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Batch 70

The biggest threat of current age is fake news and propaganda.

Brainstorming

How is it biggest threat

Causes	Impacts	Solutions
Political Motives	Democracy & Government	State led
Warfare	Economy	Tech-led
Economic Incentives	Shaping public opinion	Individual
Weak Media literacy and lack of trust	Security	

Outline

1. Introduction

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1- Introduction

1.1 Hook

1.2 Supporting Sentences

1.3 Thesis statement: 'The biggest threat of current age is fake news and propaganda'.

2. Fake News and Propaganda is not the biggest threat. Why?

- 2.1 Climate change is bigger issue
- 2.2 Nuclear Weapons and proliferations
- 2.3 Poverty and inequality

3. Why Propaganda and fake news is the biggest threat?

3.1 Drivers:

- 3.1.1 Political Motives
- 3.1.2 Warfare
- 3.1.3 Economic Incentives
- 3.1.4 Lack of Trust in institutions

3.2 Impacts:

- 3.2.1 Democracy and Governance
- 3.2.2 Shaping Public opinion
- 3.2.3 Markets and Economy
- 3.2.4 Security Risks

4. Way Forward

- 4.1 State - led solutions
- 4.2 Technology - led solutions
- 4.3 Individual Responsibilities

5. Conclusion:

The Essay

"The media is the most powerful entity on the earth. They have the power to make guilty innocent and innocent guilty" (Malcom X). Twenty first century came with the notion of "Global Village", connecting world through different channels specially through information technology, IT. This century brought people of the world together through technology and media played important role in engaging the bigger number of people. But all the innovation came with the price. Now world is facing problems like mis-information, disinformation and malinformation. The increase in number of media platforms is leading to more spread of fake information. So it can be said that "the biggest threat of current age is fake news and propaganda". It undermines the truth, leads to biases and many

security issues, and only multi-layered response can restore the conditions which are becoming more threatening.

A group of people believe that fake news is not the biggest threat of the world. They claim that issues of changing climate is bigger contemporary issue as it is effecting the physical conditions of people as well as environment and is increasing (without) beyond limits. Some say that nuclear weapons and proliferation is the bigger challenge than fake news. It is leading to unrest in the world and peace of the world is at risk due to wars and terrorism.

A group says that poverty and inequality is the major issue, because people are facing lack of basic needs and rights. This is not an individual's issue but of societies of the world. Public unrest is caused by it, conflicts arised from here and

hence the world is in chaos.

But the statement given i.e. 'the biggest threat of current age is fake news and propaganda' is the truth. 'Whoever controls the media, controls the minds' says Jim Morrison. As all the problems and solutions, from individuals to countries, arise from mind, so if the mind is not free, it is the threat to whole world.

With the advancement in technology and its availability, challenges like fake news, mis-information and even propaganda are arising. Whole world, including Pakistan, is facing this issue. 24/7 news cycles, AI deepfakes and social media algorithms are becoming more common challenging the reliability on advancing technology. There are various drivers or motives that lead to spread of propaganda and fake news.

Firstly, political motives are the major driving force that is leading to

spread of misinformation or disinformation. To delegitimise the opponent in party system, fake news are generated and termed the opponents as "traitors" or "foreign agents" creates the biasness in public. Moreover electoral manipulation is becoming a greatest threat to independence of choice of people. As reported back in 2016 elections of US, deep AI generated propaganda against opposing parties was created through various social media platforms. This is also used for gaining nationalistic interests. Hyped up news about enemies and presenting all positive aspects of one's own is becoming a threat to one's free will. eg North Korea does this to control the people. They show all the bravery and strategic power of them to public and coward actions of their opponents and thus control the mind of public.

Second comes the warfare in the world. Countries, having conflicts

with each other spread a series of mis-information or fake news against their opponents and shape opinion of people in the world. The fake news is not just a news. Fake news can be as simple as spreading misinformation or as dangerous as smearing hateful propaganda" (Fabrizio Moriera)

Recent war issues like India and Pakistan conflict in February, India tried to make controversial stories about terrorist attacks and tried to shape their attack on Pakistan as a valid response. Although it was in vain as Pakistan countered the propaganda but if measures couldn't have been taken the world's opinion would've been different. This propaganda can also be witnessed in Palestine war of independence. Israel is continuously spreading fake stories and legitimizing its "Genocide" in Palestine. The world knows yet this propaganda is giving Israel motivation to keep on harming and invading the Palestine.

Fake news and propaganda is used as a tool to gain market incentives. Fake and manipulated numbers of stocks are common which are causing harm to a large number of people. On minor level, we witness fake advertisements to sale the products and to manipulate the choices and minds of people.

Moreover with the entry of crypto-currency, fake and scamming groups are seem to be more active. They attract the people with less knowledge and gain profit.

There's another cause or driving force for spread of fake news & turning it into propaganda that is lack of trust in institutions. This usually happens at the time of casualities. Like lack of trust in forecasting ~~of~~ weather institutions especially in countries like Pakistan and Bangladesh, People believe more in fake news and do not take the words of

institutions seriously. This lead to harm and dangerous conditions sometimes causing loss of lives and other commodities of life.

There are some areas which are impacted due to fake news and propaganda. First is governance and democracy. Spread of fake news in a country by opposite political parties gives rise to unrest in public leading to conflicts and civil strifes. Fake news lead people to hate and they commit extreme acts against other parties supporters. The propaganda against governance issues of Joe Biden led to manipulate a large number of people and thus the hate for Biden increase and whole face of ^{last} elections of us changed. Moreover in a country, elections are shaped through spreading fake news against rivals terming them as "less capable" or even worse "foreign agents". People's minds are shaped by this and it changes the whole meaning of democracy.

Secondly, Public opinion of regarding the greater issues is shaped largely by media spreading fake news. Kashmir issue is one of those examples where public opinion is shaped by propaganda. India claims of being a powerful economy and head of people of and state of Kashmir is influencing the world's view. Pakistan claims are all in vain although Pakistan favours the independence of state of Kashmir but world is still silent when the issue is arised on global platforms.

Palestine issue is the same. The "Genocide", although opposed by a large number of people but still is not subjected to legal prosecution. Israel is doing propaganda saying that they 'own the land' or 'bought the land' is completely fake but is unable to be subjected for advocacy of Palestinians.

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Global markets and public institutions are at competition. People are losing trust in public institutions so fake and a large number of illegal institutions in markets of the world are scamming people. These fake agencies use advertisements and alike signs of legitimate companies to gain trust of public and then they might hack data or use the money invested for different illegal purposes.

Fourthly, the consequence faced by people due to these fake news is security risks. These fake news make people disbelieve in even legitimate sectors. The people involved in the propaganda are not exposed and they hide. They might come and start scamming through other channels since online sectors have less security and trackers for criminals.

The problem of fake news and propaganda is still on ladder. It can be coped up if various legal solutions by state, technological solutions and ~~so~~ responsibility on individual level is taken.

States should draw legal reforms to cater modern world i.e. IT related articles of the judiciary and legislature. If govt takes actions and provide assistance, the problem of fake news and propaganda can be coped up. It must be held on global level as well. Among countries, conflicts can be resolved if proper scanning of harmful and dangerous propagandas is done. Institution like United Nations must add cyber and IT related terms in their codes.

Other than state-led solutions, technology advancement must be used for catering the problematic centres. The countries and people should be taught to use technology to

get away from propaganda. IT companies should shake hands with governments to look over the matters of fake news and to catch those who spread and harm individual and collective lives of people.

Lastly individual themselves should learn about changing trends. They should know how harm these fake news cause to their choices and free will. People should know the difference between listening and having ~~to~~ an opinion. This will lead to betterment of society.

Noam Chomsky says,

"It would hardly come as a surprise if the picture of the world they presents were to reflect the interest of sellers, the buyers and the producers."

In conclusion, fake news and propaganda is the biggest challenge to the present world. It harms

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public as well as personal choice and diminishes free will. The world is facing a big challenge to cope up these propagandas causing big problems like war, conflicts and hate for ^{each} others. If state, technological companies and individuals join hands this problem can be solved and world would be a better and safer place to live in.