Virtual community identity and social media

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Abstract— This study investigates the role played by new media for creating identity of the different community. Numerous numbers of researches were articulated to establish the relationship between information and communication technologies and communication process. ICTs are providing facilities to communicate with the people all around the world. Each day new technologies of communication are popping up such as facebook, twitter and web 2.0 etc. The past few years saw the change of sharing information on personal, professional and social level. Information technology has been acting as a catalyst for global integration. This study focuses on the newer technique of communication process to create identity by using facebook community page. Content analysis is used for analyzing the data. This study sheds light on the marginalized community's identity in front of world. Based on the data collected from different facebook community page this research will examine the role of social networking site in providing platform establishing the identity.

Index Terms— Internet, Social Networking site, Marginalized, Community identity

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1 INTRODUCTION

The advent of internet technology brought the metamorphosis of communication process. This technology is also considered as a carrier of social change such as it modified the behavior, working habits and social relations. The concept of internet is the result of national security by the USA military to protect from nuclear attack. In this era internet is available to everyone and it depends on the individual's choice of utilization. Internet also introduced different social networking sites for communication in individual, group and community level. Based on the similitude the individuals are creating groups and showcasing their inner self to the entire world. John C. Turner in his book 'social identity and intergroup relation' proposed that "social group can be defined as two or more individuals who share a common social identification of themselves". It is the same identification carried out by different individual who consider themselves to be part of a particular social category group. This social group can also be known as 'community'. The facebook features the option to create groups and pages on the basis of similarities. This platform promotes different marginalized communities to create their identity. Tajfel (1978) defined social identity as "that part of an individual's self concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to the membership."Kay Deaux mentioned in the research paper 'Social identity' that the "experience of prejudice and discrimination that gays and lesbians face make the process of social identification a particularly difficult one at times" because "positive values associates with one's own group are not shared by the society at large."Studies on race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality emphasize that identity issues and the everyday evoking of racial, ethnic, sexual, and gender identities are intricately intertwined with ongoing efforts to reinforce or challenge institutions of race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality (Butler, 1990; Gagne & Tewksbury,

1998; Omi &Winant, 1994; West & Zimmerman, 1987) The German social theorist Jürgen Habermas defined the public sphere as a virtual or imaginary community which does not necessarily exist in any identifiable space. In other term it can be defined as the individual or group of people gathered together as a public and articulating the needs of society with the state" (Dr. Marshall Soules, 2007).

2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study content analysis is done to find out the research objective. Marginalized groups like queer groups and Muslim community groups were studied to understand the effectiveness of facebook in creating identity and the motive behind creating the facebook groups and pages. Data analysis is done by using both qualitative and quantitative method with the help of coding sheet which calculated the frequency of pre determined variables to solve the research problem. The four Muslim community group and four queer community pages were studied for the duration of one year. Total number of ninety six posts was studied.

3 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

At the beginning of the research the researcher had set some tentative findings to achieve at the end. The first hypothesis the researcher framed was that facebook is an effective electronic space for the creation of community identity. To prove this researcher took post from facebook religious group and queer community pages from where it has been found that the posts are fully updated to establish the identity of their rcommunity in the mind of the people. The admin of the groups are posting muslim religious thoughts, views, information, practices and rituals to create and spread their own identity to the entire world. People from various places connect with the group to give their opinion in the form of comments, like and share. This

helps to spread the message to the large geographical area. Religious information is given in eleven posts and four posts give the information about the signs and symbols of Muslim religion. Name of five major personalities from the Muslim religion are mentioned in the group's posts. The posts fulfil the aim of community media to spread the identity of the community among large population. In this group post gives the detail of the incident happening in India against Muslim community religion. The Admin post a video where in UN house this issue was brought to stop the terror spread by the Hindu community people. This post was updated to spread the communal discrimination message among people.

Another video was updated to show how RSS (Bhagwa Atankwad) Officially Exposed Over Killing Innocent Indians. From this post the Muslim group wanted to spread the message to people that they are not responsible for all the blasts happening in India. They wanted to portray the identity of responsible and honest citizen of India. Some post brought out the history of Muslim kings and leaders who fought to save the country from British. Through this post the facebook community group people wanted to uplift the work and sacrifices of Muslim kings in the mind of the people.

Posts are updated in this group with a motive to spread the information about the Masjids of the world. Through this post the group wanted to create identity of the holy place of Muslim Community. "700 Old Masjid in Africa - Must Watch. In Africa there is a 700 years old Masjid made up of river mud, every year people of that village repair it to protect it from rain." The quoted line from the post gave information about a holy place, Masjid, of Muslim community in Africa with its unique feature. Religious information about the ritual of ceremonial washing of the Holy Kaaba, which is carried out before the beginning of the month of each Ramadan was updated and this information is considered to be the feature of community media. This post reminds people about the ceremony and promotes the occasion to the entire world. In some cases the group holder asks the facebook users to watch the updated video, to love the Muslim Religion community. The video was used as medium to promote the thoughts and religious belief of Muslim community. In the comment section many people replied that after seeing the video they started liking the religion. That means this video was successful in spreading the information about the community. This video also gave information which created identity of the holy book Quran with the practices of Muslim community. On Indian Independence Day a post was updated by giving the detail of the Muslim martyrs in the freedom struggle. This post uplifts the identity of the Muslim community for active contribution during struggle for

free India. It can be counted as informative post. Video was also updated.Muslim community people don't like Hindu political party i.e. BJP to come in power so in many posts they tries to show the negative side of the party. They posted the reaction given by national Hindu party member on two rape incidents. Their comments are different for two cases because one happened to Muslim and other to Hindu. This post tries to bring out communal discrimination done by the Hindu leaders. They also take the help of politoons shown in different news channel to degrade the party or religion. Politoons shows that Hindu National party leader is unaware of the history of his own country. This degrades the image of that political leader and now he is popularly known as 'Feku'. The Muslim group member does not want him as a leader. This group took initiative to post on Republic Day of India which says that in India all good things happen because of Muslims. From freedom to national song everything is the contribution of Muslim religion. This creates a promotional effect in the facebook page and gives a positive message about the religion to the entire world. In the comment section various people contributed their own ideologies which create a forum for discussion.

In India there is many communal organization who fights with Muslim religious people in all issues. This group delivers the information of the new party which is formed to fight against RSS. This post promotes the religious unity as well as the party Popular Font of India. In a statistical count it was found that in Britain population of Muslims are increasing. This information the group member used by commenting that one day Britain will be calculated in the list of Muslim countries. This promotes the religion by showing the increase of popularity. A post was updated in the form of multiple choice questions to attract the people towards the post. Through the post one can get religious information. The religious occasion is promoted as the group holder asked to share the post as much as they can. The detail of the process of slaughtering goat with its advantages and disadvantages are also updated. This creates an identity of slaughtering style of Muslim in the mind of the people. The advantages try to explain the how Muslim people puts effort to save the goat from extreme pain and the flesh remains fresh for a long time. The detail picture of slaughtering is given in appendix.

Whatever happens in country like India, it becomes a communal affair. This group too this point and updated a post which motivates people to behave as a citizen of secular country. For a crime against Hindu a Muslim is not responsible and vice versa which tries to give the message that behind crime no religion is responsible. Instead of taking a turn towards communal discrimination or fight the authority should go

down the facts to find the cause of the crime. A post gives the detail why this Muslim group people do not want to celebrate New Year. According to them the country is full of terror, discrimination, hunger and corruption then how they can welcome New Year with happiness because nothing positive will happen in the country as well as in their life. This creates a positive image about the religion and its people's mentality. This facebook community group posted about their mission and goal of becoming voice of Indian Muslim who is always in favour of secularism in the country. All Muslims do not belong from the family of terrorist, this is the ultimate message this group wants to convey to the world. It is a promotional post about the page. Through this post the group holder is asking joining people to join the group and share among friends to spread Muslim religion.

Establishing identity and motivating the marginalised people is also an aim of the community pages. It has shared stories which motivate the members to come out as their real self and create identity of their own. The post which writes about the Talles de Oliveira Faira, a gay student who faced homophobic bullying from fellow students and teachers came to collect graduation certificate in red dress and high heels. His picture made a bold statement and motivated many people to showcase their own identity in public. On 13th January 2017 a post came in the page which says,"The portion of American adults identifying as #LGBT increased to 4.1% in 2016 from 3.5% in 2012." Queer communities were trying to showcase the negligence they face from and within the society. Based on the sexual orientation they were not able to enjoy their human and legal rights. Through facebook they tried to showcase the pain and tolerance they goes through every day. They portrayed the positive achievement too through the posts to create an identity that they too exist. They shared the posts if they are getting government jobs and the struggle behind that to motivate people. The eminent personalities who belong to this category are coming out in front of the entire world through facebook, social activity and pride parade to create identity of their community in front of the heterosexual world.

After studying both the community groups and pages the researcher concluded that the facebook has the potential to spread the voice of the marginalised to the entire world. This platform can be used to establish the positive identity of the backward class through their achievements. There are few groups of people who use SNS as a medium of entertainment so for those people this group are not fruitful. Researcher has found that many people believe that this facebook groups provides the international platform for discussion on common interest as the SNS gives various choice of selecting groups of interest. Previously many

researches was conducted on the community identity of physical groups but very few research has been done in the area of facebook to bring out the truth that it is a potential podium to transmit the message of religious community identity across the globe.

4 CONCLUSION

Social responsibility of media is the most popular topic of research in today's academic field. Beside newspaper and television now a day new media also has a great role in society. Researcher through his study has pointed out those areas where the new media is proving itself as a socially responsible media for mass communication and creating identity.

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