Digital Content Regulations: A Select Study in Indian Context

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Objectives

Hate content are the digital data that are harmful due to its inciting nature towards the protected characteristics. In Indian context, need for researches on social media and citizens e-participation with focus on hate content reduction is often reported. This is because society and nation get affected by the hate content generation and propagation. Hate content at the work place affect both mental and physical health of the victims (employees), productivity and financial status of the organization. To address the issues of online hate content, the following objectives are set.

1. To study the nature and forms of digital hate content in the Indian context.
2. To understand the influence of digital hate content in online safety.
3. To study policies and regulations addressing digital hate content.
4. To bring out recommendations for improving digital hate content regulations in India.

Methods and Materials

Fig. 2 Research Methodology

Figure 4 Proposed Architecture for Digital Hate Content Reduction

Introduction

Hatred attacks an individual or a group with an intention to hurt or disrespect based on identity of a person. The harms of online hate may be individual, collective and social. The concept of hate is contradictory. There is no universal definition of hate. Some researchers argue that hate is based on motive, emotion and an attitude. Hate can be expressed with passion: anger/fear, intimacy negation: disgust and commitment: devaluation.

The severity of hate depends on the components involved while expressing hatred. Mostly, the intergroup conflicts are because of anger emotion. As the anger possesses the aggressive behavior, acts as a destructor with conflicts between the groups. Hate speech, immediately after the event (influence stage) will flow heavily on social networks, after few days (intervention stage) will get reduced, after some more days (response stage) reduces to zero level and after a long time once again it may appear as shown in Fig. 1.

The international ranking based on a particular index depicts the developmental status of a nation. International rankings of India on different indices related to society and information and communication technology are examined. Gender gap index is used to measure equality among different genders. The ranking on gender gap index for India in 2018 is 108 and indicates that still more differences are there among the genders. Social hostilities index measures societal hostilities such as violence, harassment, and terrorism involving religion. The social hostilities index score of India in 2016 is greater than 7.2 out of 10 points. Therefore, above objectives are set to address the issues of online hate content.

Fig. 1 Stages of hate speech following a trigger event
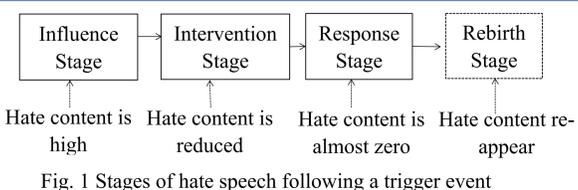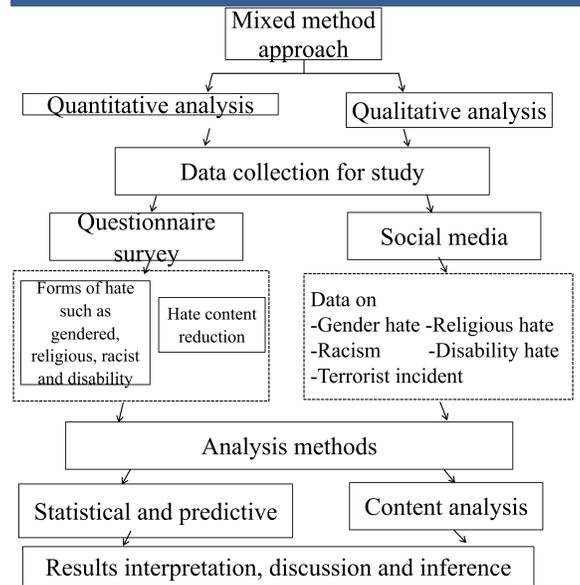
Results

The result of quantitative analysis is shown in Fig. 3. The results indicate that alienated, inclination and personal experience-1 contributes to gender hate content, which in turn contribute to online hate content. The religious hate content contributes to online hate content with the support from stance of superiority, ignorance-1, religionizing the nation and the clothing style contributing variables. The inherited nature, peer pressure, stereotype, unfamiliarity of ethnicity, personal experience-2, skin color and poverty contributes to racist hate content, which in turn lead to online hate content. Similarly, disability hate content contributes to online hate content with the support of ignorance-2, envious, fright of health and able-bodied contributing variables.

The case study on social reforms, honor and hate motivated violence, racism and disability reports the presence of gender hate, religious hate, racism and disability hate, respectively. Another case study on terrorist incident reported that the terrorist act is one of the causes to online hate content.

Figure 3 Path analysis
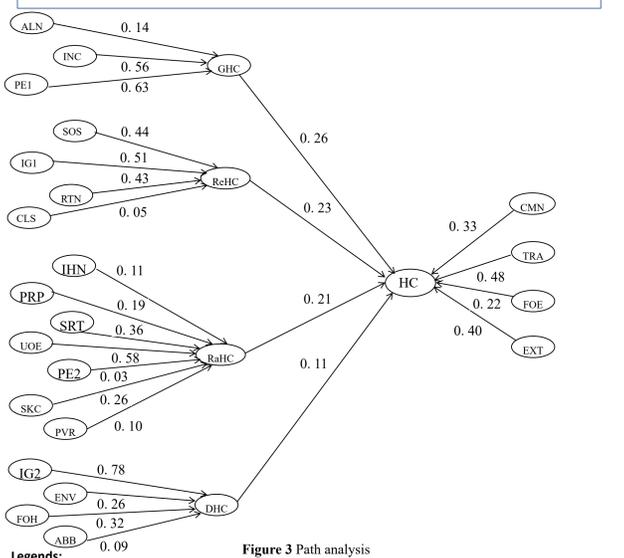
Legends:
ALN: Alienated, INC: Inclination, PE1: Personal experience-1, SOS: Stance of superiority, IG1: Ignorance-1, RTN: Religionizing the nation, CLS: clothing style, IG2: Ignorance-2, ENV: Envious, FOH: Fright of health, ABB: Able-bodied, CMN: Communal nature, TRA: Terrorist attack, FOE: Freedom of expression, EXT: Extremism, IHN: Inherited nature, PRP: Peer pressure, SRT: Stereotype, UOE: Unfamiliarity of ethnicity, PE2: Personal experience-2, SKC: Skin colour, PVR: Poverty, GHC: Gender hate content, ReHC: Religious hate content, RaHC: Racist hate content, DHC: Disability hate content, HC: Hate content.
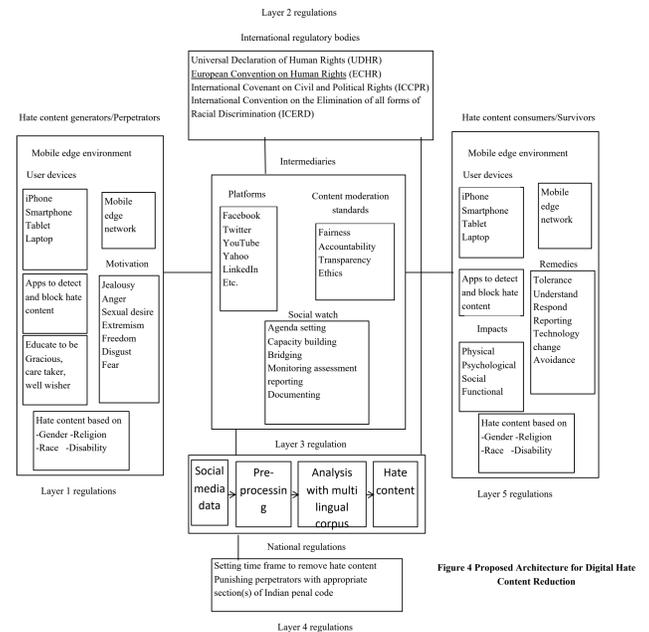
Discussion

Online hate content will be generated more by the persons who experienced hatred, having attitude, lack of religious knowledge, stance of superiority, ethnic unfamiliarity, fright of health, ignorance, extremist behaviour, communal nature, watching stereotypes, differentiating skin colour and observing terrorist incidents. As these contributors are tested and confirmed from different analysis, indeed, they extend the existing knowledge domain.

The theoretical framework designed and tested will be a basis for online hate content research. The identified determinants of online hate content and their influencing factors plays an important role in controlling online hate content by educating people. The proposed architecture, Fig. 4 supports reduction of online hate content at different layers.

Conclusions

Opinions and attitudes towards gender, religion, racism and disability are the main influencers of online hate content. These influencers can be emphasized to strengthen existing hate content regulations in India. As a remedy, the exclusive sections under IPC for gender, racist and disability hate content regulations can be drawn like section 195 of IPC for religious hate content control.

The first objective is attained by studying the ecosystem (generation, propagation and imparting) of online hate content. The second objective is addressed by analyzing social reforms towards equality through online platforms. Different international and national hate content regulation frameworks are studied and compared in terms of regulations for free and hate speech to attain third objective. In the end, to attain fourth objective, some policy recommendations such as separate hate content policy against each identity, educating the people on different traditions and cultures and authorizing social media to moderate online toxic content are made.

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