

Emerging Trends of Mob Lynching: Does Social Media Have A Role In Maintaining Law and Order Issues?

Dr. Satyanarayan Pandey¹, Pawan Kumar Pandey²

¹Assistant Professor, Department of Management studies, Binod Bihari Mahto Koylanchal
University, Dhanabad, Jharkhand

email: satyap096@gmail.com, Mob 9631948222

²Assistant Professor, Department of Mass Communication, Binod Bihari Mahto Koylanchal
University, Dhanabad, Jharkhand

Abstract

Social media has brought dynamic changes in society. It is playing a powerful role in mass communication. With socio-economic and political changes this platform can also be used by law enforcement to broaden intelligence and leverage public supports. However, it also creates some issues and challenges for maintaining the law and order. The researcher, based on a literature review identified the different significant factors influencing the use of social media in maintaining law and order issues. For obtaining the results, the different statistical method has to be utilized to examine the data, collected by the researchers with aiming to improve the use of social media in governance. The outcome of the study will help the formulation of strategy and policies by the government as well as non-government agencies to further improve the use of social media. It will also provide the platform to the researchers to further explore the study on the role of social media in governance issues.

Keywords: Mob lynching, Social media, Law, and order, Communication

1. Introduction

Social media is an emerging technology with the capability to bring dynamic changes in society. It provides cost-efficient and effective means of communication. Engagement is the key motto for social media aiming at the development of the targeted advertisement. Divisive contents are more efficient to keep people online which gives social media companies more opportunity to promote the advertisement as well as profit maximization. Anger and fear are known as important motivations for engagement. (Guillaume Chaslot, 2018). Face book and twitter are introduced in 2006 in India however Whatsapp in 2009 but today more than 200 million peoples are using social media for the means of communication. Social media has open the new vista of news dissemination algorithm-driven news distribution has reduced market entry cost and makes available the reach of new publishers and readers. At the same time, it has separated the role of content editor and curator of news distributors. Social media where play significant role in freedom of expression and dissemination of information with fast, cost-efficient by the way of mass communication similarly it is also meant for the spread of fake news by people. People spread fake news by hoping that someone

else will check the truth of the story for them. Previous researches (BBC, 2018) suggest that people with a lower level of awareness are very much prone to forwarding fake news. This fake news is mostly shared in the form of images and memes in spite of written articles. Social media groups are mostly made up of like-minded people and when they find useful information they intend to share it with the group without checking the facts or reality. Sometimes these fake news travel faster and create law and order problems.

In 2017 during the two days, 7 people had killed due to the fake news (Quint 2017) similarly many cases of mob lynching have been reported due to the inflammatory messages that are being circulated with social media. Even the local administration is unable to control the situation. Since the police are not equipped with recent and updated technology they are unable to respond quickly and efficiently against the mob start collecting and rioting. The spread of fake news is a serious issue and many states are failed to fix the problem. The spreading the fake news is posing threat to the institutional media. Fake news is associated with the belief system and once the false belief is created it is difficult to destroy. When again and again these events are repeated it creates a serious law and order issue.

Contextualizing Research Problem

Today the social media becomes an inextricable part of life. Especially WhatsApp and Facebook is the most convenient and popular way of sending messages. However, there are some negative impacts of these means of communication. They become medium of vulnerable to fake news. However, WhatsApp is the most popular medium but it is also used to fuel fake news and target killing. In spite of many similarities between Facebook and WhatsApp, WhatsApp has one-way communication and there is little scope to express the view of receivers against this fake news.

Dozens of people from Jharkhand have been lynched due to inflammatory messages — some on suspicion of stealing children and killing cows. Often Local administrations have no clue how to stop these inflammatory messages. Contrary to another social media platform Facebook where one can write and comment against the Facebook post, it has limited space for disagreement.

Jharkhand is the state where there are several numbers of cases of mob lynching identified. This incident has linked with WhatsApp (Prabhat khabar). After a number of the incident, Jharkhand Police took cognizance and Organized awareness camp. The government accepted the fact that social media creating problems in a rural area. Jharkhand government used Banner, Poster, TV, Newspaper and WhatsApp.

One of the District of Jharkhand - Saraikelke - Kharsawan unknown person was killed in suspicion of Child lifting there was a message spreading in that locality - Suspected child lifters are carrying sedatives, injections, spray, cotton, and small towels. They speak Hindi, Bangla, and Malyali. If you happen to see any stranger near your house immediately inform local police as he could be a member of the child lifting gang (The message was written in Hindi). Similarly in the Ramgarh district of Jharkhand people were killed by the mob lynching in the allegation of cow slaughtering

here also rumor propagated through the use of social media. However, the causes and consequences of such mob lynching are different but there is a similarity in nature that is the use of social media especially WhatsApp and facebook for the propagation of fake messages and the most of the part of participant is from the rural people belong to the illiterate and economically weaker segment of the society. They are less aware of the technically and educationally about the use of social media.

2. Literature Review

2.1.Social media and law and order issue

The social media has rapidly changed the communication pattern in society. Social media can organize mass without formal membership and at a low cost (Bekkers et al. 2011; Mergel 2015). It creates an opportunity for flexible responses (Thacher and Rein 2004, Pal and Pantaleo 2005), and differentiated from the mass media in the role of user centrality (Andersen et al. 2011, Van Dijk 2012, Chun et al. 2010). Meijer and Thaens (2013) identified the role of social media in maintaining law and order issues. Several works of literature are investigating the role of social media in community relations and crime control (Beshears 2016, Meijer and Torenvlied 2016, Davis et al. 2014).

2.2.Awareness about social media and fake news

Social media play a significant role in mass communication (Pandey and Kesari 2018) and awareness dissemination (Pandey and Kesari 2017, Kesari et.al 2018) it helps in social empowerment (Pandey,2013a, 2013b). Social media is founded with the principle of transparency and openness to facilitated communication, collaboration and co-creativity (Lipschultz, 2015). But still, the complete potential of social media is not utilized in the local administration and crime control (Loader and Mercea, 2011) in developing countries like India. Social media provide an open, democratic and participative way of communication to the citizen (Fink and Zerfass, 2010; Avery and Graham, 2013). Social media is an important source of information for young generations (Jewkes, 2015). However social media is also widely used for the propagation of fake news and these are based on misinformation and inaccurate belief. It is identified that Misinformation is very difficult to correct and its effects are lasting longer even after they are discredited (Pennycook, Gordon; Rand, David G. May 2018). It poses a serious threat to democracy and creating a big issue for the law and order problem. 23% of Americans say they have shared a made-up news story – either knowingly or not. Many Americans believe fake news left them confused. Social media is proved to be most effective during the crisis like a natural disaster, riots it used to communicate imminent risk for the public safety by real-time alert, instructions and update (Dencik et al. 2018).

Most of the fake news is propagated by the people and the base of this news is far from reality. In some cases like the Dadri mob lynching in 2015 and Kathua rape case in 2018 local events are promoted in such a way that it creates sensationalism and polarized the people towards the agitation and communal riot. One of the basic fact that most of the Indian population are Of rural background

with cheap access to the data and having no formal education they are a very soft target to this fake news. They have a lower level of internet literacy and they are unable to know what to be believed.

2.3. Strict rule and Regulations for social media

There is no mechanism or regulation to misuse social media in defense of mob lynching or mass agitation in India. It is observed that most of the people post or forward the messages without verifying the truth or origin of the messages. In India, there is no any special provision or law to punish mob lynching. Only some laws like The Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) under Section 223(a) mob involved in same offence and same act Indian Penal Code (IPC) 153A (promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language etc and doing acts prejudicial to maintenance of harmony), 153B (imputation, assertions prejudicial to national integration), 505 (statements conducing to public mischief) are the few provision which are not sufficient to preventing the use of social media for mob lynching due to their own limitations.

2.4. Local administration and social media

Some time political pressures and neutral or willingly inefficient role of police and local administration makes the situation worse. Some political and economic propaganda like extortion of money and affecting the election with polarizing the particular community is found as the main reason behind this type of mob lynching. (Jaffrelot, C., 2017). However the nature of the internet and social media is borderless and creates a national audience but it drives the audience to the outrage and conflicts. It is also observed that when the local administration shows inactiveness people lose faith and agitate to take the law in hand. Public participation in the local administration and better communication between public and local administration increases the faith and belief in government which leads to a decrease in the influence of fake messages.

Research objective

It is observed from the previous studies that social media play a significant role in the mob lynching in other countries since the primary objective of the study is to classify the users attribute and use pattern of the social media. Further, It also identifies whether other factors influences the attitude of social media users in propagation and spreading fake messages in the Indian context.

3. Research Methodology

The use of social media and its role in mob lynching in Jharkhand India has been chosen for the study. A survey questionnaire was given to the social media users and interviews are performed. Social media users are contacted and researchers have tried to understand the attitude of users. The enhanced knowledge of the user's attribute will help the formulation of regulations and policies by the government, civil society, and policymakers for the use of social media. It will also help in the use of social media in maintaining law and order issues.

Measurement instrument

Previous studies show that different factors affecting the attitude of the use of social media and its role in maintaining law and order issues. Initially, the researcher has identified 21 items for the development of a questionnaire and a pilot study has been conducted with 50 respondents. A final set of 17 items are used to research framework development. The researcher has used a five-point Likert scale to obtaining genuine responses from social media users.

Sample design and data collection

The researcher has itself visited the different district of Jharkhand to collect the data to examine the construct. The survey was conducted among the age group of 18 to 50 years social media users as they are very much aware of the social media. Therefore a convenient sampling method is used by the researcher to the collection of primary data between April to September 2019. After the distribution of the questionnaire to 357 social media users, only 319 are filled the questionnaire out of 275 are used for the data analysis (Table 1).

Table 1:Demographic detail of the respondent.

Age	frequency	Percentage
Age between18-30	125	45.5
30-50	93	33.8
50 above	57	20.7
Gender		
Male	168	61
Female	107	39
Education		
below higher secondary	133	48
Graduate	131	47
professional and higher study	11	4
Income		
Below 150000	162	58
150000 to 300000	71	25
300000 above	42	15

4. Analysis

The researcher has used the Smart Pls 2.0 and IBM SPSS 20 software to framework analysis of the research. In first step Smart pls 2.0 (Ringle et al.2005) is used to formulating the dimension and structural model to determine the association of the construct with the dependent variable. Further

SPSS 20 is used to perform a linear regression (Chin, 2001) estimate the significance of factor loadings and path coefficients;

Scale validity and reliability

The researcher has used the confirmatory factor analysis and structural equating model to find out the validity and the reliability of the constructed model. The validity of each latent construct is identified through convergent and discriminant validity. Where the convergent validity shows the factor loading and average variance extract (AVE) which should be at the minimum standard of .50 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Lin & Ding, 2006) here the factor loading lies between .74 to .89 and AVE between 0.62- 0.70 (Table 2). The discriminant validity (Fomell & Larcker, 1981) shows the inter-correlation among all Constructs, estimated by the values of square roots of AVE, which should be higher than the value of AVE in each construct (Table 3).

The value of composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha is used to obtain the internal consistency of the data which should be standard of .70 (Raykov, 1997). The obtained value of CR in the study lies between 0.86-0.88 whereas Cronbach alpha 0.76-0.82 which shows good construct validity and reliability (Table 2).

Table 2. Scale Validity and Reliability

Construct and Item scale	Factor	AVE	CR	Alpha
Maintenance of law and order (Beshears 2016, Meijer and Torenvlied 2016, Davis et al. 2014)		0.654	0.88	0.8247
Social media can play important role in information dissemination in public.	0.79			
Social media is an effective means of communication between local administration and the public.	0.82			
Local administration should be active in social media.	0.79			
Social media is the best means to know public feedback regarding government policy.	0.82			
Awareness (Fink and Zeffass, 2010; Avery and Graham, 2013).		0.697	0.87	0.7793
We are aware of the function of social media.	0.89			
We know the regulations for the use of social media.	0.74			
Social media can increase the harmony in the society.	0.86			
Regulations (Meijer and Torenvlied 2016, Davis et al. 2014)		0.68	0.86	0.7648
There is a need for strict rules for the use of social media.	0.83			
Spreading propagated messages should be a punishable offense.	0.82			
There should be some limitations to the use of social media.	0.81			

The efficiency of local administration (Loader and Mercea, 2011, Avery and Graham, 2013)		0.624	0.86	0.7999
Communication increases the faith of the public on administration.	0.76			
The prompt action of the local administration can reduce the spreading of fake news.	0.84			
Prompt response in social media may increase people's belief in government.	0.76			
Social media can be used for more public participation in local administration.	0.78			
Use of social media (Jaffrelot, C. 2017)		0.704	0.87	0.793
Post in social media plays a significant role in mob lynching.	0.84			
Social media can be used to crime control.	0.84			
Social media is used for mass agitation.	0.83			

Source: Authors' calculations.

Note: AVE-Average Variance Extracted, CR-Composite Reliability.

Table 3 . Latent Variable Correlation

	Law and order	awareness	regulation	Local administration	social media
law and order	0.8^a				
awareness	0.2236	0.83^a			
regulation	0.3005	0.2521	0.82^a		
local administration	0.3292	0.2886	0.2898	0.78^a	
Social media	0.3416	0.393	0.3498	0.3981	0.83^a

Source: Authors' calculations.

Note: a diagonal elements are squared AVE.

Main effects and path coefficients

A non-parametric bootstrap procedure with 1000 resample is tested in the value of standardized path coefficients (β) (Chin, 2001; Davison et al., 2003), t-value and the associated significance levels for all relationships. The path coefficient is significant if the t-value is higher than 1.96, with a significance level of 5%, using a two-tailed t-test in IBM SPSS 20 software (Table 3).

Table 3. Path Coefficients

Path	Beta	T- value	P- values	Result
Maintenance of law and order-> Use of social media	.161	2.877	.004	Supported
Awareness-> Use of social media	.237	4.328	.000	Supported
Regulations-> Use of social media	.179	3.200	.002	Supported
Local administration-> Use of social media	.212	3.731	.000	Supported

Source: Authors' calculations.

Note: Significance level $p < 0.05$, if t-value = 1.96.

Obtained value of the construct awareness ($\beta=.237$, t-value=4.328, p-value=.004), efficiency of local administration ($\beta=.212$, t =3.731,p=.000) regulations ($\beta=.179$,t=3.200,p=.002) and Maintenance of law and order ($\beta=.161$,t=2.877,p=.004) significantly influence the use of social media in mob lynching.

Discussion

Outcome of the study shows that there are many form and nature of mob lynching like cultural, social, and communal and nationalism but all events have some similarities i.e. All events are fueled by the fake news propagated in social media; People with lower level of awareness and illiteracy are the soft target for this fake news. Insecurity, fear, and anger are the key motivation for all events. Local administration fails to prevent the events due to a lower level of efficiency. However communal riot has a long history in India (Sarkar and Sarkar, 2016) but within ten years a new trend of mob lynching is emerging which is the mix-up of communal and fake nationalism which is propagated by a group of peoples to target particular communities to fulfill their ambitions. They target local illiterate people with the help of social media by fabricating fake news according to their need and agitate people towards the mob lynching and riots.

The outcome of the study shows that awareness is an important factor that influences the use of social media for spreading fake news which creates mass agitation. It is observed during the study that during the forwarding messages most of the users neither understanding the consequences nor check the truth of the messages. These users even don't know the functions of social media and laws related to the misuse of social media.

The efficiency of local administration is another important factor that significantly influences the use of social media. When the local administration shows transparency, accountability, and public participation people have more faith in the government institution, they do not rely on social media and in reverse cases spread of fake messages in social media causes mass agitation which leads to the mob lynching.

The outcome of the study shows that maintenance of law and order is one of the important factor influences social media. Social media is an important means of mass communication it can help in getting public feedback regarding the law and order issues. Proper use of social media is important to spread the information among the public. The communication gap between local administration and the public is an important factor for the misuse of social media and in turn, mob lynching cases occur.

The study displays that strict regulation is another important aspect of social media. There is a need to formulate and implement strict laws and regulations for the misuse of social media who propagating and sending a fake message which creates a problem for social harmony.

Conclusion:

During the study communication gap and less participation of local communities and administration has been identified which prevents them to get public support. Still, the police are not updated with the latest technology and the complete potential of social media is not utilized by the administration. It is important to increase transparency, accountability, and participation. Social media may be the best means of mass communication and information dissemination. It may help in mass communication and getting public support in maintaining law and order issues. It is important to develop the mechanism of regulation and formulate effective laws to prevent the misuse of social media. Local administration should be equipped with the latest technology, assure the local participation in administration and government should use social media networks efficiently to spread awareness among the people and to overcome the communication gap between local administration and public.

Limitations and future research outcomes

However, outcome of the study provides valuable insights towards the use of social media and maintaining law and order issues further it identifying the misuse of social media in mob lynching. Since the study is limited to the small geographical area within a small sample size. The researcher has studied on the basis of only four variable other variables may included in the study for better outcome .A study with in a larger geographical area with larger sample size may show the different outcome. There are cultural and social variations overall the country the cause and consequences of use of social media may vary. The outcome of the study will provide a base for the further study in social media and its role in maintaining law and order issues.

Acknowledgement

The authors are thankful to the anonymous referees of the journal for their handy suggestions to improve the quality of the article. Usual disclaimers apply.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

References

- Andersen, Kim, N., Rony, M., Ravi Vatrappu, H. Zinner, H., and Robin, G..(2011). The Forgotten Promise of E-government Maturity: Assessing Responsiveness in the Digital Public Sector. *Government Information Quarterly* 28(4): 439–45.
- Bagozzi, R. P., & Yi, Y. (1988). On the evaluation of structural equation models. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing*, 16(1), 74–94.
- Bekkers, V., Rebecca M., and Arthur, E. (2011). Micro-Mobilization, Social Media and Coping Strategies: Some Dutch Cases. *Policy & Internet* 3(4): 1–29.
- Beshears, M. L. (2016). Effectiveness of Police Social Media Use. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*. *American Journal of Criminal Justice* 42(3): 489–501.
- Chin, W. W. (2001). PLS-Graph user's guide. Houston, TX: CT Bauer College of Business, University of Houston.
- Chun, Soon Ae, Stuart S., Rodrigo S., and Eduard, H. (2010). Government 2.0: Making Connections between Citizens, Data and Government. *Information Polity* 15(1–2): 1–9.
- Davison, A. C., Hinkley, D. V., & Young, G. A. (2003). Recent developments in bootstrap methodology. *Statistical Science*, 18(2), 141–157.
- Davis, E. F., III, Alejandro A. A., and David, A. S. (2014). Social Media and Police Leadership: Lessons from Boston. *Australian Policing* 6(1): 10–16.
- Dencik, L. and Hintz, A., Carey, Z. (2018) Prediction, pre-emption and limits to dissent: Social media and big data use for policing protests in the United Kingdom 2018, Vol. 20(4) 1433–1450.
- Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. F. (1981). Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 18(1), 39–50.
- Halai, N. (2017) Mob Frenzy And Lynching..#Not In My Name ", *International Journal of Management and Applied Science (IJMAS)*, 3 (11). 40-45.
- Jaffrelot, C., (2017) The Roots and Varieties of Political Conservatism in India. *Studies in Indian Politics (SIP)*, 5 (2) 205-217.
- Jewkes, Y. (2015) *Media and Crime*. Sage, London.
- Kesari, B., Atulkar, S. and Pandey, S.(2018) Consumer purchase Behavior towards Eco-Environmental Residential Photo-voltaic Solar Lighting Systems. *Global Business Review*, Vol 21, Issue 6, Page1 -19.

- Lin, C. P., & Ding, C. G. (2006). Evaluating the group differences in gender during the formation of relationship quality and loyalty in ISP service. *Journal of Organizational and End User Computing*, 18(2), 38–62.
- Loader, B. D. & Mercea, D. (2011). Introduction Networking Democracy? Social media innovations and participatory politics. *Information, Communication & Society* 14(6)757-769.
- Meijer, A., and Thaens, M. (2013). Social Media Strategies: Understanding The Differences Between North American Police Departments. *Government Information Quarterly* 30(4): 343–50.
- Meijer, A., and René, T. (2016). Social Media and the New Organization of Government Communications: An Empirical Analysis of Twitter Usage by the Dutch Police. *American Review of Public Administration* 46(2): 143–61.
- Mergel, I. (2015). Open Collaboration in the Public Sector: The Case of Social Coding on GitHub. *Government Information Quarterly* 32(4): 464–72.
- Muriel Saville-Troike (2002) *The Ethnography of Communication: An Introduction*, 3rd Edition. Wiley-Blackwell. ISBN: 978-0-631-22841-7.
- Nunnally, J. (1978). *Psychometric theory*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill
- Pandey, S, and Kesari, B. (2017) Study of The Factors Affecting Willingness Of Rural Household's to Adoption of Solar Lighting System" Paper published in *Journal of Advanced Research in Dynamical Control Systems* (ISSN No 1943-023X) 9,(17),1861-1873
- Pandey, S and Kesari, B. (2018) Consumer Purchase behavior of Solar Equipment: Paradigm Shift towards the Ecological Motivation among Rural Working Consumers in Developing Countries.' *Journal of Advanced Research in Dynamical & Control Systems*, 10,(5) 363-375
- Pandey, S (2013) Sustainable Rural Development with Women Empowerment: Challenges and Opportunity. *Steward Business Review* . 4, 126-127.
- Pandey, S. (2014). Sustainable rural development with rural marketing in India. 4, (3), 206-210.
- Pennycook, G., Cannon, T. D., & Rand, D. G. (2018). Prior exposure increases the perceived accuracy of fake news. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 147(12), 1865-1880.
- Raykov, T. (1997). Estimation of composite reliability for congeneric measures. *Applied Psychological Measurement*, 21(2), 173–184.
- Ringle, C. M., Wende, S., & Will, A. (2005). *SmartPLS 2.0(M3) Beta*. Hamburg: SmartPLS. Retrieved from <http://www.smartpls.de>
- Sarkar, R. and Sarkar, A. (2016). Sacred slaughter: an analysis of Historical, communal and constitutional aspects of beef bans in India. *Politics, religion and Ideology*, 17, 329-351.
- Thacher, D. and Martin, R. (2004). Managing Value Conflict in Public Policy. *Governance* 17(4): 457–86.

Van Dijk, Jan A. G. M.(2012). The Network Society: Social Aspects of New Media. London: Sage Publications.

Web sources

<https://downloads.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/duty-identity-credibility.pdf>

Retrieved June 15, 2019.

https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/communities/sites/jrccties/files/dewp_201802_digital_transformation_of_new_s_media_and_the_rise_of_fake_news_final_180418.pdf Retrieved June 20, 2019

<https://hindi.thequint.com/news/india/mob-lynching-incidents-in-india-murderous-supreme-court>
Retrieved June 30, 2019

https://www.journalism.org/2016/12/15/many-americans-believe-fake-news-is-sowing-confusion/pj_2016-12-15_fake-news_0-03/ Retrieved August 5, 2019

<http://nymag.com/intelligencer/2018/04/an-apology-for-the-internet-from-the-people-who-built-it.html>

<https://www.prabhatkhabar.com/news/jamshedpur/child-kidnapper-rumor-six-brutal-murders-jamshedpur-jharkhand-video/991057.html> Retrieved September 8, 2019

<https://www.timesnownews.com/india/article/fake-news-whatsapp-social-media-jharkhand-lynching/62105> Retrieved October 12 2019

<https://www.timesnownews.com/india/article/fake-news-whatsapp-social-media-jharkhand-lynching/62105>