

government nominees, representatives of civil society organisations, the media, educational and research institutions, religious bodies, and other critical stakeholders, to ensure the social media space is closely monitored to ensure that it is not used for purposes that undermine credible information dissemination. The Commission must not be under the absolute control of the government and must be seen as an ombudsman.

Social Media regulation: It is important that government must initiate measures to regulate social media. Such intervention measures must be divested of political consideration so as not to muzzle and fetter social media and freedom of expression. Relevant stakeholders must be involved and listened to at every step that would lead to this decision to ensure that intervention measures are products of

inclusive and participatory deliberations. The objective of these regulatory measures would be to curb the spread of mis/disinformation on social media platforms.

Responsible and Responsive Journalism: Inclusive intervention measures must be taken by the government and relevant stakeholders to encourage media platforms to consider objectivity, impartiality and accurate information as not only important to reporting but also to the sustenance of society and democracy. This would ensure the cultivation of responsible self-censorship culture to check information that could be damaging to the democratic process and national cohesion.

Partnership with tech companies: Government and relevant stakeholders must ensure they work and collaborate with technology companies on content

moderation. This would allow a process of filtering the information mechanism system before it becomes detrimental to society as a whole.

Data-based Monitoring Mechanism: The government and relevant stakeholders must consider an effective process through which data-based organisations are central to containment measures that would either pull down inflammatory stories that promote hate speech or divide the society along ethno-religious cleavages. Setting up a mis/disinformation observatory manned by civil society organisations has become imperative.

This will enable citizens to track and counter mis/disinformation and also name and shame institutions and individuals involved in the act. This role cannot be left for government to avoid the observatory being used for political interest. There is an urgent need to support civil society organisation, including religious organisations, to lead campaigns against mis/disinformation during elections.

Legal Action: Government must enforce measures against those who are found guilty spreading mis/disinformation. Such deterrent measures must be divested of political interests.

Intensification of advocacy for policy change and diligent enforcement of existing regulations, laws on media practice, including the law of libel. In most cases it is the failure to enforce existing legal frameworks that fuel impunity.

