# Corruptions On Social Media: A Study Of Digital Deception

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**ABSTRACT:** Corruption is no longer limited to politics or the administrative sphere; rather, digital deception has gradually become a silent disease of the digital society. In today's technology-dependent society, corruption has also become digitalized due to the rapid development of information technology and the continuous spread of the internet. Social media has gained immense popularity among people in the past few decades. Just as social media has brought the distant world closer to us and has expanded communication, the authenticity or transparency of this communication is constantly facing challenges. People sometimes share various personal information related to their daily lives on social media. Some unscrupulous people use that information for their own benefit and try to trap innocent people for exploitation. Despite the various positive aspects of social media, it has emerged as a culture of digital corruption today. Nowadays, rather than the traditional forms of corruption, fake profiles, page reviews, fake followers, views, or likes on social media are used to distort the authenticity and transparency of information and present it to the people through all these processes. As a result, the question arises as to how the standards of authenticity, morality, and trust can be reconstructed in this era of digitalization. The overall objectives of this research are: (1) To analyze the different forms and nature of corruption on social media platforms and to explore how it is conducted. (2) To identify how personal and social credibility is damaged as a result of these corruptions. (3) To understand the socio-economic and moral impact of this corruption. (4) To provide recommendations for establishing digital ethics and transparency. The study adopts an analytical research methodology and is primarily based on secondary sources such as official documents, scholarly articles, and policy papers. The findings will contribute to a deeper understanding of these questions so that ethical transparency and social accountability can be ensured in digital policymaking in the future.


**Key words:** Corruption, Digital Deception, Social Media, Ethical transparency, Policy-making.

## Introduction

Social media has become an indispensable part of our daily lives in the present times. Platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, and YouTube have not only become a means of personal communication but have also had a huge impact on political, social and economic processes. Especially in the Indian context where the population is large and the dynamics of information flow are fast, the impact of social media has become more important.

Although social media is a fast-spreading medium, it is also increasingly being used as a tool for corruption. In the social and political sphere, distortion of information, spreading fake news, influencing public opinion in various ways, concealing financial transactions and presenting unethical activities as normal - many such strategies are being implemented through social media **(Kumar & Sharma, 2021).** This problem is becoming more pronounced these days due to the complexity of India's political and administrative structure.

While the use of social media in the Indian context is positive in many ways, its misuse can have long-term effects on society, politics, and the economy. For example, spreading false information in election campaigns, promoting illegal transactions in the corporate sector, or facilitating corruption through leaks of information about government projects - such incidents reduce public trust in society and pose challenges to justice **(Mishra 2022; Singh 2023).**

This research paper will analyze the various forms of corruption and its effects through social media and will make an attempt to highlight its social, political and economic implications in the Indian context. In addition, this paper will also include possible strategies and policy recommendations to prevent the misuse of social media.

Social media is not just a means of communication; it is a powerful social and political tool, which, when used properly, can bring about development and public welfare in society, but when misused, can also become a powerful tool for corruption. Therefore, it is very important to deeply analyze its impact and use in the Indian context.

## ❖ Nature and Types of Corruption on Social Media

With the advancement of technology, crime has also become digitalized. Just as social media has become one of the most powerful means of communication in recent times, the trend of committing crimes using social media is also increasing. Social media like Facebook, Twitter (x), Instagram, Telegram, etc., are being used by a large number of people on a daily basis **(Singh & Verma, 2023).** On all these platforms, they share their various personal information (such as happiness, sadness, disappointment, travel, and news of joy); they get to know many people, both known and unknown. Since people now share almost everything about their daily lives on these platforms, anyone can

monitor their every move, and corrupt people take advantage of this. Later, they took advantage of the helpless condition of those people, gained their trust, and assured them that they would try to improve their situation **(Mishra, 2022).**

## Creation of a Fake Profile

A fake profile on social media is an online identity that is not real. Individuals or organizations create accounts on social media using fake names, pictures, and information to hide their real identities. These profiles are usually used for political campaigning, financial gain, and identity theft **(Rao, 2020**). In the process of creating fake profiles, an account is first created using the name of a popular personality, political leader, or company. Then, some real accounts are added as friends or followers to this profile to make this fake account look realistic (**Gupta & Joshi, 2021**). Then, by sharing news posts or videos on social media using this fake profile, some unscrupulous individuals create confusion among the public and spread influence.

For example, during various Lok Sabha elections in India, supporters of several political parties use this tactic. They influence public opinion by criticizing the opposition party and spreading fake comments of popular personalities from fake profiles. Similarly, corporates often use fake profiles to spread false or negative information about their competitors **(Mishra, 2022).** The impact of this process is profound and far-reaching, such as damaging public trust, distorting social and political opinion, and putting personal and corporate security at risk.

## Fake Likes, Views and Followers

Many people buy fake likes, views and followers to show off their popularity or influence on social media. This distorts digital credibility and social influence. Usually, thousands of likes, comments and followers are created using software or bots. The number and influence of posts are increased by using fake accounts and fake friend networks. People are also misled by spreading false information by manipulating product or service reviews. Several brands on Indian e-commerce platforms have used such tactics to increase the popularity of their products, while at the same time giving many negative reviews to reduce the popularity of competitors to increase their social influence. This has damaged consumer trust and created an environment of unethical competition in the market **(Gupta & Joshi, 2021).**

## Fake News and Misinformation

Public opinion, political campaigns and economic activities are influenced in various ways by the spread of fake information and/or false news. The strategy of spreading fake news is often to use sensational headlines, which attract the attention of the reader. The information is distorted using short videos or images and an attempt is made to make the news appear realistic by citing fake sources **(Mishra, 2022).** Such activities are often observed in the electoral context of India. Many false health

information was disseminated on social media, which created risks to public health. Its impact was to create confusion in society, distortion of public opinion and moral risks related to health, education and safety.

## Theft of Personal Information

On social media, financial or political benefits are often obtained by stealing users' personal information, banking information or online account information. In this process, phishing links are usually sent, and when clicked by the user, their personal information is stolen. In addition, social engineering techniques are used to lure the user into providing information voluntarily. Incidents of user bank information being stolen through phishing links are often heard on various social media platforms **(Kumar & Sharma, 2022).** User information is also stolen from various online educational institutions or e-commerce sites and fraudulent transactions are made. As a result, the user suffers economic losses, personal security is compromised and social trust is threatened.

## Online Trolling and Harassment

Online trolling and harassment refer to the act of mentally harming a person, threatening them, or abusing the power of a group to troll another person or group on social media platforms. In this case, insulting posts are often made on social media targeting a specific person or group, or threats are also made for political or social purposes. Many times, bots or fake profiles are used to spread these trolling posts and an attempt is made to increase the reaction. We often see various videos and posts of this trolling on social media. As a result, fear and division are created in society, personal safety and social trust are reduced, and mental and social harm are caused to the common man. Similarly, sometimes threats or propaganda are spread against political and religious groups using social media.

Although social media is an essential part of our daily lives, it has created new challenges for personal credibility. Users often share their personal information and various information about their professional life online. When this information falls into the hands of some unscrupulous individuals, social media users have been victims of looting at various times. Personal prestige and social status are also being damaged through online trolling or false accusations. As a result of this process, people are now becoming cautious and their trust in social media is decreasing.

In addition to personal damage, transparency is also being disrupted at the social level due to fake news or digital fraud on social media. Public opinion is distorted by spreading various misleading information about fake news, posts or social movements. During elections in India, false information is spread on social media in different states which also affects the attitude of voters. As a result of this process, doubts are created among the people about the authenticity of media information and people lose trust in each other.

## ❖ Impact of Corruption on Social Media

Fake profiles, false information, digital fraud and trolling on social media are making individuals wary, weakening social relationships and eroding public trust in the media. In the Indian context, this impact is clearly visible in elections, social movements and corporate affairs. Corruption through social media is not just a means of personal harm or distortion of information, it has a profound impact on the social, economic and political structures.

## Social Impact

The most obvious impact of corruption through social media is in the social sphere. Misinformation, fake profiles, fake news and digital fraud create confusion and distrust in society. For example, in some Indian states, public opinion is influenced by spreading fake news during elections. Such activities create divisions in society and increase the risk of social conflict. On the other hand, during the Covid-19 pandemic, false health advice was spread on social media to create panic among the public. In addition, at different times, various misleading information about religious or political controversies has been spread on social media, which has led to an increase in violence and unrest in society.

## Economic Impact

Corruption through social media has become a direct cause of economic loss. Fake Profiles are impacting businesses and economic activities through fake product reviews, online scams and digital fraud. For example, users make wrong decisions due to fake reviews and false advertising on online shopping platforms, which negatively affects business confidence and economic transactions.

## Moral Impact

Users are morally misled through the spread of false information, creation of fake profiles, concealment of unethical transactions and trolling. False information and reviews of educational institutions or corporate brands affect the moral outlook of the public. When people realize that information is false or distorted, people's faith in truth, justice and morality weakens.

The loss of personal and social credibility due to corruption on social media is not only a personal loss, but also weakens the moral foundation of society and social stability. Therefore, it is essential to prevent corruption on social media by increasing digital ethics, information transparency and awareness, so as to reduce the long-term negative impact on society, economy and moral standards.

## Research Findings:

The research findings are -

1. Research has shown that corruption through social media in India is not limited to financial transactions or political influence. It can be seen in various forms, such as: influencing public opinion by creating fake profiles, spreading fake news or deepfake videos, distorting popularity and credibility by selling fake reviews or followers. For example, the spread of false information by political parties during elections and the use of fake reviews or likes in the corporate sector are quite eye-catching.

2. The misuse of social media has damaged trust and moral standards in society. Research has found that people's ability to verify the authenticity of digital content has decreased and the impact of fake information has reduced confusion and trust in society. For example, the rapid spread of fake health information has created panic among the public and hindered the effective implementation of government instructions.

3. Increasing the popularity of products or services by buying fake reviews, likes or followers has distorted the business competitiveness of companies and customer trust. In addition, the common man is facing financial losses through online scams, fraudulent payment platforms or phishing accounts.

4. Social media platforms are using AI and machine learning to detect fake profiles and false content. Corporate organizations are also increasing training, policy formulation and transparency for digital safety and ethics. For example, Facebook and Instagram regularly remove fake accounts and YouTube conducts content monitoring.

The results of the study show that digital corruption through social media in India is a growing and complex problem that has a profound impact on all social, political and economic spheres. This problem can be solved if the legal framework, administrative policies, user awareness and corporate responsibility are implemented together.

## Policy Recommendations:

The relationship between social media and corruption is becoming a complex and dangerous issue in modern society. Young people in particular, who usually spend their time on social media, become the main victims of corrupt people. Therefore, the need to increase awareness among young people about the risks of digital deception through the use of social media is very important.

### 1. Legal and Administrative Strengthening

The implementation of India's Information Technology Act (IT Act, 2000) and the amended rules

should be made more effective. It needs to be regularly reviewed to ensure that the law is in line with constitutional obligations and protects freedom of expression. For example, clear penalties should be laid down to stop the spread of false information on social media platforms.

### 2. Digital Transparency and Fact-Checking:

Media organizations and online platforms should implement schemes like the Content Authenticity Initiative. It is important to increase the use of AI and machine learning technologies to detect fake profiles, fake news and deepfake videos.

### 3. Awareness-Raising and Educational Initiatives

The general public needs to be made aware of digital ethics, fact-checking and online safety. Digital awareness can be increased through training programmes in schools, colleges and corporates.

### 4. Corporate and Social Responsibility

Private organizations and corporates need to formulate regular training and transparency policies in the field of digital security and ethics. Legal framework, social awareness and corporate policies should be implemented together. In addition, misuse can be detected through digital content verification, reporting mechanisms and user feedback.

### 5. Moral Development to Direct Control

It is important not only to control and punish, but also to increase the moral standards and digital responsibility of users. Social conferences, workshops and online campaigns will help increase user moral awareness.

## Conclusion

In today's information technology-dependent society, social media has become a powerful medium for people to communicate, express opinions, exchange information and participate in democracy. But if this power is not properly utilized, it can easily lead to serious problems such as digital corruption, disinformation, cybercrime, defamation, economic fraud and human trafficking through misuse. Therefore, India's efforts to curb digital corruption cannot be limited to formulating a legal framework alone, but it is very important to develop a multi-level integrated and coordinated system for this.

First, the legal framework must be made up-to-date so that the implementation of the law remains effective with the changes in technology; second, the transparency and accountability of administrative institutions must be increased so that grievance redressal and monitoring are carried out properly. Third, it is very important to ensure the corporate ethics and responsibility of social media companies so that they play an active role in protecting the safety and rights of users, not just focusing on profits.

If we can ensure fairness, information security and humane use of technology at every level of society, it will be possible to prevent the spread of digital corruption. Otherwise, this misuse will erode trust in society, weaken democracy, and undermine social stability and moral values in the long term. Therefore, we must take responsibility for building a fair society by committing to building a conscious, responsible and ethical digital society.

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