



Satyameva Jayate: Digital Media Literacy

Why in News

The Kerala Government has recently announced a digital media literacy programme called '**Satyameva Jayate**' (**Truth alone triumphs**) to counter the menace of **Fake News**.

Key Points

- The programme would be taught at **schools and colleges**, which would be encouraged to **develop curriculum on digital media literacy**.
- **The programme would cover five points :**
 - What is wrong information.
 - Why they are spreading fast.
 - What precautions have to be adopted while using the content of social media.
 - How those who spread fake news make profit.
 - What steps can be initiated by citizens.

Satyameva Jayate

- Satyameva Jayate ("Truth alone triumphs") is a part of a mantra from the Hindu scripture **Mundaka Upanishad**.
- Following the independence of India, it was adopted as the national motto of India on **26th January 1950**.
- It is inscribed in the **Devanagari script** at the base of the **Lion Capital of Ashoka** and forms an **integral part of the Indian national emblem**.
- The emblem and the words "Satyameva Jayate" are inscribed on one side of all Indian currency and national documents.

▪ **Menace of Fake News:**

- Fake news is untrue information presented as news. It often has the aim of **damaging the reputation** of a person or entity, or making money through advertising revenue.
- Once common in the print and digital media, the **prevalence of fake news has increased with the rise of social media and messengers**.
- **Political polarization, post-truth politics, confirmation bias, and social media** have been implicated in the spread of fake news.

▪ **Threats Posed**

- Fake news can reduce the impact of real news by **competing with it**.
- In India, the spread of fake news has occurred mostly with relation to **political and religious matters**.
 - However, misinformation related to Covid-19 pandemic was also widely circulated.
- Fake news spread through social media in the country has become a serious problem, with the potential of it resulting in **mob violence**.

▪ **Countermeasures**

- **Internet shutdowns** are often used by the government as a way to control social media rumours from spreading.
- Ideas such as **linking Aadhaar to social media accounts** have been suggested to the Supreme Court of India by the Attorney General.
- In some parts of India like Kannur in Kerala, the government conducted **fake news classes in government schools**.
- The government is planning to conduct more public-education initiatives to make the population more aware of fake news.
- Fact-checking has sparked the creation of **fact-checking websites** in India to counter fake news. For example **Alt News**.
- Recently, the Supreme Court has asked the Centre to provide information on the **existing legal mechanisms to deal** with complaints about the content on television channels. Further it has asked the Centre to create an authority to check fake news and bigotry on air.

Way Forward

- The government must take the initiative to make all sections of the population **aware of the realities of this information war and evolve a consensus to fight this war**. Strict action against the fake news providers.
- Government should have an **independent agency** to verify the data being circulated in **social and other media**. The agency should be tasked with presenting real facts and figures.
- Social media websites should be **made accountable** for such activities so that it becomes their responsibility to have **better control over the spread of fake news**.
- The **artificial intelligence technologies**, particularly **machine learning and natural language processing**, might be leveraged to combat the **fake news problem**.
- Programmes such as above of kerala government need to be replicated in other states to ensure students are **aware of the problem of fake news** and have the **ability to tackle it** and as well as **make their families aware of it**.

Source:IE

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