

Date

Misinformation: A Threat to Democracy

During series of elections this year, threat of spreading of misinformation seems at large scale by anti-democratic agents using many ways in order to undermine electoral process. Effective democracy demands informed citizens. Many solutions exist from general to specific but ~~gover~~ state needs to understand three points; to consider misinformation a serious problem, to accept that classifying misinformation is often warranted and to ensure freedom of expression.

PART-II

Q. 2 Make a précis of the following passage and suggest a suitable title.

(15+5=20)

Around four billion people have the opportunity to cast their votes in a series of major elections this year. However, the threat to democratic integrity posed by misinformation and disinformation looms large. An effective democracy relies on evidence-based discourse and informed citizens. Concern about the expected blizzard of election-related misinformation is warranted, given the capacity of false information to boost polarization and undermine trust in electoral processes.

Specifically, there is widespread worry about malign influence on voters, be it through conventional propaganda (including warmongering and xenophobic disinformation), unsubstantiated claims about candidates or AI-generated deepfakes (digitally altered visual media). Anti-democratic agents might also attack the electoral process directly, as was, for instance, seen in Spain in July last year, when malicious foreign actors set up an imitation of the Regional Government of Madrid's website just before an election to falsely claim that terrorists planned to attack polling stations.

Several mechanisms to protect the public against misinformation exist — from general educational interventions to specific attempts to counter misleading messages with evidence-based campaigns. But the deployment of these mechanisms requires the resolution of three issues by scholars and practitioners: recognition of the seriousness of the problem; acceptance that classifying information as false or misleading is often warranted; and an assurance that interventions against misinformation uphold democratic principles, including freedom of expression.