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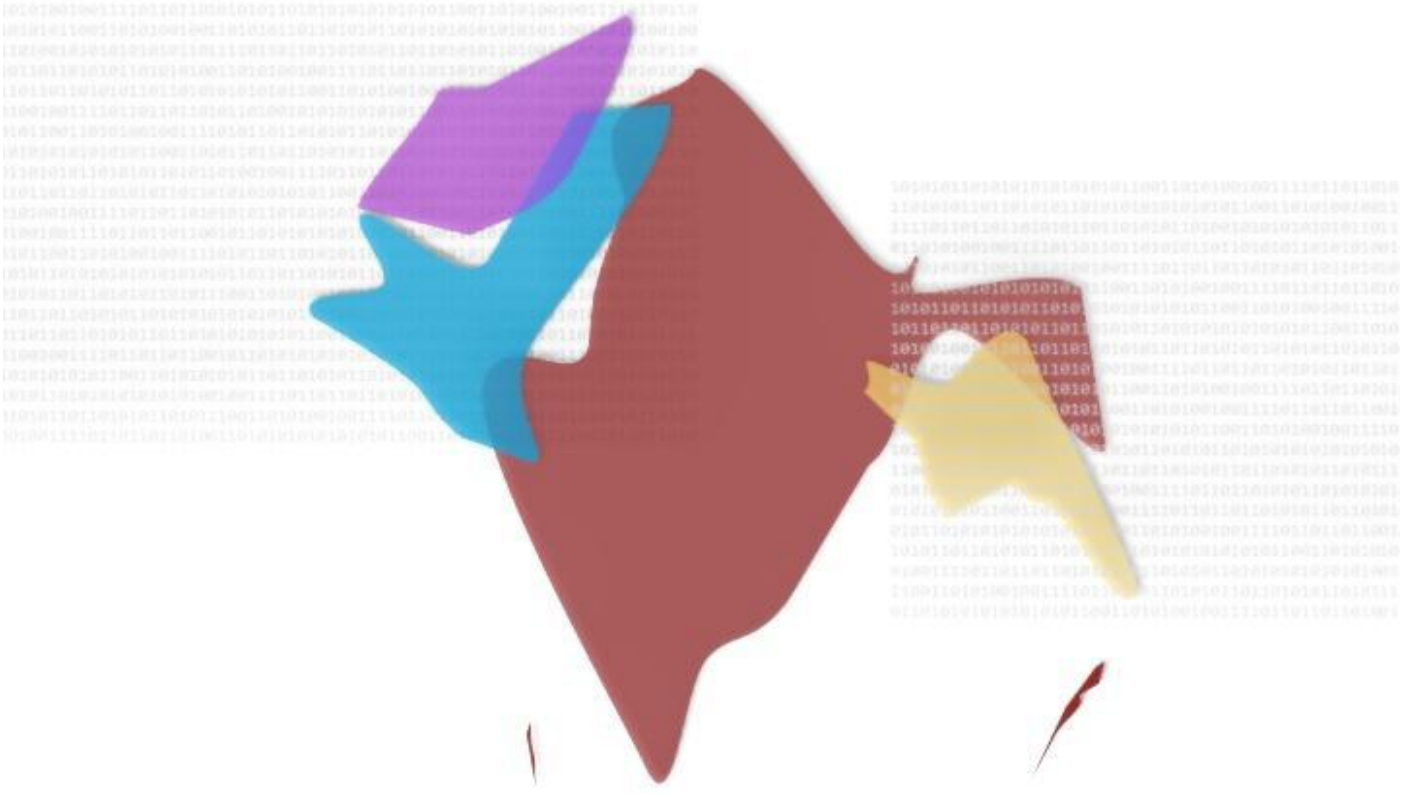
Social Media campaign and combating misinformation.

A case study of the Citizenship Amendment Act



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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that Ms. Muskan Manvar, a student of The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Vadodara has satisfactorily concluded the research report titled **"Social Media Campaign and Combating Misinformation- a Case study of Citizenship Amendment Act"** as part of the internship program at the National Centre for Good Governance (NCGG) under my mentorship.

I, Dr. Shuchi Yadav hereby validate the successful completion of the internship report within the internship program at the National Centre for Good Governance (NCGG). The report submitted by Ms. Muskan Manvar is authentic work carried out by her under my supervision and guidance. I have reviewed and assessed the intern's performance throughout the internship period.

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Abstract

This study explores the Indian government's use of YouTube to combat misinformation about the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the National Register of Citizens (NRC). Through content analysis of 15 official BJP videos, the research highlights the strategic use of multimedia content to address misconceptions, emphasizing themes of human rights and communal harmony, despite limited engagement and reach.

Objectives

The research objectives are to evaluate the tactics used by the Government and BJP to combat misinformation about CAA on social media, explore visual misinformation content, and emphasize misinformation literacy and fact-checking for citizen empowerment and civil society.

Methodology

This qualitative study employed content analysis of 15 YouTube videos from BJP's official channel on the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) to understand the structure and themes of their communication strategy.

Results

The research found that the Indian government primarily used YouTube to combat misinformation about the CAA and NRC. The content focused on human rights, education, and debunking myths. Despite strategic multimedia efforts, engagement was low, indicating a need for broader dissemination across multiple social media platforms for better reach.

Recommendations

To enhance the government's communication and combat misinformation on the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), several recommendations are proposed:

1. **Enhance Social Media Presence**: Increase engagement on platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram with daily updates, live Q&A sessions, and visual content.

2. **Promote Fact-Checking Sites**: Establish and endorse government-backed platforms to verify and debunk misinformation.
3. **Create Short Duration Stories**: Develop 40-60 second videos on real-life victim stories to highlight the necessity of the CAA, and distribute these via WhatsApp and social media.

Introduction

Social media has become an undeniable force in shaping communication and interaction in the 21st century. Social media are web-based and mobile technologies that enable users to create highly interactive platforms where individuals and communities share, co-create, discuss, and modify user-generated content (Kietzmann et al., 2011, p. 241). Boyd & Ellison defined social media as platforms that are digitally mediated spaces that enable users to create, share, and consume information, fostering online communities and facilitating social connections (Boyd & Ellison, 2008).

Social media has revolutionized communication and interaction. Social media campaigns leverage these platforms' functionalities to achieve specific goals, becoming a powerful tool for businesses and political actors alike. Social media campaigns act as strategic efforts utilizing social media platforms to reach target audiences and influence their perceptions or behaviors (Constantinides & Lenz, 2009). They are designed to achieve specific objectives. These objectives can range from raising brand awareness for a new product launch (Constantinides & Lenz, 2009) to mobilizing support for a social cause (Papacharissi, 2015).

In the age of digital communication, social media campaigns have become a double-edged sword. While they offer unprecedented opportunities for engagement and advocacy, they also present significant challenges in the form of misinformation. Misinformation, defined as false or inaccurate information that is spread intentionally or unintentionally, poses a serious threat to public discourse and democratic processes (Lazer et al., 2018).

The digital age has democratized information access, yet within this abundance lies a growing threat: misinformation. Social media platforms once hailed for fostering connection and knowledge sharing, have become breeding grounds for the spread of false or misleading content. This phenomenon, encompassing everything from fabricated news stories to manipulated images, poses a significant challenge to public discourse and informed decision-making.

The pervasiveness of misinformation is amplified by the very nature of social media algorithms. These algorithms, designed to keep users engaged, often prioritize content that

garners high levels of interaction, regardless of its veracity (Bakshy et al., 2012). This can create echo chambers (Pariser, 2011), where users are predominantly exposed to information that confirms their existing beliefs, further entrenching them in misinformation silos.

The study of misinformation has been explored in recent years with much focus on how fake news spreads on social media (Del Vicario et al., 2016; Johnson et al., 2020; Vosoughi et al., 2018)

Combating misinformation on social media demands a multi-pronged approach. One crucial strategy lies in the design and execution of effective social media campaigns. These campaigns can leverage the strengths of the platforms themselves, utilizing targeted messaging and engaging formats to educate users on identifying and critically evaluating information they encounter online. Recently, Meta launched the 'Know What's Real' campaign to combat misinformation on WhatsApp and Instagram. It educates users about safety measures, promotes fact-checking organizations, and warns against deepfakes.

The spread of misinformation is a complex issue, but visuals play a particularly effective role. Their inherent appeal and ease of manipulation make them a weapon of choice for those seeking to deceive.

The human brain is wired to process visuals faster and more efficiently than text (Pylyshyn, 1981). According to Just and Carpenter (1980), visuals are processed pre-attentively, meaning they require less cognitive effort to register than textual information. This inherent advantage makes visuals more likely to capture attention in an environment filled with competing stimuli (McMains & Sokolsky, 2010).

Studies have shown the effectiveness of visuals across various communication contexts. Infographics can effectively summarize complex data sets (Cairo, 2012). Educational videos can improve learning outcomes compared to text-based instruction (Mayer, 2014). Social media platforms leverage the power of images and videos to disseminate information and engage users (McCue, 2018).

Crucially, visuals are more attention-grabbing and emotionally engaging than textual information (Powell et al, 2015). Visuals help to transport news consumers in a storyline and

can override the systematic processing of (faulty) lines of argumentation (Hameleers et al., 2020). Another crucial quality of visuals is their more direct index of reality compared with text alone (Messaris & Abraham, 2001): Visuals bear a stronger relationship to the depicted reality than the abstract descriptions offered by text, and the richer and more vivid reality displayed in visual information should elicit stronger emotions and behavioral responses (Powell et al., 2015)

Digital editing tools make it easier than ever to manipulate or fabricate visuals. Images can be altered to distort reality, while videos can be deceptively edited to change the context of events (Chesney & Wenzel, 2014). These manipulated visuals can then be spread online, appearing authentic and further solidifying the spread of misinformation.

This research follows the case study of the Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019 and how misinformation on social media regarding the same led to chaos and crisis. The Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), passed by the Indian Parliament on December 11, 2019, amends the Citizenship Act of 1955. It provides an accelerated pathway to Indian citizenship for persecuted religious minorities from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan who arrived in India by 2014. The eligible minorities are Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis, or Christians, excluding Muslims from these countries. This act was the first time religion was overtly used as a criterion for citizenship under Indian law.

Social media campaigns surrounding the CAA have been a double-edged sword. On one hand, they have served as platforms for mobilization and awareness. On the other hand, they have been breeding grounds for misinformation and disinformation. The debate on social media has been primarily driven by misinformation, with various stakeholders using these platforms to further their interests (Rustogi, 2020)

The social media campaigns on the CAA have shown how powerful these platforms can be in shaping public opinion. However, they have also highlighted the challenges in distinguishing fact from fiction, leading to widespread circulation of misinformation. It is crucial for the public to critically evaluate the information they encounter on social media and seek out credible sources to form informed opinions on such significant issues.

The case of the Citizen Amendment Act also underscores the role of social media giants in countering misinformation. Platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube have implemented policy measures to identify and reduce the spread of false information, yet the challenge persists (ABC News, 2020)

Visuals are a powerful tool for communication, but their very strengths can be exploited to spread misinformation. By understanding the tactics employed and taking steps to develop critical visual literacy, we can better defend ourselves from the deceptive power of visuals online.

Objectives

1. To evaluate the tactics used by Government and BJP to combat misinformation about CAA on social media
2. To explore the nature of visual misinformation content related to CAA
3. To enumerate the relevance of misinformation literacy for citizen empowerment
4. To discern the relevance of fact-checking for combatting misinformation for civil society

Research Gap

While research exists on identifying misinformation, a gap remains in understanding how to effectively counter it within the context of the CAA. This study gives the potential effectiveness of various counter-misinformation strategies that can be employed by social media platforms, fact-checking organizations, or civil society group

Literature Review

According to a 2023 report by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs[1] India has the world's largest youth population, with approximately 600 million people between the ages of 15 and 34. This demographic dividend presents a unique opportunity for social and economic growth. Young Indians are tech-savvy and increasingly reliant on the internet, making them prime users of social media platforms.

A 2022 report by We Are Social and Hootsuite[2] suggests that India has over 627 million social media users, which translates to a staggering 45% of the population. This figure is expected to rise significantly in the coming years. Furthermore, the report indicates that the 18-24 age group represents the largest user demographic on social media platforms in India, highlighting the dominance of young people in this digital space.

India's youthful population and its high social media engagement create a unique digital landscape. Social media platforms act as catalysts for economic growth, social change, and knowledge sharing in India. As this space continues to evolve, understanding the preferences and behaviors of young Indian social media users will be vital for businesses, policymakers, and educators alike.

Social media in particular has a significant impact on how the public narrative is shaped by mass media outlets. Their influence is complex, though, as they frequently serve as both misinformation channels and possible countermeasures.

Through a variety of methods, mass media outlets unintentionally aid in the spread of false information. Sensational content is given priority via algorithmic amplification, which is motivated by engagement metrics and spreads false or unconfirmed information. Echo

[1] "World Population Prospects 2022" (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2023)

[2] "Digital 2023: India" (We Are Social & Hootsuite, 2022)

chambers also serve to confirm pre-existing ideas, which fosters the spread of false information. Furthermore, the democratisation of content generation makes it possible for anybody to disseminate information, regardless of its veracity, which supports misleading narratives.

Quick dissemination is made possible by social media's sharing functionality. Misinformation can spread quickly when a single bogus post reaches millions of people. Confirmation bias among users, which occurs when they believe information that supports their beliefs, exacerbates the issue. In addition, the absence of context in social media posts facilitates the spread of false information.

In "War of the Hashtags: Trending New Hashtags to Override Critical Topics in Social Media," Debashmita Poddar from Gran Sasso Science Institute examines the influential role of hashtags in shaping discussions on social media platforms, particularly focusing on their potential to divert attention away from crucial issues. The paper highlights how trending topics can be strategically used to suppress ongoing significant matters, using a case study on Indian politics to illustrate this phenomenon.

The research outlines the growing importance of social media platforms in modern society and the pivotal role of hashtags in categorizing and organizing discussions. Hashtags have become integral in spreading ideas, promoting events or products, and even shaping political discourse. The paper delves into the mechanics of trending topics on platforms like Twitter and Facebook, emphasizing their power to spark discussions and influence public opinion.

Using the example of Indian politics, the paper explores how a major economic crisis, such as the onion price surge, was overshadowed by a controversial political issue, the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). Through the strategic use of hashtags like #IndiaSupportsCAA and #IndiaAgainstCAA, attention shifted away from the economic crisis to the political debate, effectively dampening discussions on the former

Mass media outlets have the ability to fight disinformation, even in spite of their role in its dissemination. When aggressively pushed, fact-checking projects can reveal misleading material and offer correct information. Critical thinking is encouraged when users are prompted

to double-check information before sharing it. Ensuring transparency and accountability is crucial, and this involves conducting independent audits of content moderation rules and algorithms.

The spread of mis- and disinformation is an increasing concern for democratic societies around the globe (Lazer et al., 2019). In modern high-choice media environments. Exposure to misinformation can be harmful and can have negative consequences for democratic governance as well as trust in news media and journalism more broadly (e.g., Bennett & Livingston, 2018; Chesney & Citron, 2018; Nisbet et al., 2021; Ognyanova et al., 2020; Vaccari & Chadwick, 2020). Pogue (2017) considers fake news one of the greatest threats to democracy, journalism, and freedom of expression.

Misinformation refers to false or inaccurate information that is spread, regardless of intent to deceive. It can occur when individuals unknowingly share incorrect information or when the information itself is a result of misunderstanding or misinterpretation. Misinformation can lead to misconceptions and confusion among the public, often complicating the ability to make informed decisions (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017).

Misinformation spreads quickly due to the virality of social media platforms. Factors contributing to this include the algorithmic prioritization of sensational content, cognitive biases of users, and the echo chamber effect, where individuals are exposed primarily to information that aligns with their pre-existing beliefs (Vosoughi, Roy, & Aral, 2018)

Mohamad Tariq Banday, Muzamil M. Mattooin in the paper explore the integration of social media into e-governance initiatives, highlighting its potential benefits and challenges. It emphasizes the widespread use of social media globally and its role in facilitating communication and collaboration. Within e-governance, social media enhances citizen engagement, transparency, and service delivery.

Platforms like Facebook and Twitter enable governments to connect with citizens and gather feedback. Despite its advantages, social media use poses security, privacy, and misinformation risks. The paper analyzes social media policies from 26 jurisdictions, identifying eight core

elements including employee access, account management, acceptable use, employee conduct, content management, security, legal considerations, and citizen engagement.

They talk about how Indian government's framework for social media governance covers these elements but has limitations. Clearer guidelines are needed for employee access control and account management. Security measures and risk management also require more emphasis. Recommendations include enhancing security controls, providing clearer guidelines, and addressing gaps in employee training.

Mahnaz Mansoor's study which is titled as **Citizens' trust in government as a function of good governance and government agency's provision of quality information on social media during COVID-19** gives a notable finding that the moderating effect of government agencies' provision of quality information on social media. It reveals that transparent and accurate communication on social media platforms can amplify the positive impact of government response on public trust. This highlights the pivotal role of social media in shaping public perceptions and fostering trust in government actions.

Platforms like Facebook and Twitter enable us to connect with friends and family across borders, share cultural experiences, and participate in global movements. Social media has empowered social change movements like the Arab Spring, where it facilitated communication and organization among protestors (Khamis et al., 2012). Furthermore, it allows for the dissemination of news and information at an unprecedented rate, fostering a sense of global citizenship (Papacharissi, 2010).

In some countries, social media has been a powerful tool for political mobilization, allowing citizens to hold their governments accountable. In others, it has been used to spread misinformation and sow discord, undermining democratic processes (Huang et al., 2015).

Social media campaigns are a cornerstone of modern marketing strategies. They leverage the power of social media platforms to achieve specific goals, shaping brand awareness, driving engagement, and influencing consumer behavior (Smith & Baker, 2023).

The paper **Trends in the diffusion of misinformation on social media (2019) by Hunt Allcott, Matthew Gentzkow and Chuan Yu** investigates the trends in the diffusion of

misinformation on social media platforms, particularly Facebook and Twitter, from January 2015 to July 2018. Concerns about the impact of misinformation on societies and democratic institutions have prompted actions by social media platforms to curb its spread. The study analyzes user interactions with content from fake news websites and stories on Facebook and Twitter, comparing them with interactions on other news, business, or culture sites.

In their comprehensive review, Wu, Morstatter, Carley, and Liu delve into the intricate landscape of misinformation on social media. They address the challenges arising from its dissemination, the difficulty in defining it, its manipulation, and detection methods.

The authors stress the need for a clear definition of misinformation, given the diverse terms associated with it, such as disinformation, fake news, rumor, and spam.

Another paper **Social Media in e-Governance: A Study with Special Reference to India (2013)** explores the integration of social media into e-governance initiatives, highlighting its potential benefits and challenges. It emphasizes the widespread use of social media globally and its role in facilitating communication and collaboration. Within e-governance, social media enhances citizen engagement, transparency, and service delivery. Platforms like Facebook and Twitter enable governments to connect with citizens and gather feedback.

Christian von Sikorski, Viorela Dan, Britt Paris, Joan Donovan, Michael Hameleers, Jon Roozenbeek, Sander van der Linden in their paper Visual Mis- and Disinformation, social media, and Democracy highlights the pressing issue of mis- and disinformation in contemporary democratic societies, exacerbated by the proliferation of false narratives in high-choice media environments. It outlines key constructs such as fake news, disinformation, and misinformation, emphasizing the need to address visual and multimodal forms of misinformation due to their significant impact on emotional reactions and behaviors. The escalating threat posed by visual mis- and disinformation, including deepfakes and cheapfakes, poses challenges for journalism and democracy, necessitating both technical and theoretical solutions. It mentions having proactive strategies like prebunking to inoculate individuals against misinformation, alongside media literacy education and collaborative efforts between researchers, journalists, and online platforms have been advocated for in the paper. Overall, it

provides valuable insights and recommendations to mitigate the adverse effects of visual mis- and disinformation on democracy and journalism.

The research article titled "Political Leaders of India and Political Participation on Twitter: A Case Study of CAA Protest" published in the Stochastic Modeling & Applications journal delves into the role of Twitter in shaping political discourse, particularly in the context of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) protest in India. The study, authored by Jenith Sekar and Dr. Kuldeep M Siwach, employs content analysis to analyze tweets from major political leaders during the CAA protest period. The article's objectives include identifying key political players active on Twitter, understanding major categories of political narratives during the CAA protest, and analyzing the role of political leaders in facilitating digital discourse on Twitter. The analysis of political parties and Twitter narratives presented in the article sheds light on the significant role of social media platforms, particularly Twitter, in shaping political discourse and facilitating public opinion during the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) protests in India. The study focuses on a dataset of 5107 tweets collected between December 1, 2019, and February 29, 2020, encompassing various stakeholders such as political parties, politicians, celebrities, activists, journalists, and web portals.

The Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) was enacted by the Indian government in December 2019, sparking widespread protests and instances of violence across the country. The Act aimed to provide a pathway to Indian citizenship for non-Muslim immigrants from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan who had faced religious persecution. However, critics argued that the CAA, in conjunction with the proposed National Register of Citizens (NRC), was discriminatory against Muslims and undermined the secular foundations of India. This contentious law led to significant unrest, particularly in regions with diverse religious populations.

How CAA Created Situations of Riots and Violence

1. Perceived Discrimination:
    - Background: The CAA's exclusion of Muslims was viewed as part of a larger agenda to marginalize the Muslim community in India. This perception fueled

anxiety and anger among Muslims and secular groups who saw the act as undermining India's secular constitution.

- Example: In Delhi, protests against the CAA began peacefully but escalated into violent clashes, particularly in the northeastern parts of the city in February 2020. The violence resulted in over 50 deaths and numerous injuries. Reports indicated that the riots involved both pro-CAA and anti-CAA groups, and there were allegations of police inaction and bias during the violence (Bhan, 2020).

2. Provocative Speeches and Misinformation:
    - Background: Politicians and public figures made provocative speeches that heightened tensions. Social media also played a significant role in spreading misinformation, which inflamed the situation further.
    - Example: In Uttar Pradesh, inflammatory speeches by political leaders and the spread of misleading information about the CAA led to violent protests in cities like Lucknow and Kanpur. The police crackdown on protesters, including reports of excessive force, contributed to the violence (Jha, 2020).
3. Communal Polarization:
    - Background: The CAA protests often took on a communal tone, with clashes occurring along religious lines. This polarization was exacerbated by historical grievances and a charged political environment.
    - Example: In Assam, where there was already significant unrest over the National Register of Citizens (NRC), the introduction of the CAA added fuel to the fire. The Assamese feared that the CAA would undermine the NRC and allow a large number of immigrants to settle in the state, threatening their cultural identity. Protests in Guwahati and other parts of Assam turned violent, resulting in deaths and widespread property damage (Chakravarty, 2019).

Locations of Notable Riots and Violence

1. Delhi:

- Jaffrabad, Maujpur, Chand Bagh, and Shiv Vihar: These areas witnessed some of the worst violence during the anti-CAA protests in February 2020. Clashes between pro-CAA and anti-CAA groups, along with police actions, resulted in significant casualties and property damage.

2. Uttar Pradesh:
    - Meerut, Kanpur, Lucknow, and Aligarh: These cities saw intense protests and violent clashes. The police were heavily criticized for their handling of the protests, with accusations of bias against the Muslim community.
3. West Bengal:
    - Kolkata and Howrah: West Bengal experienced large-scale protests both in support of and against the CAA. The political climate in the state contributed to the volatility, leading to several violent incidents.
4. Assam:
    - Guwahati and Dibrugarh: Assam, which has a significant population concerned about immigration, saw protests turning violent. The fear that the CAA would exacerbate illegal immigration led to widespread unrest.

Theoretical Framework

1. Agenda Setting Theory (McCombs & Shaw, 1972):

This theory posits that the media plays a crucial role in shaping public perception by prioritizing certain issues and influencing what people consider important. In the context of this research, agenda-setting theory helps to understand how social media campaigns determine which narratives and information about the CAA gain prominence in the public sphere. By analyzing the content of social media campaigns, the dominant themes and information being disseminated can be identified.

2. Framing Theory (Entman, 2004):

Framing theory focuses on how information is presented and the impact it has on how people interpret it. Social media campaigns often employ specific framing techniques to influence how users perceive the CAA. This research explores how these campaigns frame the issue, highlighting certain aspects of the CAA while downplaying others. For example, a campaign might frame the CAA as a national security measure while neglecting its potential impact on specific religious minorities. By analyzing framing techniques, one can understand how social media campaigns attempt to shape public opinion and potentially contribute to the spread of misinformation.

3. Social Network Theory (Granovetter, 1973):

This theory explores how information flows within social networks and how individuals are influenced by their social connections. Social media platforms act as powerful social networks, facilitating the spread of information, including misinformation, among users. This research shows how social media networks facilitate the dissemination of information about the CAA, both accurate and inaccurate.

Methods

Research Title

Social Media Campaigns and combating Misinformation: A case study of CAA

Research Questions

The primary importance of developing a research question is that it narrows down a broad topic of interest into a specific area of study (Creswell, 2014) Research questions, along with hypotheses, also serve as a guiding framework for research. These questions also specifically reveal the boundaries of the study, setting its limits, and ensuring cohesion. The research question has a domino effect on the rest of the study. These questions influence factors, such as the research methodology, sample size, data collection, and data analysis (Lipowski, 2008).

Research Questions for this study are-

1. What are the dominant narratives and counter-narratives presented in social media campaigns regarding the CAA?
2. In what ways has the government utilized social media to address misinformation about the CAA?

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative and exploratory research design to investigate the role of social media campaigns in combating misinformation. Qualitative research is suitable for in-depth exploration of complex phenomena and understanding the contextual perspectives of participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The exploratory nature of this research seeks to uncover new insights and generate hypotheses regarding the effectiveness of social media campaigns in addressing misinformation.

An exploratory design offers the flexibility to adapt the research process as new findings emerge. This is crucial in the context of rapidly evolving social media landscapes and the dynamic nature of misinformation (Brown, 2006). By using exploratory methods, the study

can remain responsive to emerging trends and insights, ensuring that the analysis is relevant and comprehensive.

Exploratory research also is particularly valuable when the aim is to gain insights into complex, multifaceted phenomena where little prior knowledge exists (Stebbins, 2001). The issue of misinformation and the role of social media campaigns in combating it is a relatively new area of study, necessitating an approach that can uncover underlying mechanisms, strategies, and impacts.

The qualitative nature of exploratory research allows for in-depth insights into participants' experiences, attitudes, and perceptions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). This is essential for understanding the nuanced ways in which social media campaigns are perceived by the public and how these perceptions influence the effectiveness of the campaigns in combating misinformation.

Data Collection

Social Media Data:

- Public posts (visuals) related to the CAA on major platforms like YouTube were collected.
- A timeframe was established to capture relevant data.

Methods And Tools Used

Content Analysis

Methods of qualitative data analysis namely content analysis was used to identify emerging themes.

Content analysis is a systematic, replicable, and objective method for analyzing messages (e.g., text, images, audio, video) to identify patterns, themes, and meanings within the content (Krippendorff, 2018). It involves breaking down the content into its constituent parts and coding them according to a predetermined framework. This allows researchers to quantify and

analyze the occurrence of specific elements within the content, such as words, phrases, images, or symbols..Content analysis was used to systematically examine 15 videos from the official YouTube channel of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) related to the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). This method allows for the identification and analysis of communication patterns, themes, and strategies used in these campaigns (Krippendorff, 2018).

Content analysis is a non-reactive method because the creators of the content didn't know whether anyone would analyse it. Content analysis lets us discover and document specific features in the content of a large amount of material that might otherwise go unnoticed. We most frequently use content analysis for descriptive purposes, but exploratory or explanatory studies are also possible for various audiences and the determination of which type to use depends on the desired quality of information or desired quantifiable relationships. Frankel and Devers (2000) provide further reasons for using qualitative methods. These authors explain that qualitative research methods are best suited when the research questions pose puzzles that cannot be fully solved using usual research methodologies.

Coding Framework

To systematically analyze the videos from YouTube, a detailed open coding framework was developed.

Open coding is an inductive approach to content analysis that involves generating codes directly from the data rather than applying predetermined codes (Sandelowski & Barroso, 2007). This approach is particularly valuable in the early stages of research when the goal is to explore and understand the data in detail. By immersing themselves in the data and generating codes that emerge from the text, researchers can identify patterns, themes, and concepts that may not have been apparent using a more deductive approach.

Open coding also allows researchers to be flexible and responsive to the data, as they can adapt their coding scheme as they gain a deeper understanding of the material (Miles et al., 2014). This flexibility is important when dealing with complex and nuanced data, such as text or images, which may not fit neatly into predetermined categories.

Moreover, open coding can be used to identify unexpected or surprising findings that may not have been anticipated using a more structured approach. By allowing the data to speak for itself, researchers can uncover new insights and perspectives that may inform their subsequent research questions and analysis.

For this study therefore the dataset comprises 15 YouTube videos posted between December 2019 and March 2024, primarily by the MyGov India and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) channels. These videos aim to support the CAA by promoting awareness and addressing misinformation.

Steps Involved in Content Analysis:

1. **Sampling**: Fifteen videos from the BJP's official YouTube channel, specifically focusing on the CAA, were selected for analysis. These videos were chosen based on their relevance to the topic and their potential to illustrate the strategies used to combat misinformation.
2. **Coding**: The content of each video was transcribed and coded to identify recurring themes, strategies, and messages. A coding scheme was developed based on initial observations and relevant literature on misinformation and social media campaigns (Mayring, 2014).
3. **Analysis**: The coded data was analyzed to identify key themes and patterns. This analysis aimed to understand how the BJP's social media campaign addresses misinformation related to the CAA, the strategies employed, and the overall narrative constructed in the videos.

Coding Sheet for Visual Data Analysis

1. General Information

- **ID Number**: Unique identifier for each piece of visual data.
- **Platform**: Social media platform where the content was found (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube).
- **Date**: Date when the content was posted.
- **User Type**: Type of user who posted the content (e.g., individual, activist, politician, organization).

2. Content Type

- **Content Type**: Type of visual data (e.g., image, video, infographic, meme, poster, flyer).
- **Media Description**: Brief description of the visual content.

3. Themes and Narratives

- **Primary Theme**: Main theme of the content (e.g., protest, support for CAA, opposition to CAA, educational, misinformation).
- **Secondary Theme**: Any additional themes present (e.g., human rights, nationalism, communal harmony).
- **Narrative**: Specific narrative conveyed (e.g., promoting unity, spreading fear, debunking myths).

4. Sentiment Analysis

- **Sentiment**: Overall sentiment of the visual content (e.g., positive, negative, neutral).
- **Emotional Tone**: Specific emotions conveyed (e.g., anger, fear, support, hope).

5. Visual Elements

- **Symbols and Icons**: Presence of significant symbols or icons (e.g., national flags, religious symbols).
- **Colors**: Dominant colors used in the visual (e.g., red for urgency, blue for calmness).
- **Textual Elements**: Presence and analysis of any text within the visual (e.g., slogans, hashtags, captions).

6. Dissemination Patterns

- **Engagement Metrics**: Number of likes, shares, comments, and views.
- **Virality**: Indication if the content went viral (e.g., high engagement, trending).
- **Key Influencers**: Identifying influencers or key accounts sharing the content.

7. Misinformation Indicators

- **Misinformation Type**: Type of misinformation if present (e.g., false claims, manipulated media, misleading context).
- **Source Verification**: Verification status of the information source (e.g., verified, unverified, debunked).
- **Fact-Checking**: Presence of fact-checking labels or information.

8. Government Response

- **Official Statements**: Reference to any official statements or counter-narratives.
- **Policy Measures**: Mention of any policy measures taken to address the misinformation.

9. Additional Notes

- **Contextual Information**: Any additional context that is important for understanding the visual content.
- **Researcher Comments**: Space for researchers to add any additional observations or comments.

Example Coding Entry

Table 1

Coding Entry Example

Variable	Data
ID Number	001
Platform	Twitter
Date	2020-01-15
User Type	Activist
Content Type	Image (Meme)
Media Description	Meme comparing CAA to historical events
Primary Theme	Opposition to CAA
Secondary Theme	Human rights
Narrative	Fear-mongering about minority rights
Sentiment	Negative
Emotional Tone	Fear, anger
Symbols and Icons	Religious symbols, protest signs
Colors	Red and black
Textual Elements	"CAA = Discrimination"
Engagement Metrics	10K likes, 5K shares, 2K comments
Virality	Yes
Key Influencers	@activist_handle, @influencer_handle
Misinformation Type	Misleading context
Source Verification	Unverified
Fact-Checking	Fact-checked by @factchecker_handle
Official Statements	Referenced government clarification
Policy Measures	Mentioned new educational campaigns

Variable	Data
Contextual Information	Meme posted during peak protest period
Researcher Comments	High engagement suggests strong impact

Note. This table contains coding entry example

Results

Table 2

Visual media content analysis.

Variable	Data
ID Number	1 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o2jcLpu1HHM)
Platform	YouTube
Date	19th Dec, 2019
User Type	Channel (MyGov India)
Content Type	Video
Media Description	Sikh family who migrated from Pakistan
Primary Theme	In support with CAA
Secondary Theme	Human rights
Narrative	Struggle to get Indian Visa
Sentiment	Positive
Emotional Tone	Emotional, Happy
Symbols and Icons	Expressing emotions
Colors	Grey and brown
Textual Elements	CAA= Visa
Engagement Metrics	609 views
Virality	No
Key Influencers	@mygovindia
Misinformation Type	none
Source Verification	Verified
Fact-Checking	Fact checked by Gov of India
Official Statements	Platform by Gov of India

Variable	Data
Policy Measures	Awareness regarding CAA
Contextual Information	Video posted shortly after bill was passed
Researcher Comments	Low engagement

Note. This analysis is with regards to a Sikh family who migrated from Pakistan

Table 3

Visual media content analysis

Variable	Data
ID Number	2 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mgvtl5tkoIU&list=PLGqF2Eq4iV79O8CpOKuF-JpkaGcPXf3gD&index=1)
Platform	Youtube
Date	8th Jan, 2020
User Type	Channel (MyGov India)
Content Type	Video
Media Description	does NRC exclude anyone for being transgender for being at East for being a diva fees or Dalits or women and landless with or without documents
Primary Theme	In support with CAA
Secondary Theme	Educational
Narrative	Connection of NRC with CAA
Sentiment	Positive
Emotional Tone	Professional
Symbols and Icons	Educating people
Colors	Blue and Cream
Textual Elements	NRC
Engagement Metrics	362 views
Virality	Yes
Key Influencers	@mygovindia
Misinformation Type	none
Source Verification	Verified
Fact-Checking	Fact checked by Gov of India
Official Statements	Platform by Gov of India
Policy Measures	Education regarding CAA
Contextual Information	Video posted shortly after bill was passed
Researcher Comments	Low engagement

Note. does NRC exclude anyone for being transgender for being at East for being a diva fees or Dalits or women and landless with or without documents

Table 4

Visual media content analysis

Platform	YouTube
ID Number	3(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BFsg0_Qld-U&list=PLGqF2Eq4iV79O8CpOKuF-JpkaGcPXf3gD&index=2)
Date	7th Jan, 2020
User Type	Channel (MyGov India)
Content Type	Video
Media Description	large number of people in India who do not have homes who are poor and are not educated they do not even have any basis of identity what happens to these people
Primary Theme	In support with CAA
Secondary Theme	Educational
Narrative	Voting Rights
Sentiment	Positive
Emotional Tone	Professional
Symbols and Icons	Educating people
Colors	Blue and Cream
Textual Elements	NRC
Engagement Metrics	284 views
Virality	Yes
Key Influencers	@mygovindia
Misinformation Type	None
Source Verification	Verified
Fact-Checking	Fact checked by Gov of India

Official Statements	Platform by Gov of India
Policy Measures	Education regarding CAA
Contextual Information	Video posted shortly after bill was passed
Researcher Comments	Low engagement

Note. This analysis is about large number of people in India who do not have homes who are poor and are not educated they do not even have any basis of identity what happens to these people.

Table 5

Visual media content analysis

Variable	Data
ID Number	4 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MOJG0n6d0q0&list=PLGqF2Eq4iV79O8CpOKuF-JpkaGcPXf3gD&index=19&t=7s)
Platform	Youtube
Date	19th December, 2019
User Type	Channel (MyGov India)
Content Type	Video
Media Description	migrated with his family from Pakistan
Primary Theme	In support with CAA
Secondary Theme	Human rights
Narrative	Struggle to get Indian Visa
Sentiment	Positive
Emotional Tone	Emotional, Happy
Symbols and Icons	Expressing emotions
Colors	Green and brown
Textual Elements	CAA= Visa
Engagement Metrics	198 views
Virality	Yes
Key Influencers	@mygovindia
Misinformation Type	none
Source Verification	Verified
Fact-Checking	Fact checked by Gov of Inda
Official Statements	Platform by Gov of India
Policy Measures	Awareness regarding CAA
Contextual Information	Video posted shortly after bill was passed
Researcher Comments	Low engagement

Note. Table contains citizen who migrated with his family from Pakistan

Table 6

Visual media content analysis.

Variable	Data
ID Number	5 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V7lC_IiLXmc&list=PLGqF2Eq4iV79O8CpOKuF-JpkaGcPXf3gD&index=1)
Platform	YouTube
Date	23th December, 2019
User Type	Channel (MyGov India)
Content Type	Video
Media Description	Migrated with his family from Pakistan
Primary Theme	In support with CAA
Secondary Theme	Human rights
Narrative	Struggle to get Indian Visa
Sentiment	Positive
Emotional Tone	Emotional, Happy
Symbols and Icons	Expressing emotions, community help
Colors	Green and brown
Textual Elements	CAA= Visa
Engagement Metrics	103 views
Virality	Yes
Key Influencers	@mygovindia
Misinformation Type	none
Source Verification	Verified
Fact-Checking	Fact checked by Gov of Inda
Official Statements	Platform by Gov of India

Variable	Data
Policy Measures	Awareness regarding CAA
Contextual Information	Video posted shortly after bill was passed
Researcher Comments	Low engagement

Note. This table contains analysis of a citizen who migrated with his family from Pakistan

Table 7

Visual media content analysis.

Variable	Data
ID Number	6 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J_fpahCXisQ&list=PLGqF2Eq4iV79O8CpOKuF-JpkaGcPXf3gD&index=1)
Platform	YouTube
Date	30th December, 2019
User Type	Channel (MyGov India)
Content Type	Video
Media Description	Will People be excluded in NRC on religious grounds
Primary Theme	In support with CAA
Secondary Theme	Educational
Narrative	Voting Rights
Sentiment	Positive
Emotional Tone	Professional
Symbols and Icons	Educating people
Colors	Blue and Cream
Textual Elements	CAA= Visa
Engagement Metrics	179 views
Virality	Yes
Key Influencers	@mygovindia
Misinformation Type	none
Source Verification	Verified
Fact-Checking	Fact checked by Gov of India
Official Statements	Platform by Gov of India

Variable	Data
Policy Measures	Awareness regarding CAA
Contextual Information	Video posted shortly after bill was passed
Researcher Comments	Low engagement

Note. This analysis answers the question "Will People be excluded in NRC on religious grounds?"

Table 8

Visual media content analysis.

Variable	Data
ID Number	7 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pjuvjrqfkCs&list=PLGqF2Eq4iV79O8CpOKuF-JpkaGcPXf3gD&index=7)
Platform	Youtube
Date	2nd Jan, 2020
User Type	Channel (MyGov India)
Content-Type	Video
Media Description	Provision of documents to prove Indian citizenship
Primary Theme	In support with CAA
Secondary Theme	Educational
Narrative	Voting Rights
Sentiment	Positive
Emotional Tone	Professional
Symbols and Icons	Educating people
Colors	Blue and Cream
Textual Elements	CAA= Visa
Engagement Metrics	219 views
Virality	Yes
Key Influencers	@mygovindia
Misinformation Type	none
Source Verification	Verified
Fact-Checking	Fact checked by Gov of India
Official Statements	Platform by Gov of India

Variable	Data
Policy Measures	Awareness regarding CAA
Contextual Information	Video posted shortly after bill was passed
Researcher Comments	Low engagement

Note. This table is with regards to the provision of documents to prove Indian citizenship.

Table 9

Visual media content analysis

Variable	Data
ID Number	8 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=09BhzjXeidw)
Platform	Youtube
Date	24th December 2019
User Type	Channel (Bharatiya Janata Party)
Content Type	Video
Media Description	The video portrays visuals of the CAA Jan Jagran rally in Siliguri. It shows how hundreds of people gathered in support of CAA
Primary Theme	In support with CAA
Secondary Theme	
Narrative	Non Violence
Sentiment	Positive
Emotional Tone	
Symbols and Icons	Flag of India and flag of BJP, banners with “India Supports CAA’
Colors	Red, Orange with little Green and White
Textual Elements	CAA
Engagement Metrics	10K views, 1K likes
Virality	Yes
Key Influencers	@bjp
Misinformation Type	none
Source Verification	Verified
Fact-Checking	Fact checked by PIB

Variable	Data
Official Statements	none
Policy Measures	Awareness regarding CAA
Contextual Information	Video posted shortly after bill was passed
Researcher Comments	high engagement

Note. The table analyzed visuals of the CAA Jan Jagran rally in Siliguri. It shows how hundreds of people gathered in support of CAA

Table 10

Visual media content analysis

Variable	Data
ID Number	9 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lUtgcLbq7i8)
Platform	Youtube
Date	14th March 2024
User Type	Channel (Bharatiya Janata Party)
Content Type	Video
Media Description	The video shows Mr. Amit Shah clearing the difference and relation between NRC and CAA when interviewed by Indian Journalist Ms. Smita Prakash
Primary Theme	Explanatory
Secondary Theme	in support of CAA
Narrative	Interview
Sentiment	Positive
Emotional Tone	support
Symbols and Icons	none
Colors	White
Textual Elements	none
Engagement Metrics	4072 Views
Virality	No
Key Influencers	@bjp, Mr. Amit Shah
Misinformation Type	none
Source Verification	Verified
Fact-Checking	not mentioned

Variable	Data
Official Statements	NRC is not related to CAA. CAA will be implemented uniformly throughout the country. The only two regions in the country that will not be under the purview of CAA are the ILP (Inner Line Permit) areas and the regions under the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution. - HM Shri Amit Shah
Policy Measures	Awareness regarding CAA and NRC
Contextual Information	Video posted very Recently after the implementation of CAA
Researcher Comments	less engagement

Note. The table shows Mr. Amit Shah clearing the difference and relation between NRC and CAA when interviewed by Indian Journalist Ms. Smita Prakash

Table 11

Visual media content analysis

Variable	Data
ID Number	10 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AFpkpJ751p8)
Platform	Youtube
Date	28th December, 2019
User Type	Channel (Bharatiya Janata Party)
Content Type	Video
Media Description	The video shows people giving their signatures in support of CAA, it also shows hindu refugees (Kashmiri Pandits, Sikhs) giving their statements and reasons of why they support CAA.
Primary Theme	in support of CAA
Secondary Theme	communal harmony
Narrative	signature Campaign
Sentiment	Positive
Emotional Tone	emotional, support
Symbols and Icons	none
Colors	White
Textual Elements	I support CAA, I Supoort Narendra Modi
Engagement Metrics	8.2k Views, 942 likes
Virality	No
Key Influencers	@bjp, women from different religious backgrounds
Misinformation Type	none
Source Verification	Verified
Fact-Checking	not mentioned
Official Statements	none
Policy Measures	none
Contextual Information	Video was posted right after the announcement of CAA
Researcher Comments	high engagement

Note. The table shows people giving their signatures in support of CAA, it also shows hindu refugees (Kashmiri Pandits, Sikhs) giving their statements and reasons of why they support CAA.

Table 12

Visual media content analysis

Variable	Data
ID Number	11 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vJ9RyIA2j9I)
Platform	Youtube
Date	7th January, 2020
User Type	Channel (Bharatiya Janata Party)
Content Type	Video
Media Description	BJP National President Shri Amit Shah conducted door-to-door public visits in Lajpat Nagar 2, Delhi and Working President Shri J P Nadda in Vaishali, Ghaziabad to create awareness regarding CAA.
Primary Theme	in support of CAA
Secondary Theme	communal harmony, Public Support
Narrative	Public Relations, Awareness
Sentiment	Positive
Emotional Tone	support
Symbols and Icons	BJP Flag
Colors	Blue, White, Orange, Green
Textual Elements	#IndiaSupports CAA
Engagement Metrics	14k Views, 1.1k likes
Virality	yes
Key Influencers	@bjp, Mr.Amit Shah, Mr J P Nadda
Misinformation Type	none
Source Verification	Verified
Fact-Checking	not mentioned
Official Statements	none
Policy Measures	none
Contextual Information	Video was posted recently after the announcement of CAA
Researcher Comments	high engagement

Note. This table contains BJP National President Shri Amit Shah conducted door-to-door public visits in Lajpat Nagar 2, Delhi and Working President Shri J P Nadda in Vaishali, Ghaziabad to create awareness regarding CAA.

Table 13

Visual media content analysis

Variable	Data
ID Number	12 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tVvS6oJY6aM)
Platform	Youtube
Date	3rd May 2024
User Type	Channel (Bharatiya Janata Party)
Content Type	Video
Media Description	The video shows PM Modi justifying why CAA is essential for the country while on the election campaign in West Bengal. He also mentions how TMC can't stop the implementation of CAA.
Primary Theme	in support of CAA
Secondary Theme	gaining vote bank
Narrative	
Sentiment	Positive
Emotional Tone	Hope, Support
Symbols and Icons	Bjp's Lotus, Indian Flag
Colors	White, Orange. Green,
Textual Elements	BJP
Engagement Metrics	328 Views
Virality	No
Key Influencers	@bjp, PM Narendra Modi
Misinformation Type	none
Source Verification	Verified
Fact-Checking	not mentioned

Variable	Data
Official Statements	TMC is fighting tooth and nail against the implementation of CAA to keep their vote banks happy. Mamata Banerjee's party must understand that they can't prevent the implementation of CAA - PM Shri Narendra Modi
Policy Measures	none
Contextual Information	Video was posted recently after the implementation of CAA during the election campaigns
Researcher Comments	very low engagement

Note. The table shows PM Modi justifying why CAA is essential for the country while on the election campaign in West Bengal. He also mentions how TMC can’t stop the implementation of CAA.

Table 14

Visual media content analysis

Variable	Data
ID Number	13 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=65KHfsUSDNk)
Platform	Youtube
Date	13th January, 2020
User Type	Channel (Bharatiya Janata Party)
Content Type	Video
Media Description	The video shows PM Modi clarifying what CAA is. He mentions how CAA is not about taking away citizenship, it is about giving citizenship.
Primary Theme	Positive
Secondary Theme	awareness
Narrative	debunking myth among the youth of West Bengal and North-East India.
Sentiment	Positive
Emotional Tone	emotional, support
Symbols and Icons	none
Colors	White, Orange, Blue
Textual Elements	none
Engagement Metrics	947 views.
Virality	No
Key Influencers	@bjp, PM Modi
Misinformation Type	clearing false claims
Source Verification	Verified
Fact-Checking	not mentioned

Variable	Data
Official Statements	On the National Youth Day, I tell the youth of WB, North East, and entire India that any person with any religion from any country can still apply for Indian citizenship. CAA is not about taking away citizenship, it is about giving citizenship: PM Modi in West Bengal, 12.01.2020
Policy Measures	none
Contextual Information	Video was posted right after the announcement of CAA
Researcher Comments	less engagement

Note. The table shows PM Modi clarifying what CAA is. He mentions how CAA is not about taking away citizenship, it is about giving citizenship.

Table 15

Visual media content analysis

Variable	Data
ID Number	14 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OIO9BuHumEA)
Platform	Youtube
Date	7th February, 2020
User Type	Channel (Bharatiya Janata Party)
Content Type	Video
Media Description	The video shows PM Modi explaining the how CAA essential using facts from history in the Lok Sabha in support of CAA.
Primary Theme	Support for CAA
Secondary Theme	Nationalism, Gaining of Vote bank
Narrative	Debate with the opposition in the Lok Sabha
Sentiment	Positive
Emotional Tone	support,
Symbols and Icons	none
Colors	Green, White
Textual Elements	
Engagement Metrics	763 Views
Virality	No
Key Influencers	@bjp, PM Modi
Misinformation Type	none
Source Verification	Verified
Fact-Checking	not mentioned
Official Statements	Nehru-Liaquat pact signed in 1950 protected religious minorities in Pakistan from discrimination.

Variable	Data
	Why did a secular and visionary leader like Nehru use the term 'religious minorities' and not ‘all minorities’? CAA will not impact any Indian practising any faith. - PM Modi
Policy Measures	none
Contextual Information	Video was posted after the announcement of CAA
Researcher Comments	less engagement

Note. The table shows PM Modi explaining how CAA essential using facts from history in the Lok Sabha in support of CAA.

Table 16

Visual media content analysis

Variable	Data
ID Number	15 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VuK7P-mVYFo)
Platform	Youtube
Date	21th December, 2019
User Type	Channel (Bharatiya Janata Party)
Content Type	Video
Media Description	The Modi government's Citizenship Amendment Act is not what she was told by those who misled her, learns an anti-CAA protester.
Primary Theme	in support of CAA
Secondary Theme	Awareness,
Narrative	Debunking Myths and Agenda Setting
Sentiment	Positive
Emotional Tone	Educational
Symbols and Icons	none
Colors	Red
Textual Elements	none
Engagement Metrics	19 Views, 16k likes
Virality	yes
Key Influencers	@bjp
Misinformation Type	clarifying misinformation about CAA and NRC
Source Verification	verified
Fact-Checking	no
Official Statements	none

Variable	Data
Policy Measures	none
Contextual Information	Video was posted right after the announcement of CAA
Researcher Comments	high engagement

*Note.*The Modi government's Citizenship Amendment Act is not what she was told by those who misled her, learns an anti-CAA protester.

Discussion and Content Analysis

In the context of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the National Register of Citizens (NRC), the Indian government's efforts to combat misinformation was limited to mostly youtube. The study finds a very limited presence on Twitter (now X). The study therefore focussed on studying the structure and form of the content available on YouTube videos.

By focusing on YouTube, it seems the government leveraged a platform that supported detailed, multimedia-rich content capable of effectively addressing misinformation and engaging a broader audience. This strategic choice highlights the necessity of selecting appropriate platforms based on their strengths in content delivery and audience engagement, particularly in efforts to combat misinformation on complex legislative issues.

Content Analysis:

- **Primary Themes**: All videos focus on supporting the CAA. The primary themes include human rights, educational content about the CAA and NRC, and clarifying misconceptions.
- **Secondary Themes**: Common secondary themes are education, communal harmony, and promoting the positive impact of the CAA.
- **Narratives**: The videos often depict personal stories of struggle and success in obtaining Indian citizenship, explanations of the CAA's provisions, and responses to misinformation.

Emotional Tone and Sentiment:

- The sentiment across all videos is predominantly positive, aiming to create an emotional connection with the audience through happy and supportive tones.
- Emotional tones range from emotional and happy (in videos depicting personal success stories) to professional (in educational and explanatory videos).

Visual and Textual Elements:

- **Symbols and Icons**: Common symbols include expressions of emotions, educational icons, and national flags (India and BJP).
- **Colors**: A consistent use of colors like grey, brown, blue, cream, and green is noted across the videos, which seem designed to evoke calm and trust.
- **Textual Elements**: Textual elements frequently used include references to CAA and NRC, with key phrases like "CAA= Visa" and "#IndiaSupportsCAA."

Engagement Metrics:

- The engagement metrics vary significantly, with some videos receiving as low as 19 views and others up to 10K views.
- Despite the official nature and verified status of these videos, many had low engagement, suggesting a limited reach or impact.

Virality and Key Influencers:

- **Virality**: A few videos achieved high virality, particularly those posted by the BJP channel, likely due to the involvement of prominent figures like Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah.
- **Key Influencers**: The key influencers include government channels and officials (@mygovindia, @bjp, PM Narendra Modi, and Amit Shah).

Misinformation and Fact-Checking:

- All videos were verified and fact-checked by the Government of India, ensuring the information presented was accurate and credible.
- There was a clear focus on debunking myths and clarifying misinformation regarding the CAA and NRC, often through direct statements and official clarifications.

Policy Measures:

- The policy measures highlighted in these videos primarily revolved around increasing awareness and education about the CAA.
- There were no specific new policy measures introduced, but the emphasis was on explaining existing provisions and addressing public concerns.

Contextual Information:

- Most videos were posted shortly after the CAA bill was passed, targeting the peak period of protests and public discourse.
- The timing of the videos indicates a strategic effort to counter misinformation and promote the government's perspective on the CAA.

Researcher Comments:

- Despite the official nature and fact-checked status of the videos, the overall low engagement suggests a need for more effective dissemination strategies to reach a broader audience

Relation between the Theoretical framework and the Research Findings

Agenda Setting Theory (McCombs & Shaw, 1972)

The Agenda Setting Theory posits that media plays a crucial role in shaping public perception by prioritizing certain issues and influencing what people consider important. In the context of this research on the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the National Register of Citizens (NRC), the theory is applicable in understanding how social media campaigns, especially on YouTube, determined the prominence of various narratives and information about the CAA.

- **Application to Data Interpretation and Content Analysis:**

Primary Themes: The primary themes identified in the videos, such as human rights and educational content about the CAA and NRC, align with the agenda-setting function. The government's YouTube strategy highlighted these themes to shape public perception positively.

Engagement Metrics: Despite low engagement metrics for many videos, the topics chosen reflect an attempt to prioritize certain narratives over others, such as focusing on communal harmony and debunking misinformation.

Policy Measures and Contextual Information: The timing and content of the videos, particularly during peak protest periods, illustrate the agenda-setting efforts to influence public discourse.

Framing Theory (Entman, 2004)

Framing Theory examines how information is presented and the impact this presentation has on public interpretation. In this research, framing techniques used in YouTube videos about the CAA are analyzed to understand how the government sought to influence perceptions.

- **Application to Data Interpretation and Content Analysis**:

Narratives and Emotional Tone: The framing of the CAA as beneficial, highlighting personal success stories, and using positive emotional tones (e.g., happiness, support) demonstrate the strategic framing to foster a favorable view.

Visual and Textual Elements: The consistent use of calming colors and national symbols, along with key phrases like "CAA= Visa," illustrates framing techniques aimed at portraying the CAA as a trustworthy and beneficial policy.

Misinformation and Fact-Checking: Videos addressing myths and providing official clarifications reflect framing efforts to counteract negative narratives and misinformation about the CAA and NRC.

Social Network Theory (Granovetter, 1973)

Social Network Theory explores how information flows within social networks and how individuals are influenced by their connections. This research examines how social media platforms, particularly YouTube, function as social networks disseminating information about the CAA.

- **Application to Data Interpretation and Content Analysis:**

Engagement Metrics and Virality: The varying levels of engagement and the virality of videos involving key influencers like PM Narendra Modi indicate the role of social networks in spreading information. Videos that went viral likely benefited from being shared within influential social networks.

Key Influencers: The involvement of prominent figures and official channels demonstrates how social networks amplify certain messages and contribute to the broader dissemination of information, whether accurate or inaccurate.

Secondary Themes and Policy Measures: The focus on education and communal harmony reflects an understanding of how social networks can be used to promote positive narratives and increase awareness among interconnected users.

Integrating Theories with Results

The integration of these theories with the research findings provides a comprehensive understanding of how social media campaigns around the CAA were designed and disseminated:

Agenda Setting: The government aimed to set the public agenda by focusing on positive aspects of the CAA and addressing misinformation. The content analysis shows a deliberate effort to highlight themes that align with this agenda-setting strategy.

Framing: The framing techniques used in the videos were geared towards creating a favorable perception of the CAA. The analysis of visual and textual elements, as well as emotional tones, reveals how the government framed the issue to influence public opinion.

Social Network Influence: The role of key influencers and the varying engagement metrics underscore the importance of social networks in spreading information. The data indicates that while some videos had limited reach, those involving influential figures or official channels achieved higher virality, reflecting the dynamics of social networks.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the application of Agenda Setting Theory, Framing Theory, and Social Network Theory provides valuable insights into the government's social media strategy concerning the CAA and NRC. The focus on YouTube over Twitter allowed for more detailed and engaging content, aligning with these theoretical frameworks to shape public perception, frame the issue positively, and leverage social networks for broader dissemination. Despite challenges in engagement, the strategic use of multimedia content on YouTube highlights the necessity of selecting platforms based on their strengths in content delivery and audience engagement, particularly in combating misinformation on complex legislative issues.

Recommendations based on Research Findings

In light of the research conducted on the social media campaigns and combating misinformation regarding the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), several recommendations have been developed to enhance the government's efforts in effectively communicating and countering misinformation. The focus of these recommendations is to support the government's initiatives and to strengthen its social media presence and strategies. The following recommendations are proposed based on an in-depth analysis of social media dynamics, misinformation tactics, and comparative legal frameworks.

1. Enhance Social Media Presence

Recommendation: Increase Government Engagement on Social Media Platforms

Social media has emerged as a powerful tool for information dissemination and public engagement. It is imperative for the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) in the case of CAA to establish a robust and active presence on major social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. Regular updates, transparent communication, and engagement with the public will help build trust and credibility.

Action Plan:

- **Daily Updates:** Post daily updates about policies, initiatives, and clarifications regarding the CAA.
- **Interactive Sessions:** Conduct live sessions and Q&A forums to address public queries and concerns.
- **Visual Content:** Utilize infographics, videos, and interactive content to explain complex policies simply and engagingly.

2. Develop and Promote Authentic Fact-Checking Sites

Recommendation: Establish and Endorse Government-Backed Fact-Checking Platforms

To combat misinformation effectively, it is crucial to develop and promote authentic fact-checking websites and resources. These platforms should be dedicated to verifying information related to government policies, including the CAA.

Action Plan:

- **Government Endorsement:** Endorse existing reputable fact-checking sites and collaborate with them for accurate information dissemination.
- **Dedicated Fact-Checking Unit:** Create a dedicated unit within the MHA to verify and debunk misinformation promptly.
- **Public Awareness Campaigns:** Launch awareness campaigns to educate the public on identifying and reporting misinformation.

3. Create Short Duration Stories for Whats App and Social Media Handles on CAA

Recommendation: Short (40 sec to 01 minutes) audio visual content can be created for circulation on necessity of CAA for real life victims.

To effectively communicate the necessity of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and its impact on real-life victims, short duration audio-visual content should be created and circulated, highlighting the personal experiences of individuals affected by the absence of citizenship, using their own words, living conditions, and stories of struggle.

Action Plan:

- **Content Creation:** Develop 40-60 second videos featuring real-life stories of victims affected by the lack of citizenship, highlighting their struggles and the necessity of the CAA.
- **Distribution:** Optimize and circulate videos on WhatsApp and social media platforms, collaborating with influencers for wider reach.
- **Public Awareness:** Launch campaigns using hashtags and engage audiences through Q&A sessions to raise awareness.

4. Create Conversations around the Stories and Case Studies Victims - Podcasts with Influencers from across the civil society on benefits of CAA. Make them talk about the effects of the denial of citizenship to those being granted with specific case stories of women, children and youth.

5. Activate MHA's Social Media Handles

Recommendation: Increase Activity on Official Social Media Handles

The official Twitter handle of the MHA spokesperson and other official social media accounts should be more active and regularly updated with relevant information.

Action Plan:

- **Regular Posting:** Ensure that the MHA's Twitter handle and other social media accounts post regular updates on policy matters and government activities.
- **Responsive Engagement:** Respond promptly to public queries and misinformation on social media platforms.
- **Information Campaigns:** Run continuous information campaigns to highlight the benefits and clarifications regarding the CAA.

6. Strengthen Social Media Strategies Across Ministries

Recommendation: Enhance Social Media Strategies Across All Government Ministries

Each ministry should develop and implement robust social media strategies to improve communication and public engagement.

Action Plan:

- **Strategic Planning:** Develop a comprehensive social media strategy for each ministry, focusing on transparency and public engagement.

- **Cross-Ministry Collaboration:** Foster collaboration between ministries to ensure consistent and unified messaging.
- **Training and Development:** Provide training to government officials on effective social media use and crisis communication.

7. Launch Pro-CAA Campaigns

Recommendation: Proactively Launch Campaigns Supporting the CAA

When opposition movements such as 'Ban CAA' are trending, it is essential for the government to proactively launch campaigns that highlight the benefits and positive aspects of the CAA.

Action Plan:

- **Strategic Messaging:** Develop clear and consistent messaging that addresses public concerns and highlights the benefits of the CAA.
- **Influencer Collaboration:** Collaborate with influencers, experts, and community leaders to endorse and promote the CAA.
- **Public Engagement:** Organize public forums, webinars, and community meetings to discuss the CAA and address misconceptions.

Additional Recommendations:

8. Leverage Data Analytics for Campaign Effectiveness

Recommendation: Utilize Data Analytics to Monitor and Improve Campaigns

Implement data analytics tools to monitor the effectiveness of social media campaigns and to identify and counteract misinformation trends.

Action Plan:

- **Real-Time Monitoring:** Use analytics tools to track campaign performance and public sentiment.

- **Adaptive Strategies:** Adapt and refine campaigns based on data-driven insights.
- **Impact Assessment:** Regularly assess the impact of campaigns on public opinion and misinformation levels.

9. Promote Media Literacy

Recommendation: Introduce Media Literacy Programs

Educate the public on media literacy to help them critically evaluate information and recognize misinformation.

Action Plan:

- **Educational Initiatives:** Develop and implement media literacy programs in schools, colleges, and community centers.
- **Public Workshops:** Organize workshops and seminars for different demographic groups to enhance media literacy.
- **Collaborative Efforts:** Partner with educational institutions and non-profits to promote media literacy.

10. Establish a Rapid Response Team

Recommendation: Create a Rapid Response Team for Misinformation Management

Establish a dedicated team to monitor, identify, and respond to misinformation swiftly and effectively.

Action Plan:

- **24/7 Monitoring:** Implement round-the-clock monitoring of social media platforms for misinformation related to the CAA.
- **Swift Response:** Develop protocols for rapid response to misinformation, including corrections and clarifications.

- **Public Reporting Mechanism:** Create a mechanism for the public to report suspected misinformation directly to the team.

11. Foster Collaboration with Tech Companies

Recommendation: Partner with Social Media Platforms to Combat Misinformation

Collaborate with major social media platforms to develop and implement effective strategies for identifying and mitigating misinformation.

Action Plan:

- **Joint Initiatives:** Work with social media companies to create algorithms and tools that can detect and flag misinformation related to the CAA.
- **Regular Communication:** Establish regular communication channels between government agencies and social media platforms to ensure timely updates and actions.
- **Public Awareness:** Launch joint campaigns with social media companies to educate users on how to identify and report misinformation.

12. Strengthen Community Engagement Programs

Recommendation: Enhance Community Engagement to Build Trust and Spread Accurate Information

Develop community-based programs to engage directly with citizens, providing accurate information and addressing their concerns regarding the CAA.

Action Plan:

- **Local Outreach:** Organize town hall meetings, community forums, and workshops in various regions to discuss the CAA and its implications.
- **Community Leaders:** Collaborate with local leaders, influencers, and trusted community figures to disseminate accurate information and counteract misinformation.

- **Feedback Mechanism:** Implement feedback mechanisms to gather public input and address any misconceptions or concerns in real-time.

Conclusion

These recommendations aim to enhance the Government's ability to effectively communicate and manage information related to the Citizenship Amendment Act. By strengthening social media presence, promoting authentic fact-checking, enacting comprehensive riot management laws, referencing international best practices, activating official social media handles, enhancing ministry-wide social media strategies, launching proactive campaigns, leveraging data analytics, promoting media literacy, and establishing a rapid response team, the government can significantly improve its engagement with the public and combat misinformation more effectively. By partnering with tech companies and strengthening community engagement programs, the government can build a more robust and responsive communication framework. These steps will ensure that the government remains transparent, responsive, and proactive in addressing public concerns and misinformation surrounding the CAA

Conclusion

This research delved into the Indian government's social media campaigns to combat misinformation surrounding the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the National Register of Citizens (NRC). The study found that efforts were primarily focused on YouTube, with limited presence on other platforms like Twitter (now X). The analysis of YouTube content revealed a strategic use of multimedia to engage viewers and clarify misconceptions about the CAA.

Key findings from the content analysis showed that the videos primarily emphasized themes of human rights, education on CAA and NRC, and addressing misinformation. Secondary themes included communal harmony and the positive impacts of the CAA. The videos often featured personal stories, used positive emotional tones, and incorporated national symbols and specific colors to evoke trust and calm. Despite these efforts, the engagement metrics varied, with many videos receiving low views, indicating a limited reach.

The study underscores the importance of choosing the right platforms for effective communication. By focusing on YouTube, the government leveraged the platform’s capability to deliver detailed and engaging content. However, the limited engagement suggests a need for broader dissemination strategies across multiple social media platforms to reach a wider audience.

Incorporating theories like Agenda Setting, Framing, and Social Network Theory, this research highlights how the government’s strategic content creation and dissemination efforts aimed to influence public perception positively. Moving forward, it is recommended that the government enhance its social media presence, promote fact-checking initiatives, and create short, impactful stories for broader circulation to effectively combat misinformation about the CAA.

Limitations and Further Scope

Platform Exclusivity:

The research exclusively analyzed content from YouTube, which may not provide a comprehensive view of the social media landscape. Other platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp play significant roles in disseminating information and misinformation. By focusing solely on YouTube, the research might overlook critical data and trends present on these other platforms.

Short Time Frame:

The research was conducted over a period of three months. Social media trends and the spread of misinformation can vary significantly over time. A longer time frame might capture more nuanced shifts in public opinion, the evolution of misinformation narratives, and the effectiveness of counter-campaigns.

Government Social Media Presence:

Despite efforts to use social media, the government's presence and engagement were limited. The effectiveness of combating misinformation heavily depends on the reach and engagement of the disseminating entity. The limited social media presence of the government might have hindered the potential impact of their campaigns, leading to insufficient coverage and less effective countermeasures.

Engagement Metrics:

The study primarily analyzed engagement metrics (views, likes, comments) without deeper engagement analytics. While views and likes provide some indication of reach, they do not fully capture the depth of user engagement or the effectiveness of the content in changing opinions. Qualitative analysis of comments and sentiment analysis could offer more insights into audience reactions and the spread of misinformation.

Homogeneous Sample:

The research analyzed content predominantly from two channels (MyGov India and Bharatiya Janata Party).This might result in a homogeneous sample that reflects a singular narrative. Including videos from a broader range of sources, including independent media, opposition parties, and civil society groups, could provide a more balanced and comprehensive view of the discourse surrounding the CAA.

Absence of Offline Context:

The research did not integrate offline context and events with online data. Social media activity is often influenced by offline events such as protests, public speeches, and traditional media coverage. Without considering these offline factors, the research might miss important triggers and influences on online discourse.

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