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Fake News: A Bird's Eye View Gutenberg to Zuckerberg

— Prantim Borgohain &
Dr. Atul A. Bhatt

Abstract :

In the era of internet fake news can easily spread through different platforms. Social media play a vital role in spreading misinformation. The term fake news is not new. In this study the researcher giving a bird eye view on fake news from past to present. Different era of fake news also included in this study.

Key words: Fake News, Social media, False information, Misinformation.

Introduction :

In 1990s the internet was first introduced with the purpose of easy access of information and made accessible for the people. Within the short period of time, it got popularity and grown rapidly. Nowadays with the grown of internet plenty of false and misleading information spread everywhere. As Fake News is found in the internet, finding true information become difficult for the people. Mostly fake news are spread through online either the social media platforms or the use of fake news websites (Sadiku, 2018). Today most of the people use social media in their daily life. As most of the time of people's lives are spent interacting online through social media platforms, most of the people consume any information easily from the social media. They never urge to go with traditional media for the same. Because, news consumption on social media is more timely and less expensive than traditional media. Secondly on social media one can easily share the news with others, comment on it and discuss about it with friends and other readers (Shu, 2017).

Definition of Fake News:

The term Fake News is not new, it has been existed from a very long time. However, there is not only a particular definition of fake news, at different time different scholars define fake news differently. Allcott and Gentzkow defined fake news as news which are traditionally and verifiably untrue and could be used to mislead others (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017). There are two major features in this definition one is authenticity and another one is intent. It means false information which can be verified and sometimes it can be created intentionally to mislead targeted readers. Narwal also defined fake news as type of fabricated story without any basis in fact, but published with a legitimate look and feel (Narwal, 2018).

History of Fake News:

Fake news is not a new phenomenon. Fake news existed before the invention of printing press. When people have lived in groups, rumour and false information are transfer mouth to mouth.

Fake News at the age of pre-printing press:

Before the invention of printing press people used materials like stone, clay and papyrus to write any kind of information. At that time the writings were limited only to leaders of any group and controlling information gave powers to the people among others. So the leaders controlled the information and knowledge to intact their power. Some information that were survived, baked on tablets, carved in stone, drawn in pictograms admire the power and wonder of the leaders. It reminded to the common people that leader controlled their lives (Burkhardt,2017).

Fake News at the age of post-printing press:

After the invention of the printing press, people can store and spread information easily for long time. With the development technology the concurrent spread of literacy helped to spread any information widely among the people. But the major problem was that all people were not able to consume news for lake of literacy. Literate people have the ability to manipulate information. Therefore, the power was on the hand of literate people. When more people became literate, misleading others were more difficult. On the other hand, it became economically doable to print and sell information. Then authoritatively writing on a topic became a powerful skill. The leaders had sought talented writers as their employee to control new information. Gradually, printed information became available from different sources. Books, newspapers, cartoons were created by the writers who got the monetary intensive. Some were paid by a publisher to provide real news. Others, it seems, were paid to write information for the benefit of their employer (Burkhardt,2017).

Fake News at the age of Mass Media:

In the era of mass media information spread in very high rate. Because information can spread easily through mass media like newspaper, radio etc. In January 1926 Father Ronald Arbuthnott Knox broadcast a fake news in BBC radio in the program "Broadcasting the Barricades" (A. Brad Schwartz, 2015). During the broadcast he implied that London was being attacked by communist's parliament was under siege, and the Savoy Hotel and Big Ben had been blown up. In 1938 this fake news report was famously followed by Orson Welles's War of the Worlds broadcast (Burkhardt,2017).

Fake News at the age of Internet:

In the late twentieth century, the internet was introduced to the world. It gave a drastic change in the fake news world. Internet provided easy and rapid way to disseminate fake news at vast scale in short time. When the internet was publicly available, any one who have computer can access it. At the same time, computer developed rapidly and gradually affordable for average person. A new way introduced to the world through internet for producing information and make it available to almost everyone instantly. In that period websites were created for generalized web use, but some of them were fake websites. Some hoax websites were satire and some were misled or deliberately spread fake news (Burkhardt,2017). Due to web 2.0 the communication of web based communities and sharing of communication are increased (Patel & Bhatt, 2017).

Fake news on social media:

The advent of social media drastically changed the scenario of fake news. Social media gave another opportunity to advertising and particular group of people. Social media sites are used to find same minded people, to stay touch with family and friends at any time and easily communicate with them. These platforms provide easy and economical way to share information and to make communication with each other. Social media websites provide short hand method of communication, one can share own feelings through icons and emojis without write something. Users can share any message or information to friends and followers with a single click (Burkhardt,2017).

Using pre-programmed algorithms known as bots, news organisations, advertising, political parties, and many other entities have developed web sites that may be directed to the accounts and networks of social media users. The bots can be trained to look up online content that is similar to that which a user of social media has already clicked on, liked, or shared. After that, they can incorporate the fresh data into what the user sees (Gillespie, 2014). Some times on social media people shared fake data unintentionally and it mislead people and create problems (Borgohain, et al. 2022).

Types of fake news:

There is vastness and variety in the universe of fake news having different intensity and formats to grab the attention of the audience (Shu, 2017). Claire Warden, the Research Director of the First Draft News categorized fake news into seven categories based on their patterns, impact and format which are –

1. **Satire/Parody:**The objective of this form of news is entertainment and satire; it is not meant to harm anyone, but it may be taken as fact. Numerous websites and social media platforms provide satirical comments on politics, celebrities, and society to amuse readers, but these tales have the potential to be false. because they profoundly influence political trust, beliefs, and public dialogue (Narwal, 2018).
2. **Misleading Content:** Misleading use of information to create some issue that is not completely true. As the news can be distorted to make captivating headlines and only small snippets of full article are displayed to audience in the newsfeed. These types of news deliberately create political influence, propaganda or partisanship. Misleading news promotes biased point of view. This type of news seeks to actively influence public opinions. For Example: Gotcha! Union Boycotts War (Narwal, 2018).
3. **Imposter Content:**News is reported from both true and false sources. These fabricated, false sources have a very similar look and feel to legitimate news websites. The fake news websites publish tales that deceive the viewers into believing these bogus reports by giving them a low-class appearance similar to the real source. The entire country's government is hampered by this. As an illustration, aajtak.com is actually aajtak.com.co. Because the majority of viewers will only see Aajtak, they won't pay attention to the domain name. By presenting less reputable stories without publisher information while posing as Aajtak, the imposter takes advantage. This damages the credibility of legitimate websites and reduces trust (Narwal, 2018).
4. **Fabricated Content:**This story is entirely false and was written with the intent to mislead readers and cause them harm. In order to mislead the audience, new content that is devoid of truth and wholly false has been created. The style and appearance of this kind of news are highly exciting. The only goal of fake content is to get likes, shares, and revenue. News bots are typically employed to disseminate false information to a large audience. Usually, the false content is produced for political or commercial gain(Narwal, 2018).
5. **False Connection:**When the headlines, graphics, and background used to promote a story don't line up with the news's actual content, a false connection has been made. This is an illustration of careless journalism.

Because journalists write articles without conducting enough fact-checking and connect disparate events, As a result, the public has less faith in digital media. For instance, it's common to see flashy headlines in news articles and social media posts that describe hot, spectacular news stories. However, there is no connection between the headline and content once it has been clicked through (Narwal, 2018).

6. **False Context:**News is occasionally released without context checking. The information backing up the text might not be accurate. The audience may be misled when accurate news is presented with incorrect context. It is all the result of subpar journalism; when in-depth investigation is not covered, an issue of this nature develops (Narwal, 2018).
7. **Manipulated Content:**Authentic information or imagery that has been altered in some way to tell a different story with the purpose to deceive. To produce false news, real images or videos are altered. Through the use of potent modification tools and cutting-edge techniques, digital images have made it easier for manipulators to alter images. Minor details are removed from photos, colour saturation is increased, people are added or removed, and the context is changed to draw the viewer's attention (Narwal, 2018).

Impact of fake news:

- a) **Societal Impact:** The majority of violent activities among groups or individuals have been discovered to be sparked by fake news that is disseminated on social media in the last fifty years. It also makes the country weak in times of need by upsetting the social harmony and fraternity of the population (Narwal, 2018).
- b) **Financial Impact:**The financial sector disseminates information in an effort to unravel corporate hierarchies and national economic systems. Before the RBI policy is announced, information about it begins to circulate on various media platforms. This information then informs decisions, which eventually has a detrimental impact on the country's economy. Similar to this, misleading information regarding the board meetings of various firms is disseminated, which lowers the value of such companies' stock on the market (Narwal, 2018).
- c) **Psychological Impact:** A study found that when people are given a lot of information, they are more susceptible to manipulation. Emotions and prejudices govern human behaviour. People start spreading the news without verifying the goals and veracity of the data. People alter their opinions after learning information that contradicts their beliefs because they take little to no time to evaluate the accuracy of the information before spreading it, which causes the information to spread like a virus.

The more often we are exposed to information, regardless of how absurd or nonsensical it may seem, the more likely we are to believe it. Additionally, each time a person sees such stories on Facebook, Google, or another website, a small impression is left on their minds (Narwal, 2018).

- d) Political Impact:** Fake election polls and fake news before elections not only mislead the electorate but even influence the outcome of the election. In addition, false information about a political candidate or political party right before elections tarnishes their reputations and is a key factor in their electoral defeat. Thus, it can be inferred that fake news can have an impact on public sentiment and electoral disclosure. Many countries' election administrations have passed stronger regulations against fake news in an effort to curb it (Narwal, 2018).

Conclusion:

With the increasing popularity of social media, more and more people consume news from social media instead of traditional news media. However, social media has also been used to spread fake news, which has strong negative impact on individual users and broader society. To combat the issue of fake news every one should be literate. In this digital era information increase rapidly in every second. To find out the real or true information from the bulk everyone should know the authenticity of the source of information.

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