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Biggest Threat of current age is
fake news and propaganda

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(1) Introduction:-

Humans have certain rights and liberties which are under threat in this day and age. These rights are often violated and liberties are taken away. The tool to fight said oppression is media but in an avalanche of fake news and propaganda, media is being silenced. The fake news and propaganda is a tool widely used by oppressive regimes around the world. This tool is biggest threat to liberties, whether political, social or economic, and rights, whether legal or humanitarian.

(2) Age of fake news and propaganda:-

Truth has always been manipulated to serve interests of individuals. Every country, company or famous personality has to deal with false news or propaganda at some part of their lives. But in

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this day and age it is so much easier to manipulate truth or spread propaganda.

a) Historic content:-

The Prophets have faced propaganda, the never ending rumors, the kings and generals have all faced propaganda. If we were to look at history from colonizers to fascists everyone used propaganda and false news to erode societies. The Hitler, Mussolini were shown as larger than life. The "leader" is watching over us, was used to indicate benevolence of leaders. This kind of false narrative was always built on pile of dead bodies.

b) Death of Truth:-

The propaganda acts as a quick sand that entraps truth. One can say they are innocent but their voice is too meek compared to drums of lies. Take

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example of "Umbergo Garcia". He was arrested and was deported from USA and where his voice was too weak. People were led to believe that he was not innocent. It took a long battle to just prove his innocence to masses.

3) False news and "Department of Truth"

The George Orwell referred to media or propaganda department as "Department of Truth". The story is simple:

- ① Make a lie,

- ② spread that lie.

- ③ Deny that lie is a lie.

- ④ Watch it turn into a truth.

We have seen many such cases take for example case of

"Abhinandan". The famous Indian pilot. He was awarded second highest gallantry award for doing absolutely nothing. The state run propaganda distorted reality.

Similarly the phrase "Murdo diet" was refurbished by Murdo govt of

Venezuela to hide human deaths to famine.

c) Israel and battle for truth:-

After recent Hamas and Israel conflict there was so much fake news and propaganda done by Israel that aljazeera wrote a piece titled "Israel and what is real?" The state denied any human rights violations even though they were blatant lies. This fake news narrative has also been employed by other regimes around the world.

Why Propaganda is effective:-

The appeal of propaganda is very simple - It deals with emotions. It has confirmation bias and most importantly it lacks critical thinking.

d) Psychological propaganda

First rule of propaganda is that it deals with emotions. It can be sense of patriotism, it

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can be love for family, friends and religion or any thing that binds people. It is always an emotion sold and it can be love or hatred.

c) Confirmation biases -

Humans have something called confirmation bias. We want validity for what we think is right. Propaganda does that. Any outrageous claim can be validated by a broad range of odd content available online.

f) Lack of critical thinking:-

Every false news, every bit of propaganda is logical. If you don't think about it. In world of AI slop and pre-digested content the propaganda is much easier to swallow.

g) Harder to Refute:-

The worst part about propaganda is that it is harder to refute.

The denial of propaganda often need solid evidences. As Trevor Noah once said

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"It is easy to fight an enemy that everyone knows exist, than to make everyone enemy exist"

5. Why Propaganda is a Threat of current age?

World economic forum report 2025 predicted disinformation to be one of biggest threats for humans. They predicted it will cause conflict as well as make people - especially elderly - bigger target for scammers as well as terrorist organizations.

b) AI slop and Fake news:-

The bigger issue is availability of AI generated content which is being used by scammers as well as states to indicate a better or worse world. Donald Trump used AI to show his Gaza plan which was hiding atrocities.

(i) Terrorist Propaganda:-

The terrorist organizations around the world have been using

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propaganda to make themselves more valiant or heroic while making their enemies more satanic. They have been using their propaganda to get as much funding from as many sources as they can. The extremist propaganda has been used to stimulate communal violence, stir up sectarian conflicts as well as starting wars.

1) Technological amplification:-

The technological amplifications of any narrative can result in truth being hidden, ignored or suppressed. The media is often dependent on states or are owned by specific individuals. They determine which voice to amplify and which to suppress. The social media is not much different. The truth is often buried in code while lies and propaganda is treated as breaking news. It is not just the death of truth but the amplification of deceit that changes

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world for worse.

6) A Threat to liberties and rights:-

What is worse stripping someone from their rights? or denying them the right to speak? The rights if they can be taken away would mean they are not rights but privileges. The liberties are at stake in a war against false narratives. The rights of anyone can be taken and they can be denied a right of life on top of that they can be denied a right to make their cases. They can be persecuted by media - They can face a media trial while being denied an actual trial.

ii) Challenge to political liberties:-

Every person has right to assemble, join or make political parties as well as running in election but some times they face barrage of fake news and propaganda. There is

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a famous case from US elections of 2016 where Mr. Donald J. Trump did a campaign filled with propaganda against ms. Clinton. Similar campaign was done against Mr. Biden in 2020.

u Social liberties at stake:-

We have been privy to social rights we like to speak, to read to wave flags, to gather with friends and families but every social right, norm and custom is at stake. From news about people stopping their religious actions or propaganda regarding religious practices is a normal occurrence. Many muslims have been victims of propaganda that they slaughtered a cow.

u Economic rights are at stake:-

Due to propaganda about food in Australia a lot of people protested against "Halal" sticker on their food. The boycotting campaigns

as well as marketing propaganda has led to consumer blaming. The use of terms like carbon footprint and "per person" to consumerize blame has been a time tested tactic of major companies.

2) An Issue of legal rights:-

Legal rights of citizens around the globe are at threat due to propaganda and fake news. The Nazi Germany took away legal rights of its citizens and got applauded for it by its citizens due to effective propaganda. The propaganda is done to justify extra judicial killings in India.

3) Humanitarian rights - a crisis:-

In Chechnya, Bosnia, Iraq, Afghanistan and Palestine, The crisis were dubbed as a terrorist issue while in reality it was a humanitarian crisis.

The denial of truth, has been used by oppressors to justify themselves.

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7. Conclusion:-

The Fake truth and propaganda pose a big threat to human civilization. The only way to fight back is to strengthen institutes, fact check code in media and public education. If this was not done soon we will face a crisis.

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere".

(MLK)
