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## Role of media and social networking sites in internal security challenges in South Asia

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### Abstract

Media is the source of information which gives information from one to all about all issues happening around us, whether the issues are local, regional or global. There is also electronic media and communication sector, which ranges from telecommunication networks and internet, through many ways and is itself among the most active in current drive for globalisation. Media is also a powerful agent in transformation of social, cultural and political structures. Even government greatly needs a strong media support for their existence in politics. Social networking sites are the popular sites which have made communication easy and fast with family, friends, and colleagues all around the world. Social networking has changed the communication pattern. But as we know when a thing has good side then it also have a bad side, same is with the social networking sites. The social network information now a day's being used in ways for which it has not been initially intended. There are many apps by which one person can hack other person site information and like this it can pose serious risks to an enterprise's network, data and reputation. In this paper, we are going to raise several such privacy and security issues of social network and security of South Asia region.

**Keywords:** blogs, facebook, internal security, social networking, twitter, polarization

### 1. Introduction

Throughout history, nation & states have faced security threats from both internal and external sources, but in modern time's internal security complications poses greater threats especially when these are accentuated by hostile states. Many nations, like Yugoslavia, Sudan, Congo etc. have succumbed to them and many, like Yemen are facing survival threat. Political destabilizations, violent internal conflicts, legitimacy crisis etc. are some of the internal security threats to which South Asia is not an outlier. These have disintegrated nations like Pakistan in 1971 and some have been able to return from the brink like in Sri Lanka but all continue to face challenges. Social media is explained by a number of tools, which includes blogs, Wikis, discussion forums, micro-blogs, twitter and social networking sites Facebook. Social networking sites also pose major challenge in financial and organized crime which destabilizes the system. The organized criminal groups have found in social networks a forum to position themselves in the popular culture as an alternative lifestyle. A predominant framework of India's national security has to take cognisance of military and non-military dimensions in term of both external threats and internal challenges to its regional integrity and national unity (Kumar, 2016) <sup>[10]</sup>. Threats to a nation originate as much from external aggression as from internal trouble but at times internal factors can corrode national security more critically than any external threat. National power based on political stability, societal cohesion and economic development would thus remain central to the future of South Asian state's National security.

### 2. Significance of the study

The last two decades have witnessed a rapid transformation of traditional media into new media that encompasses digital, computerized and networked information and communication technologies. Every segment of society desires its virtual presence on the social media platform. There exists a need to know why social media has grabbed such a great focus, as it has been causing an intensified threat to the other conventional media.

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### 3. Objectives of the study

#### 3.1 This study is intended to get associated on the following

- To discuss the significances of social media.
- To talk about the key features of internal security challenges.
- To analysis the major roles played by social media.
- To highlight the theories related to media and national security issues.
- To focuses the key challenges posed by social networking sites to South Asian States Security.
- To search for the social networking sites active in South Asian Society.

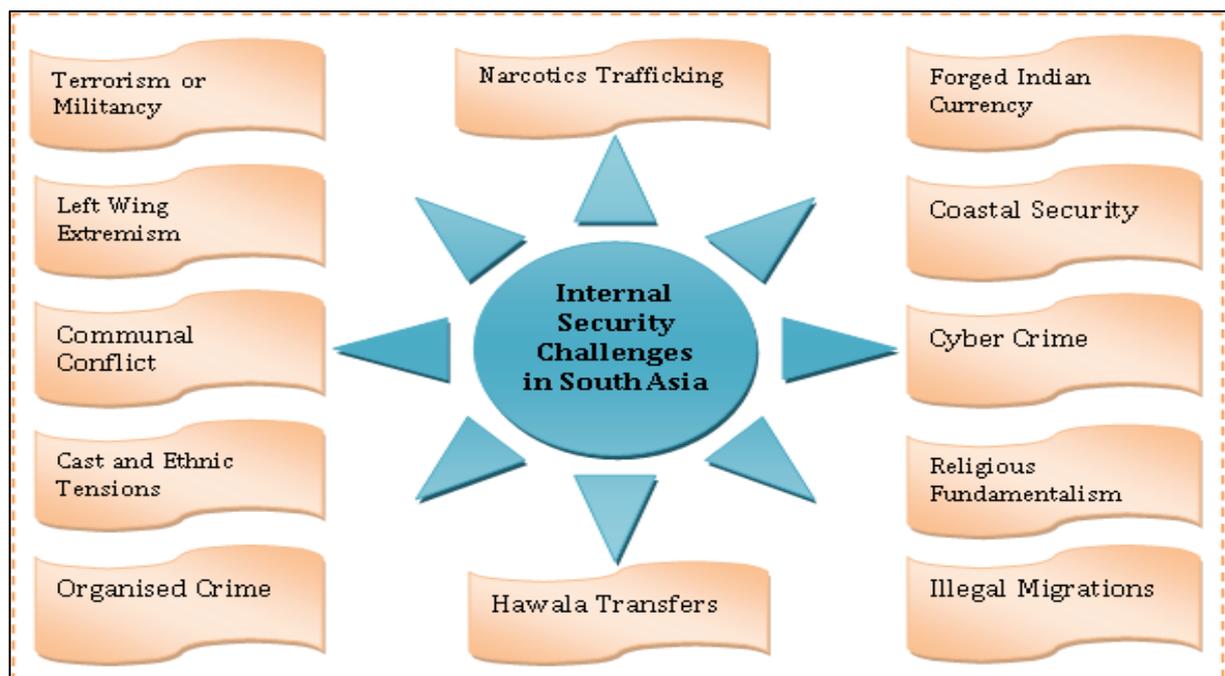
### 4. Research methodology

The study based on primary and secondary sources of information. The data collected from the secondary sources of information, it is classified and presented in the form of simple tables for easy understanding. Statistical tools like graphical representation of data, Correlation coefficient are utilized to analyze the data. In addition to the literature collected through journals, books, articles, seminar reports. All the available literature has been reviewed for the acquaintance of knowledge on subject matter to verify the nature, significance, characteristics, and roles played by the social media, apart from the key challenges imposed by this form of media.

### 5. Security challenges

In the regions of South Asia-India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Maldives, and Pakistan, there is intense internal turbulence and disturbances due to rebellion movements, ethnic conflicts and religious fundamentalism. Major internal security challenges are many. There are several reasons for these internal security issues such as Unfriendly neighbour, weak state structure like poor governance, hopeless poverty in large numbers because of deforestation, sustenance has decreased, political insecurity like secessionism, revolutionary movements, Polarisation of society, Hardening class barriers, drug trafficking and arms, smuggling, rise in intolerance and fundamentalism (Kumar, 2016) <sup>[10]</sup>.

It has been well documented that mass media pose internal security challenges through various means such as terrorism which makes uncertain future of nation. Social media sites are very convenient, affordable and people can reach huge number of audience through these sites such as you tube, twitter, Facebook. It has been observed that terrorists normally use social networking sites to transmit messages and accomplish their dangerous targets. All anti-government groups use internet technology such as email, chat room, e group, forums and virtual message boards to live their communication.



### 6. Role of media

Media is considered as influential channel for effective communication. It supports in promoting the right things on proper time. It provides a real exposure to the mass viewers about right or wrong process. Media is the source of information for a culture for any societal or political issue. Whether the issue is local, regional or global, people rely and even trust on information provided to them by media. Therefore, this dimension/value of media increases its significance as an influential and instrumental tool with regards to building confidence or promoting mistrust among people on issues related to national security. This importance of media can be observed at the times of disaster

of national level (Singh, 2011) <sup>[16]</sup>. Even though, sometimes, media is related with spreading false news but it is a fact that it helps to inform people about the realities as well. Media, the means of communication that reaches or influences people broadly has a significant position in the statecraft mechanism especially in period of information rebellion (Bertot, *et al.*, 2012) <sup>[2]</sup>.

The huge influence of media in creating popular image was used subsequently by states to counterbalance their enemies and foes, internally and externally. But irrespective of the degree of independence and fairness available to the media, it has been extensively observed that media follows the nationalistic principles when dealing with matters of

national security and interests (Mathur, 2012) [15]. Progressively, nation states and non-state political actors have well identified the great influence of media and its use for their objectives. However, the dynamics of media impact are quite different, varying and diversified in different countries. When discussing about the Indo Pakistan security relations, media has adopted a nationalistic approach forwarding and pushing the national interests such as in wars (1965, 1971), crisis (1990 nuclear alert), border skirmishes (Kargil) or the low-intensity war (LIW) in Kashmir (Hekkala *et al.*, 2012) [7].



Media plays an important role in politics as it influences public opinion and helps define and take up issues. It can keep the powerful in check by seeking transparencies in their actions. Suppose if a government were to control all information regarding its own actions, won't escape all accountability. Thus, an independent media is an effective check on government's power and influence over its citizens and even mass media is supposed to make it easier for people to participate in political decisions, understand how the government works. But in this day and age, the media is often used to manipulate and obscure the true form of political issues (Kumar, 2017) [11]. The coverage of nuclear explosions carried out by India and Pakistan in 1998 is one of the major examples in this regard where popular sentiments were emphasised and media had major role to push forward the national program. During that period, media used a nationalistic approach to highlight the state standpoint.

One strategy that politicians use is the diversion of attention. The attention of a group of people can be diverted by meaningless facts and words. With their minds somewhere else, it's share for public to recognize the real issues and separate the truth from fiction. Sometimes it works under the government pressure imposed through laws and media can also work under the influence of financier, as it has become a commercial industry. The role of media is mainly determined by its relationship with its state.

## 6.1 Theories related to media

**6.1.1 Authoritarian system:** The government in power controls the media. The main aim of media is to support and improve the government policies and serve the state. The criticism on government mechanism is banned.

**6.1.2 Libertarian system:** In which media is owned by whoever has economic means to do so. Under this theory media work with three aims such as to inform, to discover truth and accountability of the government.

**6.1.3 Social responsibility system:** The media is controlled by anyone who wants to say something. The major responsibility in this theory is to inform, entertain, sell but also raise the conflict to the plane of discussion.

"Freedom of the press is guaranteed to those who own one". Many scholars have recognized that media has powerful role in politics. It has pushed the process of rapid globalization as well as summarized the international politics. Information is a major resource in the current global environment. Political parties have become sensitive on how the media cover their public appearance because they are aware of the impact of media on their career. Media has a remarkable impact on politics, which at times is good or turn out bad depending on who is affected. If media is used against politicians, their career can be easily destroyed, but if the media cover positive element about politician, their career can take him to new heights.

It's natural for people to believe what the media tell us because we assume that the media has done research on that. The media have often been accused of biased news coverage of political activities. Most media stations are owned by wealthy individuals who support specific political ideology. Media and politics are closely connected and it is a fact that politicians need media to power. Media is the major source of information and has become political, therefore, it has capability to influence the global structure and it may bring a change in the structure. Although the role of media in international politics is positive, sometimes it is influenced and used by the major actors as a source of publicity to promote their interests and bring desired changes in the prevailing system (Chakravarti, 2009) [4].

Preferably, it has general perception that media must be unbiased and free from the publicity mechanisms. It should provide balanced account to the people. Media educates and keeps the public informed about the national and international political and other human realities taking place in everyday life. The main aim of media is to highpoint the trouble issues in the society and pressurize to the government and public to formulate suitable mechanisms to eliminate those troubles. At the national level, the responsibility of media is to build a bond between people and governments (Chakravarti, 2009) [4]. Media serves as a frontier by ensuring that the government is working within its mandate. However, following the globalization, the responsibilities of media have also extended. It has to play a role for preserving and pursuing the national interests of the state and highlighting its perspective along with the global issues (Bertot, *et al.* 2012) [2]. It has to scrutinise the conduct of international relations and emphasize the social issues at global level in lieu of global security.

## 7. Media and National security

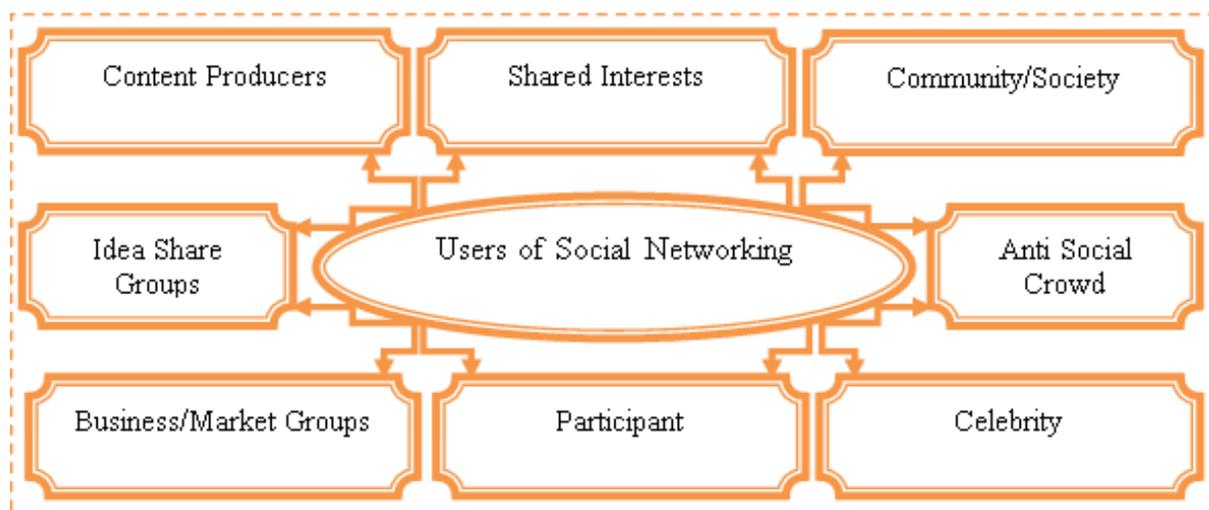
National security is prime importance of any nation to maintain peace and harmony. Issue, sensitive to national security, is the subject of military readiness is new acquisitions. One wonders how does media lay its hands on "secret" or "confidential" documents or the proceedings of a meeting and report them for consumption of public without a second thought, when the same documents, if reported by a member of military, would invite strictures and punitive action under the official secret act? There are numerous examples from recent Pathankot/Uri attack and the aftermath of them, to acquisition of aircraft and equipment trend to it, giving an impression person that the nation's

military is ill prepared to take an action. Like this national security is also in the hands of media that want media shows to the outer countries.

In current scenario, the role of electronic media is the most effective and powerful to persuade masses. Strong motivated people cannot be forced to abandon their struggle against heavy odds. It is for this aspect of unique coverage and impact that the electronic media can be geared up effectively to promote and expand security awareness among the people at large (Bertot, *et al.*, 2012) [2]. The media has been conducting the war of its own to counter the hostile propaganda from across the borders. The electronic media is a morale-building factor. In the military jargon, morale is the will to fight for the national cause to the last. Media is one of the most powerful instruments of communication. It can help to promote the right things on right time and gives a real as well as strong aspects of world about what is right or wrong also express that how can we store and distribute the views- media covers all aspect of our interest like weather, politics, war, health, finance etc. the media informs all details of all major political situations, decisions and scenarios. Hence people can better understand their rights and make better decision. The power of media is so extensive and huge, it can be used to educate people with very little cost and even one of major duties of media today is to inform people about the latest happening around them and the world. As when the terrorist attacks take place the role of media become very important, because it pass the message to rest of the world. Like, this media helps for better understanding towards the improvement of our society.

**8. Social networking sites**

With advancement in technology, communication has grown. It is now easier and cheap to communicate and connect with people across the world. “Man is a social human being and interacting and being social is part of human nature.” Now, In twenty first century, all activities are through the internet and different social networking sites like Facebook, Whatsapp, Instagram, Twitter and Hi5 etc. have taken up so much that now, we just cannot be away from them with plenty number of social networking sites, connecting to friends and family who are very far away from us is made so simple that is just feels that we are taking over a cup of coffee. They encourage feedback, proposals, and ideas from all workers, thus opening the door for innovation in any shape or form. They also participate well with cloud computing platforms and allow files to be shared & transmitted in a secure manner (Kim, 2012) [8]. These sites also help ones to expand their horizon by getting in touch with people of similar taste, like, interests and ideas irrespective of their caste creed or distance. One could express their views or public matters on such platforms. These social networking sites behave like social media, media which allows social interaction. Social media is growing rapidly throughout the world. More adults and teenagers are joining sites such as twitter, MySpace to interact with friends, family and stranger. The introduction of social media has changed the world in many ways. It affects each individual in different ways. Today it can be used as a very helpful tool in changing a person’s life, but at the same time cause such conflicts which can negatively impact a person.



Data Source: (Scaife, 2014)

Fig 2: Social Connectivity of Users

While there are some negative associated with social media, the positives in communication all around, has made the world stronger and better place to live in. A recent article even states that “Social Networking sites can also have a positive impact on young adults’ life by helping them be more empathetic”. Despite of positive, there are many negatives associated with social media. Using social media can make a person more vulnerable to predators and cyber building. In this age, “Cyber Bullying is quite common, can occur to any young person online, and can cause profound psycho-social outcomes including depression, anxiety, severe, isolation and tragically suicide. Cyber bullying

impacts society in a negative way because it’s harming young teenagers’ mind.

**8.1 Significances of Social Media**

Social media has become very significant because of the two most important and precise characteristics of social media. They are: ubiquity and interactivity.

1. Ubiquity is the sense that new media technologies affect everyone in the societies they are employed, even if everyone in the society may not be the audience of such a media (Leah A. Lievrouw & Sonia Livingstone, 2006) [14].

2. The second significant issue that distinguishes new media from traditional mass media channels and content is the persistent sagacity of interactivity associated with new media channels, that is, the

selectivity and reach that media technologies offer users in their choices of information sources and interaction with other people (Leah A. Lievrouw & Sonia Livingstone, 2006) <sup>[14]</sup>.



**8.2 India’s internal security challenges**

Social networking sites has immense role in recent developments across the globe with special reference to incidents in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia. There have been panic reactions on the part of governments regarding social media, an issue that India has faced. However, social media

is more independent than electronic or print media because of its interactive nature and less gate keeping. The growing voice of the marginalized sections having access to Internet through these sites has led to governments asking for greater control and scrutiny (Verma, *et al.*, 2013) <sup>[19]</sup>. In social networking sites, several types of data are shared.

**Table 1:** Taxonomy of Social Networking Data

S. No.	Types of Data	Explanation
1.	Service Data	Data a user may provide to a social networking site in order to set up an account. Such data might include a user’s legal name, age, home address, gender and email address.
2.	Disclosed Data	Data which the user posts on their own page, e.g. status updates, tweets, blog entries, photographs, messages, comments and so on.
3.	Entrusted Data	Data posted on other account holders’ page often similar in content to disclosed data, except that the user relinquishes a degree control over the data once it has been posted. Although such data may be deleted, the replication or re-sharing the data, who views it, or the comments which are posted next to it may not be so easy to control.
4.	Incidental Data	Data posted by other users, e.g. comments, photographs taken by others that a user is tagged in. The user does not control this data and it is not created by the user who is the subject matter of the posting.
5.	Behavioural Data	Data collected by the social networking site which concerns a user’s habits and preferences. The data is gathered by recording user activity and interactions with other users. It might include games played, topics the users writes about, news articles accessed, etc.
6.	Derived Data	Data about a user that is derived from all other sources of data.

**Data Source:** (Scaife, 2014)

In India, more freedom of expression in social networks has made governments in different States as well at the Centre jittery. Indian government in a highly controversial decision has urged Google, Facebook and Microsoft to pre-screen data before it goes up on the website. According to the Google Transparency Index Report published in The Hindu newspaper the Internet search giant received requests from Indian government and various authorities for removal of 358 items of which 255 are in the category of government disparagement (Thompson, *et al.*, 2014) <sup>[18]</sup>. This sounds threatening for freedom of speech and expression in digital space. Social networking sites are influential, empowering and to some extent more democratic.

The biggest challenge for internal security of nation through social networking site is cyber terrorism. Social networking sites also invite fraudsters to take excellent opportunity to become wealthy by applying deceiver schemes. Internet media is a major resource for developing serious crime. As Internet is growing explosively, online criminals try to

present fraudulent plans in many ways. Cyber terrorism is simply the use of computer network tools to damage vital national infrastructures, for example transportation, government process (Janczewski, 2008). Many theorists’ scholars raised concern that cyber terrorism is growing at high speed due to dependency of nations and critical infrastructure on computer networks for their procedures (Lewis, 2002).

**8.3 Challenges to south Asia region**

Social networking sites also pose major challenge in financial and organized crime which destabilizes the system. The organized criminal groups have found in social networks a forum to position themselves in the popular culture as an alternative lifestyle. Nowadays, the Internet reveals all the things that used to be hidden, and has become the platform of organized criminal groups to prove their power and profits with impunity (Thompson, *et al.*, 2014) <sup>[18]</sup>. Twitter accounts of presumed Pakistan and Afghan drug

traffickers have attracted the attention of international media as they give the opportunity to take a look at the lifestyles of the so-called “Narco Juniors”, (Kumar, 2006) <sup>[9]</sup> that is second generation of drug traffickers that have inherited the leadership of large criminal organizations.

Social media sites generate revenue with targeted advertising, based on personal information. As such, they encourage registered users to provide as much information as possible. With limited government oversight, industry standards or incentives to educate users on security, privacy and identity protection, users are exposed to identity theft and fraud. Additionally, these platforms have huge confidential user information, and are likely vulnerable to outside or inside attack (Kumar, 2016) <sup>[10]</sup>. The following organized groups pose potential threat using social networking sites:

- National subversive groups (Marxist-Leninist groups).
- Regional criminal organizations (mafia, drug traffickers)
- Opposing movements/extra-parliamentary forces
- Cracker groups (predominantly acting within a state).
- Religious sects.
- Companies (with national capital stock).
- Hacker groups.
- Associations/foundations/ non-profit organizations.
- Political parties /Labour Unions.
- Public institutions (national security agencies included).

Plentiful evidence demonstrates the way groups used social media to pose threats to national security. A predominant framework of South Asian States’ (SAS) national security has to take cognisance of military and non-military dimensions in term of both external threats and internal challenges to its regional integrity and national unity. Threats to a nation originate as much from external aggression as from internal trouble but at times internal factors can corrode national security more critically than any external threat (Subrahmanyam, 2007) <sup>[17]</sup>. National power based on political stability, societal cohesion and economic development would thus remain central to the future of India’s National security.

Social media is explained by a number of tools, which includes blogs, Wikis, discussion forums, micro-blogs, twitter and social networking sites Facebook. It has been observed that twitter is an effectual coordination mechanism for instigating riots and trying to initiate negative publicity (Vladlena, *et al.*, 2015) <sup>[20]</sup>. Since the number of internet users in world is growing, no doubt, the number of social media users is also on the increase. It was revealed that Social networking sites permit for information to spread very quickly amongst the public (Deng, *et al.*, 2014) <sup>[14]</sup>. Social networking sites enable users to exchange ideas, to post updates and comments, or to partake in activities and events, while sharing their interests.

#### 8.4 Concluding remarks

Cyberspace has been changed various old concepts. In this globalised world everyone is neighbour of other. There is no established concept of boundaries. The use of social media has become a ubiquitous component of the ever more interconnected world in which we now live. Social networking sites and the challenges that it throws up in the space of cyber-warfare are indeed issues that have drawn the attention of security and law enforcement agencies in recent

times. Social media is used by terrorist organisations as a tool for ideological radicalization, recruitment, communication and training (Barnes, 2006) <sup>[1]</sup>. In addition, terrorist groups take advantage of it to communicate with cybercrime organisations and to coordinate along with the fundraising activities carried out in part (drug smuggling, gun running) or completely on the Internet.

It is fairly clear from all of this research that social networks are big security and privacy risks. They have this risk because of their centralized architecture, their huge repository of all the personally identifiable information a hacker could ever want, and the general ignorance of the populace to how to properly use privacy settings to improve their online safety. There is also a large risk because many people, especially teenagers, are extremely trusting of other people and what type of information about themselves they reveal online.

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