methodology

The researcher used qualitative approach for this paper. The analysis of the data is done in three parts.

Textual Analysis

Focus on analysing written texts, articles, and reports produced by journalists. Identify key themes, language patterns, and framing strategies used in conveying information related to online hate and misinformation.

Case Study

There will be in depth exploration of the YouTube channels of the Independent Journalists, blog posts, social media platforms will be analysed to identify the use of information to disseminate the message on the various issues. Thorough study will be done on the use of language, images, symbols ad signs used to disseminate the information.

Discourse Analysis

Examine the broader discursive context, considering how language constructs social reality. Analyse the linguistic elements, power relations, and ideologies embedded in journalistic discourse on the selected issues.

From the population which included journalists, media organizations, and news outlets actively engaged in reporting on issues related to online hate and misinformation in India the researcher employed purposive sampling to select media outlets known for their commitment to authentic reporting. Snowball sampling is used to identify the students in journalism and media studies. Choosing journalists covering a diverse range of issues related to online hate and misinformation.

The data collection is done through the secondary sources from the YouTube channels of independent journalists, interviews were conducted of the students' journalists to identify the perspective towards independent journalist and was analyzed using

Textual Analysis

Qualitative methods to analyze textual data, identifying patterns, themes, and linguistic features.

Discourse Analysis

Analyzing discursive elements using thematic coding, identifying underlying ideologies and power relations. Interpret findings in the context of broader discursive trends in journalism.

Research Gap

In the realm of cybersecurity and online safety, a pressing need exists to comprehensively examine the motivations and psychological mechanisms that drive individuals to engage in cybercrime. By understanding the root causes and cognitive processes behind these illicit activities, we can lay the foundation for more effective preventive and intervention strategies. Concurrently, it is imperative to assess the efficacy of current strategies and policies to mitigate the scourge of cyber hate, a rampant issue in the digital landscape. This scrutiny will provide valuable insights into the strengths and weaknesses of existing measures deployed by governments, social media platforms, and online communities. Furthermore, a deeper exploration of how cyberhate impacts diverse demographic groups, encompassing youth, elderly, different genders, and individuals from varied cultural and religious backgrounds, is essential. In the contemporary era, where online platforms serve as channels for information dissemination, a critical examination is necessary to understand the coexistence of peace and the challenges posed by hate speech, fake news, disinformation, and misinformation. This research explores how online spaces can be harnessed responsibly to foster community building, societal cohesion, and national progress. This study aims to delve into the intricate dynamics between the dissemination of accurate information, the societal consequences of misinformation, and the pivotal role of independent journalism in steering public discourse toward constructive narratives. By elucidating the multifaceted connections between online communication, journalistic practices, and their impact on societal well-being, this research provides insights into practical strategies for utilizing digital platforms as instruments of awareness and justice and constructing a more equitable and informed society.

Research Objectives

- To examine the spread and impact of misinformation in online spaces, assessing how it contributes to the propagation of hate and its influence on public perception.
- To explore the role of independent journalists and news channels in India in countering online hate and misinformation, identifying their strategies and impact on promoting informed and just online communities.
- To assess the effectiveness of current regulatory and countermeasure initiatives aimed at mitigating online hate and misinformation, both in India and globally.
- To identify and propose potential solutions and strategies to foster peaceful coexistence in the digital world, considering the role of education, media literacy, and online platforms.
- To develop recommendations for policymakers, internet platforms, and civil society organizations to address the complex issues of online hate and misinformation, while safeguarding freedom of expression and protecting democratic values.

Data Analysis, Interpretation and Findings

The independent journalism and the journalists are a powerful and most effective tool to counter online hate

and misinformation, and foster informed and just online and offline communities to bring peace in the society.

Barkha Dutt's brave Independent Journalism

Barkha Dutt, the fearless and independent journalist, has contributed substantially to promoting peace through her insightful and informative reporting. Her videos, hosted on the Mojo channel with over 1.31 million subscribers and 16,000 videos, cover diverse topics, demonstrating a commitment to social issues and a fearless pursuit of truth. One noteworthy aspect of Dutt's work is her coverage of sensitive issues, such as the reunion of a 9-year-old girl with her father after an alleged murder by Hamas terrorists. By providing in-depth and informative content, Dutt fosters understanding and empathy, contributing to a broader sense of compassion and potential conflict resolution. Her dedication to social issues is evident in reports on self-rule in Manipur and the Indigenous Tribal Leaders Forum's declaration of setting up a governing body if their demands are unmet. Dutt contributes to social harmony and understanding by giving voice to marginalized communities, essential elements for maintaining peace within a diverse society. Barkha Dutt's analysis of political warfare in India adds another layer to her peace-promoting journalism. Understanding the complexities of political dynamics is crucial for fostering stability and informed public discourse. Her balanced reporting, as seen in her podcast with top bureaucrat Anil Swarup, provides viewers with nuanced insights into the present government and the previous UPA government based on facts, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of political scenarios. In addressing contemporary challenges, Dutt explores topics like deepfake and information integrity, raising awareness about potential threats to peace arising from misinformation. Informed societies are better equipped to navigate complex issues without succumbing to manipulation, fostering a more peaceful and resilient public sphere. Furthermore, Dutt's environmental reporting, such as the coverage of stubble burning and its impact on daily lives and air quality, reflects a broader environmental consciousness. Environmental degradation can be a source of conflict, and Dutt's efforts to raise awareness align to promote a sustainable and peaceful coexistence. Her trailblazing reporting during the Kargil War in 1999 and subsequent reports on conflicts and wars demonstrate her commitment to accurate and impactful journalism. By presenting a comprehensive view of various issues and advocating for independent journalism in a climate where journalists are increasingly vulnerable, Barkha Dutt contributes to creating an informed and engaged society—foundational elements for fostering peace in the world.

Karan Thapar's Advocacy of Peace

Karan Thapar, a prominent Indian journalist, has consistently advocated for peace, justice, and democracy through his independent journalism. His well-known show, *The Devil's Advocate*, and the eponymous book have become synonymous with fearless reporting and insightful analysis.

One of Thapar's notable contributions is his dedication to raising awareness and educating the public on a diverse range of issues, both national and international. His extensive coverage includes the Kashmir conflict, Indo-Pak relations, Indian democracy, media ethics, and the role of civil society. Through his books and articles, he has provided clear and detailed information on these topics, fostering a better understanding among his audience. His recent reporting on the relationship between Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and U.S. President Joe Biden exemplifies his commitment to providing well-researched and informative analyses of global affairs. The coverage of the Israel-Hamas conflict underscores his focus on moral questions and the impact on vulnerable populations. Thapar's reporting extends beyond geopolitical issues to encompass the world of sports. His recent report on the World Cup Cricket emphasized the importance of being good players is also to be good losers, demonstrating the broader lessons and values that can be derived from sportsmanship. His consistent theme is empathy for
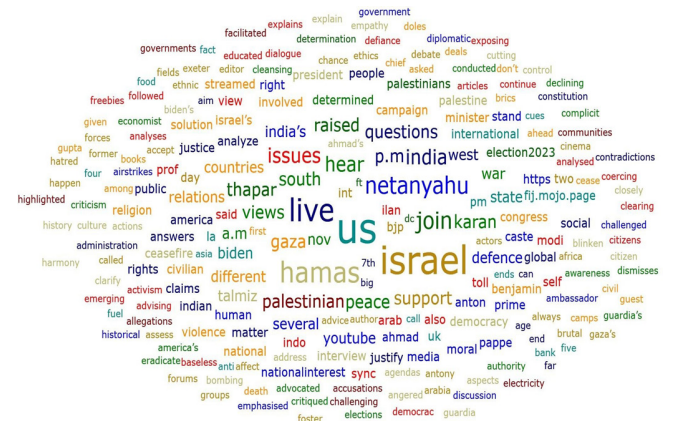

Figure 1: It shows the word cloud of textual and discourse analysis

Figure 2: It is the word cloud gathered from different articles, interviews of Karan Thapar with some of the great personalities

victims and survivors of violence and oppression. He has highlighted human rights violations and injustices, contributing to a broader understanding of social issues. His participation in various forums and platforms aimed at fostering community peace and harmony reflects his commitment to building a just society. The journalist's emphasis on India-Pakistan peace initiatives and the voice of the global south adds depth to his reporting. Thapar's detailed analysis of Indo-U.S. relations further showcases his dedication to exploring complex international dynamics. Throughout his career, Thapar has stressed the importance of pluralism, human rights, saving the Constitution, and secularism. In his videos, he promotes a culture of debate and discussion, fearlessly asking tough and probing questions during interviews. This commitment to independent journalism has contributed significantly to building a more informed and just society.

An Overwhelming Interview of Karan Thapar with Prof Tarunabh Khaitan

In a compelling interview by Karan Thapar, Professor Tarunabh Khaitan sheds light on the relevance of the ruling party, the Modi government, emphasizing the nuanced dynamics shaping India's democratic landscape. The central theme revolves around the notion of "Killing the Constitution with a thousand cuts," serving as a poignant metaphor for the challenges faced by democracy under the NDA regime. Professor Khaitan begins by asserting that democracy in India is in peril, particularly under the current government. He articulates the significant shift between Modi 1 and Modi 2 regimes, highlighting the evolving nature of autocratic leadership that has learned from 20th-century dictators. According to Khaitan, the Modi 2 regime poses a more significant threat to democracy than the Emergency imposed by Indira Gandhi, as autocratisation systematically erodes the foundations of democratic institutions. The interview delves into the opportunistic nature of the Modi government, particularly its actions leading to the delegitimization and disenfranchisement of the Muslim minority population in India. Khaitan critiques the government's discriminatory laws, such as NRC and CAA, which have contributed to the polarization of the electorate and the criminalization of the Muslim community.

Khaitan also addresses the erosion of institutional mechanisms by the Modi 1 and Modi 2 governments. This includes control over judicial appointments, compromising the judiciary, and undermining various institutions. The professor points out the government's use of corporate power to silence the media, creating a crony capitalist-dominated narrative. Hyper-nationalism, according to Khaitan, has reached its zenith, with the committed ideological party succeeding in bringing Hindutva ideology to the forefront and shaping India as a Hindu Rashtra. The interview highlights the

Figure 3: It is the word cloud of detailed analysis of the interview of Karan with Prof. Khaitan

lack of magnanimity in the opposition party, presenting a significant challenge to checks and balances within the democratic framework. Khaitan critiques the flaws in the Constitution, particularly the concentration of power in centrally appointed governors and the absence of a constitutional office for the opposition leader. He contends that these shortcomings, coupled with the single-minded focus of the RSS, have paved the way for the close realization of a Hindu Rashtra. Moreover, Khaitan raises concerns about the systematic preparation for a new Constitution, indicating that the government's goal is not only to alter the legal framework but also to transform the essence of the Indian people. The prospect of shifting from a parliamentary to a presidential system is discussed, with Khaitan characterizing it as the "elected autocrat's wet dream." The interview with Professor Tarunabh Khaitan provides a comprehensive and critical examination of the Modi government's impact on India's democratic fabric, serving as an eye-opener for many Indians and fostering a broader understanding of the complex issues at play. Khaitan's insights expose the multifaceted challenges faced by the nation under the current regime, prompting reflection on the state of democracy in India.

Ravish Kumar's fearless journalism a pathway to build peaceful and informed society

Ravish Kumar, a prominent and fearless independent journalist, has been a stalwart in the field for over 27 years, gaining recognition for his unwavering commitment to truthful reporting. He gained widespread popularity through his YouTube channel, Ravish Kumar official71. It has more than 7.88M subscribers with 345 videos. The videos share unfiltered opinions on various topics, mainly focusing on Indian politics, society, and culture. Despite threats and an increasingly unsafe environment, Kumar remains dedicated to providing transparent and fearless journalism.

Despite facing death threats and criticism, Kumar maintains his responsibility to provide relevant content that reflects the truth of the time. He emphasizes the need for different Election Commissions to address party differences and highlights the existential crisis in truth-telling globally. His documentary *'While We Watched'* exemplifies his dedication to truth-telling, shedding light on the dangerous weaponization of fake news by the ruling regime in India. His term *Godi Media* for pro-government media reflects his concern about the culture of violence and hatred propagated in the name of religion and nationalism.

Kumar's reporting extends beyond mainstream issues, giving a voice to marginalized communities and addressing social injustices. His commitment to journalistic integrity earned him the *Ramon Magsaysay Award in 2019*, recognizing his efforts to maintain journalistic standards amid the rise of politicized fake news. In the face of majoritarian Hindu Nationalist politics that threaten press freedom, he remains optimistic. He acknowledges his followers' responsibility and believes that, over time, those who follow him have become more responsible. Despite the challenges, he receives messages of apology from individuals who once harbored violent thoughts, showing the impact of his fearless journalism.

Ravish Kumar's work reflects a dedication to trustworthy journalism as a tool for building a peaceful society. By exposing corruption, poverty, social inequality, and marginalized communities' struggles, he informs and advocates for social justice.

Shekar Gupta's The Print and Cut the Clutter is a tool for factual journalism and building a peaceful society

Shekhar Gupta, a seasoned journalist and the driving force behind The Print and Cut the Clutter, (CTC), has emerged as a pivotal figure in shaping the narrative of Indian journalism. Gupta's impact is undeniable with over 23,000 videos on CTC and a subscriber base of 2.32 million. CTC, initiated in 2018, serves as a beacon of explanatory journalism, a genre gaining prominence in today's media landscape. Gupta's videos are not just a coverage of diverse topics but a form of storytelling. By breaking down complex issues into easily digestible narratives, he ensures that the audience is informed and engaged.

Under Gupta's leadership, the editorial ethos of The Print revolves around the pillars of Politics, Policy, Governance, and Social and Cultural Change. This comprehensive approach allows for a deeper understanding of the socio-political fabric of India and the world at large. The content is characterized by clarity of thought, colloquial language, and a commitment to contextualizing complex issues. One notable aspect of Gupta's reporting is his refusal to sit on the fence. In the Bilkis Bano case, he took a clear stand against the remission granted to the men convicted of her rape, showcasing a commitment to justice. His reports on caste census politics and the Manipur issue indicate his ability to delve into critical matters, providing a nuanced perspective beyond the surface.

In an era of rampant misinformation, Gupta's dedication to fact-based reporting is crucial. The Print's mission of high-quality, fair, and questioning journalism aligns with the need for the public to distinguish between facts and manipulated news. Gupta's on-air apologies for occasional factual errors exemplify his accountability. His storytelling ability is not limited to politics; he extends it to episodes like *Valor, heroism amid Ignominy, and the Battle of Rezang La*, highlighting the military glory of India. This diversification underscores his commitment to offering a holistic understanding of various facets of society. Through interviews with political figures like D K Shivkumar Gupta provides a platform for in-depth discussions, facilitating a better grasp of political nuances. The impact of CTC and The Print is evident in their growing readership and viewership, making them the most read and watched news space among digital platforms. The involvement of prominent investors like Ratan Tata signifies the trust and credibility Gupta has built. His role in conscientizing people lies in the dissemination of accurate information, the exploration of diverse topics,

Figure 4: It shows the word count of the articles, 10 videos of Ravish's reporting

Figure 5: The word cloud from the various articles of Shekhar Gupta and 10 videos from CTC

and the cultivation of critical thinking. By contributing to building a peaceful society, Shekhar Gupta exemplifies the power of responsible journalism in shaping public discourse.

Conclusion and Discussion

As rightly as Marshal McLuhan quoted that the" The world as Global Village", the new media especially social media, digital journalism, are all the tools through which we are heading towards a more technological and networked globe to which Manuel Castell coined the term "Network Society" where we are connected by information nodes, the risk of spreading misinformation, hatred, digital bullying has also got a pace. The relevance of this study is to scrutinize the digital journalism landscape from a peace building perspective. Journalism as a mass media tool helps in disseminating information in the form of news which over the period of time has changed its format from print to digital, which also changed the consumption pattern. People engaged in daily routine are having less time to undergo the entire piece of news and thus prefer short summarized readings which is leading to a greater scope of falsifying facts and figures, therefore the spread of hatred for some instances. Journalism as a novel profession has its own ethics and morals. The Social Responsibility Theory derived from Hutchins Commission lay out a ethical and socially acceptable guidelines for the working professions with regards to their credibility and accountability for the news they publish. Catering to the consumers, keeping the repercussions of the news is very crucial. The concept of peace is subjective in nature which depend on various reasons.

In independent journalism where reporters are not bound to any corporate or societal prejudices serve their best to suffice the information thirst of the citizens, especially from India which is one of the biggest growing democracies in the world, the figures like Barkha Dutt, Karan Thapar, Ravish Kumar, and Shekhar Gupta emerge as catalysts for fostering an informed and active community. Through their courageous reporting and commitment to truth, they dismantle ignorance by shedding light on diverse and complex issues. Their work goes beyond the headlines, delving into sensitive topics, providing nuanced analyses of political landscapes, and giving voice to marginalized communities. By encouraging critical thinking and presenting a variety of perspectives, these journalists empower individuals to engage with the world with empathy and understanding.

In doing so, these independent journalists contribute significantly to building a peaceful and just society. Their efforts challenge power structures, hold authorities accountable, and expose injustices. Cultivating a well-informed public creates a foundation for dialogue, empathy, and unity, essential in dispelling ignorance and working towards a society that values peace, justice, and the shared pursuit of truth.

For this growing concerns over spreading misinformation which leads to distortion of peace a robust counter checking systems to verify the facts at the sub-editor and editor level must be ensured. It is also important for the field reporters, stingers and freelance correspondence reporters to understand the novel nature of the profession. The institutions in India which provides courses on journalism should entitle courses on peace journalism, give more importance to media laws and ethics and hand on training for journalist on fact checking and data journalism. Journalism, is more than just producing news, rather it's a way through which people connect with their society and get informed.

From a consumer's point of view, it's extremely important to understand the nature of the profession in terms of ethics and morals. Giving valuable feedbacks, letters to editors are still considered the best way a news reader communicate to the editor and let them know if something is out of the box. In the world of internet, digital literacy becomes crucial for consumers, producers and prosumers.

Thus, in ever growing society of information, the basics of human life especially maintaining peace is the utmost priority, to which necessary measures if taken can lead us to a world of joy rather being polarized.

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For this paper all the selected participants were prior briefed about the topic and their names are not disclosed to keep their identity anonymous.

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