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Day - 19

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Question:

Critically discuss the role of media and social networking sites in internal security challenges as far as India is concerned. Elaborate with examples.

"Whoever controls the media controls the mind"-Jim Morrison

Answer:

Historical media events:

- 2008 saw the election of Barack Obama as the first Black President of USA. His rise was accompanied by the silent rise of social media.
- 2010 Arab spring- Social media played a huge role in mobilizing people who were demanding democracy and voice in decision making.
- #MeTOO campaign on social media became global movement and helped in demonstrating the wide spread prevalence of sexual assault and harassment, especially at work place.

Relevance of Media:

For a country like India, the backbone of its democracy is the access to information and expression, which helps its citizens to make responsible and objective choices, to promote accountability by its officials, provide solutions to conflict resolution, and also to encourage diverse views of its diverse people. This access of information has, in turn, allowed the Indian media to play the role of the Fourth Estate and watchdog that holds the Government accountable in all its activities.

Present scenario of Media:

- The concept of breaking news has many a times detrimental effect on National Security. Amplifying the fear factor through news reporting, live telecast of sensitive information are some of the concern areas.
- Media has triggered an information revolution around the world that has forced people, governments and organizations, both public and private, to rethink strategies on how to manage their information and engage in an increasingly interconnected world.
- Technology is a double-edged sword. It throws up new challenges in the realm of law and order and security for governments that need to be dealt with innovatively.
- Social Networking Sites (or Social Media) and the challenges that it throws up in the space of cyberwarfare are indeed issues that have drawn the attention of security and law enforcement agencies in recent times.
- Almost two thirds of the users are accessing social media through their mobiles and this is a promising sign that it is bound to increase due to availability of low-cost mobile devices which has become a game changer.

Social Networking Sites:

- India is the largest market for social networking site Facebook after the US.

- YouTube gets 60 million hits a month in India.
- Twitter has 22.2 million users in India, making it its third largest user base in the world.
- These numbers are mind boggling and have far reaching implications in terms of security, law and order.

IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND NEW CHALLENGES:

- For the Indian government, Internet remains the chosen platform for socio-economic empowerment schemes. while at the same time, it heightens the risks of India's vulnerabilities.
- We are also witnessing the growth of the "New Media phenomena" in India where traditional media (mainly television) is increasingly relying on social media to feed its 24-hour news cycles and picking content and coverage led by social media trends.
- Social media's capacity to spread information at extremely high volumes and velocities needs to be tapped into by security and law enforcement agencies to wrest control back from perpetrators of crimes.
- In 2013 evidence emerged from Muzaffarnagar riots where a fake video shot in Pakistan, showing two boys being killed in the Pakistani city of Sialkot, was reportedly circulated through social media in Muzaffarnagar in Uttar Pradesh, triggering communal riots that killed 40 people.
- In 2015, an Indian woman allegedly involved in recruiting people for the ISIS was deported by the UAE and subsequently arrested in Hyderabad. She had been portraying herself as a British national while luring youth for ISIS through social media.
- In April 2016, Mohammad Shafi Armar, Head recruiter of the ISIS in India had recruited 30 youngsters and was in touch with 600-700 potential recruits via Facebook, WhatsApp, and other social media platforms.
- During 2015, Burhan became an icon of Kashmiri rebellion using pictures with a dozen of his comrades posing in army-style combat, which went viral on social media and signaled how the new-age militants were willing to be identified.
- In 2013 Delhi gang rape incident where a large number of protestors mobilized themselves with the help of social media.
- Free apps and embedded social media programs that come preloaded on mobile devices may be appealing to use, but they may be placing personal information at risk.

Relevant Problems for Analysis:

For Instance, ISIS:

The ISIS Social Media Arsenal -

- **Twitter** has been the most successful platform for the group.
- **Facebook** allows the selective sharing of graphic content.
- **YouTube** allows the group to upload professionally produced propaganda videos of executions, captured territory, and life in the Islamic State.

Areas to hit upon:

- Understand the structure of social networks
- Identify key people and relationship

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- Determine the proliferation of Ideas in networks
- Understand and forecast behavior

How to hit:

- Track developments of relationships between people and understand how they use social media. e.g. Identifying the extent and use of social media by criminals.
- Who in social networks wields influence over people? Finding out means and methods by which anti-national elements carry out recruitment and their target population?
- Topics and Ideas individuals and groups are discussing and sharing. e.g. violent/ extremist literature rhetoric or offensive material which may spread panic among people if unchecked.
- To keep a tab upon behavior and discussions on social media platforms e.g. How are criminals using social media to inflame tensions and is their use of the medium changing to avoid policing?

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE FRAMEWORKS A WAY FORWARD:

- Social media is really about interactive design. It is difficult to identify whether the other side engaging you is a person or a malicious actor. Same technology can be used for malware propagation, phishing, cybercrime and misinformation campaigns. There exists a huge lack of awareness amongst citizens, law enforcement agencies and higher levels on the potential of misuse of social media.
- 24x7 complaint review mechanisms with service providers during times of emergency, notification to concerned group/ individual to take down offensive content.
- Law enforcement agencies across the globe are using a superior form of "Open source Intelligence" to engage, collate, analyses and predict, and share intelligence using data gleaned from social media networks, also known as Social media intelligence **(SOCMINT).**
- Quick decisions by an authority empowered to direct law enforcement agencies in a case of social media triggered cyber-attack that needs to be thought through.
- Since most social media content providers have headquarters outside India, the rule of the land at this point of time do not apply.
- Mumbai Police has launched a project called "**Social Media** Lab", the first of its kind in the country. The lab would monitor relevant information from Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and all other open sources in the public domain.
- Government agencies may not be able to match pace with the radical innovations in technology, but they will have to be Proactive in their engagement and outreach efforts in e-governance. Ensure collaboration of citizens and building of secure communities, SoP's which could be operationalized in times of contingency.
- **Last but not the least the Concept of National Security continues to be an extremely challenging task as various factors identify its capacity at all levels of perception, and thus, cannot be restricted to a single definition due to its changing nature from State to State.**

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