SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE ARMED FORCES

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Introduction

Few years ago, Social Media as a topic of discussion for a seminar for the Armed Forces had not been found acceptable and presence of Armed Forces personnel on social media had been banned. These orders were however soon revoked once the relevance of social media for the Armed Forces was appreciated by all concerned and the Army is deliberating whether a separate DG Shaping Information Environment (DG SIE) is required. There is thus a need to write a paper on this topic of immense relevance. This paper puts forth the condensed wisdom of deliberations carried out by various speakers, during a seminar on the subject held on 04 & 05 Sep 18.

"Proliferation of and Exploiting Capabilities of Social Media"

Social Media is all pervasive, all-encompassing and it affects our personal and official lives. It has changed the way we think, spend, act, establish & maintain relationships; in fact it has changed our way of life. The way we fight has also undergone a change and we need to factor in how social media impacts a soldiers war fighting abilities. On establishing contact with the adversary, immediate updates are provided on social media. Social media drives public opinion which will drive decisions and it impacts morale both in a positive and negative manner. Social media has also brought in major changes in the way the Armed Forces

will fight, function and lead. The power of Social Media is both bad and good and the reach is unmatched. These days a person is known by the No of followers he has on social media. As military leaders, we need to fully comprehend, harness and exploit this power and reach. New age warfare is Multi Domain Warfare and information and data are the drivers of power.

Proliferation of social media has exposed the limitations of policy and oversight which were present in the nation state which had regulatory framework. The younger generation connects through the social media as it doesn't merely give information, but interacts while giving information. The phenomenon of present day "Breaking News" first explodes on WhatsApp or Twitter much before TV News Channels. So it is important for the Armed Forces to put across their version of the story first on the social media. Social Media is a present day reality which cannot be ignored by the Armed Forces and not responding to an adverse newspaper report is not an option in the present scenario. In fact in today's digital driven world, avoiding the social media may be counterproductive because rumours may begin to flow. And rumour is like butter; very easy to spread but difficult to un-spread. Perception is becoming more important than facts and it is very important that we in the Armed Forces connect on the social media. The fallout of social media is on equal measure on the Armed Forces also and there is a need to contain its negative fallout.

There are some inherent contradictions between the Military and the Media; while the former is secretive and centralized, the latter is open, flat, spontaneous and ubiquitous. These need to be resolved and there is a need in the Armed Forces to evolve and do these things timely. We need to engage over social media and there is a need to identify measures and guidelines for usage of social media. The low cost and high impact approach should be adopted for optimum results. Social media is gaining momentum at an exponential rate and the Armed Forces need to keep pace with these changes, else we would be left behind. It has been acknowledged that information is a pillar of national power so it's logical that the Armed Forces be associated with it. A two way communication between the Armed Forces and society is imperative to project a correct image. We must convey to the people and at the same time we must be open to ideas. We must also leverage Social Media platforms to educate and empower the soldier. It is imperative to reach out to the soldier and to leverage the power of the social media; without denying the use of smart phones to our troops.

Perception Management and Social Media

William James had said "Thoughts become perceptions, Perceptions become reality; Alter your thoughts, alter your reality." Perception Management has been used in military operations under the ambit of Psy Ops in attempts to gain advantages over enemies. The goal is to alter the perception of the opposing party in a way that provides advantage and can be used successfully to score a victory. This has now become an integral part of Info warfare. Militaries use social media increasingly and UK has even raised a brigade (77 Brigade) specifically to deal with Social Media and Info warfare. Social media plays an important part in managing perceptions due to its extensive reach, speed and penetration. Exploitation of social media however needs to be handled with caution. Risks of social media fueled public relations disasters are very real. The risk of social media being used for unintended purposes such as brain washing, causing panic and unrest is real and needs to be guarded against. It is of paramount importance for the

state to monitor the social media and step in whenever anti-social elements attempt to twist or manage perceptions and psychology of people. If properly utilized social media has been found to be highly effective especially in disaster management.

The government needs to actively use the social media to correctly inform own population, gauge public sentiment, take feedback and initiate pre-emptive action. In the fast-paced evolving scenario social networking has become one of the foremost ways of communication both personal and official. Social media with its perils and boons is like a two edged sword. Since platforms like Twitter have enabled everyone to become a "citizen journalist" it is therefore being used in Psy Ops to spread rumours and misinformation. Issues particularly pertaining to the military are made viral on the social media to degrade morale and change public opinion. If the military does not tell its side of the story on the social media, people start believing whatever is being reported on the social media. Hence, military public relations must have an active presence on the social media. If we can't even reach our countrymen through social media, then perception management through social media for warfare remains only a dream. Social media is buzzing irrespective of our participation. By not participating, we are only favouring our enemies. It is time for Armed Forces to do more in this field and to act decisively.

Role of Social Media and Internet

The power hierarchy has changed due to easy availability and democratization of information and social media has accelerated this change. There are over 200 million users of Facebook and WhatsApp in India itself. Amongst the presence of Global Defense Forces on Facebook, India takes the lead with the No of followers on Army, Air Force

and Navy being 11 million, 0.4 million and 1 million respectively. The comparative figures for the US Army are 4.6 million, 2.7 million and 3 million respectively. Fear may not be the answer to deal with technology and denying Armed Forces access to social media may result in making them illiterate and being unable to grasp AI, which will be a reality within the next 15 years. While fear is a defeating strategy, understanding and knowledge is a winning strategy. There is thus a need to optimally utilize this large presence of Armed Forces on the social media platform.

5 G for Social Media and Armed Forces

5G or Fifth Generation mobile technology would provide a hyper-connected vision. 5G Network is envisaged to accommodate Apps & Services with different latency, reliability & bandwidth. 5G network can be used for multiple tasks like high speed fixed wireless access, industrial manufacturing, education and training, integrating public and private transport networks, public safety and disaster management and smart logistics management. The key differentiator will be greater connectivity as an enabler for Machine-to-Machine (M2M) services and the Internet of Things (IoT) will be created. This vision may include a new radio technology to enable low power, low throughput field devices with long duty cycles of ten years or more. Next-generation Radio Access Technology sets specific targets that new radio interfaces must meet in terms of data rates (faster than 1Gbps downlink) and latency (less than 1ms delay).The Armed Forces thus need to be 5G network ready and there is a need to draw up an action plan for use of social media by the Armed Forces. Soldiers, leaders and children are all impacted by social media and hence it is our bounden duty to understand this platform and form a dedicated team to build expertise in 5G technology.

Social Media Strategy in the Armed Forces

The purpose of the presence of the Armed Forces on social media is to create a place for the organisation in cyberspace so as to create awareness among country men and encourage connection with them. To ensure continued faith, the media content put out has to be credible, creative and interactive. World War III is likely to be a guerrilla information war with no division between military and civilian participation. While the mainstream media is defensive, high cost, low impact, with the user being subservient; in comparison social media is offensive, low cost, high impact, inclusive, has instant reach, is user created & harvested and can be used as an effective campaigning tool. Social media however has certain preconditions & intent which are generation of ideas, leading to creation and sharing of content through networking & dissemination, with an aim to influence Group Dynamics. The ecosystem involves a No of influencers, who could either be media houses, mainstream media, social media and veterans. Indian Army is present on all social media platforms. It's largest audience is on Twitter which is the second fastest growing handle in govt category in India and is globally ranked 9th. On Facebook, it has the 2nd largest audience & is the 5th fastest growing handle in govt category in India and is globally ranked 3rd. On Youtube it is the 4th largest you tube channel in govt category in India. While on Instagram, it is the top handle amongst all militaries of world.

Social media is a power which can be leveraged as it is the fastest means of passing messages, information & opinions; it contributes towards establishing a cohesive community and keeps a check on internal health of an organization. It helps in curbing mis-information ,in building goodwill and is an effective tool for internal communication.

In order to shape initiatives, the Armed Forces need to establish truth, address aspirations, take few initiatives & course correction, reinforce linkages, create emotive & shareable contents, which ultimately leads to Image Projection. The aim should be to keep Armed Forces always relevant, propel institutions, honour our martyrs, curb misinformation, establish truth, give effective rebuttals, put forth human interest stories, build relations with journalists & editors, cultivate influencers and exploit alternate media like FM Channels, Regional Media, AIR, Doordarshan and CRS.

Shaping of the Information Environment

Social media has taken major stride in this century and security forces have equally benefited with its advantages and suffered its ills. Social media has got a wide landscape where in large number of media platforms are available today. Security forces need to adapt faster for getting the positive out of these platforms, hence there is a need to work out a strategy and stay in tune with the latest technology advancement in social media platforms. The latest new holistic concept of perception management is shaping of the information environment. It is a more elastic concept and most relevant in time and space keeping with technology update. If information voids are filled with a favorable narrative then the unfavorable information can also be changed into a favorable narrative for the security forces. To achieve this, the information fed has to be credible and timely to counter the unfavorable information narrative. The complete concept revolves around domination of the information space, which is where social media plays an important part.

The challenges of social media are that it can be exploited by inimical forces groups and individuals which can enhance

the scope of anti-services sentiment. It is also very difficult to track and search for mischief makers. At the same time security forces can also equally exploit the same social platform. To achieve this, the Armed Forces need to educate its troops to ensure awareness rather than making an attempt to control social media. To counter misinformation we need to work on an alternative explanation or narrative to prevent misinformation from getting reinforced and whatever the explanation is given, needs to be simple and brief, and the language has to be non-authoritative. The most important part is that time is very critical to react. The way forward is to influence media through own medium and narrative. Outreach needs to be carried out and linkages reinforced for image projection. The Armed Forces need to massively increase our presence in social media and leverage technology to synergise with subordinate formation HQ IW Cells. It thus entails a continuous cycle of shaping strategy, establishing linkages, increasing the reach of social media, leveraging technology, synergise to again shape strategy.

Effective Utilization of Twitter & Instagram by the Armed Forces

The use of Twitter is a revolutionary way of interacting on a social media platform. Twitter can be a resource for broad casting important information, coordinating multi-agency efforts and getting help when crisis strikes. Twitter is live reporting, conversational in nature with a distributed framework, which can distribute the message at a very fast pace, connecting multiple agencies at a very big platform. It is being used for crisis management, voicing your views, spreading ideas and is also creating a public opinion. The Armed Forces in India are on Twitter and they have got a very large following. The images and short videos can be posted on Twitter which can then be shared very fast. It facilitates

both Passive exploitation ie collection of information and Active exploitation which entails engaging with the environment, conducting info operations and influencing them. Active exploitation could be done covertly or overtly as it allows engagement with key leaders, maintains contact with the target audience and helps contain adverse propaganda. However it needs to be kept in mind that there is no control over the tweet once it has been sent and there is an inherent risk of conflicting versions being put out in the environment.

Instagram is however the medium of choice for the youth and for the upwardly mobile people, so it needs to be addressed. Mobile has created a huge shift in the way people communicate and consume media. This shift can be broken down into three new consumer expectations; Immediate, Expressive and Immersive. Instagram has provided new features like comments, filters and controls whereby the user can manage and regulate the time spent on the internet which facilitates control and monitoring and is of use to the Armed Forces.

Considerations for Deploying Social Media by UK

In UK the smart phone has overtaken the laptop as the device used by internet users. Policymakers in MoD in UK have begun to understand the role of social media for Armed Forces and their families. Access to social media influences the emotional and physical wellbeing of military staff. Enhanced contact with family can strengthen relationships and feelings of intimacy, but personnel may also be distracted by the concerns of family and loved ones. The British military's communications strategy has been modernised to better coordinate a full spectrum approach. Amongst others two key elements of this are Director of Defence Communications

(DDC) (MoD) and 77 Brigade. DDC provides leadership, coherence and governance to full spectrum communications across all Defence Board Standing Objectives, using all available internal and external channels. DDC oversees relations, on behalf of MoD, with communications organisations within NATO, UN, EU other international bodies and allies. Oversight of defence identity and brand policy including those of Single Services is done in association with the Directorate of Intellectual Property Rights. British 77 Bde is however structured to execute operational outputs.

Social media should be exploited to support tactical actions. To maximise the utility of social media, it needs to be used socially. It should not be used as another delivery platform for traditional media products and press releases. Social Media exploitation can be divided into two categories. Passive and Active. Passive exploitation entails Intelligence preparation of the environment, monitoring and collecting intelligence or insight. Active exploitation on the other hand involves engaging with target audiences and conducting messaging and influence activities. Passive exploitation can be used for the collection of intelligence and insight. This is Open Source Intelligence collection activity and is not necessarily Information Activity. It can however give information about activities. Intelligence is provided in terms of near real-time situational awareness, Early warning indicators, Threat assessment, Collateral damage assessments and Battlefield damage assessments. Target Audience Analysis serve as an input to inform about future Information Activities. These can be in the form of Content preferences etc, Profiling of individuals, groups or organisations, Deeper understanding of adversaries ideology, Narratives, Key influencers and Demographics.

Active exploitation is the area that can offer the most noticeable outcome. This is where one can influence a target audience's attitudes and perceptions. It can be done overtly or covertly, and in support of one off event based activity, short term or persistent. This involves engaging with Key Leaders and setting the conditions prior to real world engagement. We need to identify levers of influence and maintain persistent contact with target audiences. Adversarial propaganda and narratives need to be countered.

It however needs to be considered that for Information Operations conducted online in support of tactical activity, there is no guarantee that they will remain at the tactical level. Once the content is out in the social media, no one has control over it any longer. However this should not be something to be scared of it, because it's just the internet. Any activity conducted in support of a tactical activity must be approached holistically, and must be consistent with messaging and with the activity conducted at the strategic and operational level. Information Fratricide is a reality that needs to be guarded against.

Challenges for Deploying Social Media for Military Use

Sufficient IT infrastructure and internet bandwidth must be available at the tactical level to conduct the level of activity required to be effective. We need to be able to collect, create and disseminate content. This needs to be resourced sufficiently and the infrastructure needs to be protected and hardened from adversarial action. In Peace Enforcement Operations infrastructure might be available at the tactical level due to permanent locations. However in conventional conflict it is extremely unlikely that there would be the infrastructure available at the tactical level.

Language and Culture is another challenge. Despite sharing a common language, a lack of cultural understanding can result in unintended consequences and an inability to communicate your message properly. We thus need to find the individuals that have the correct language skills and cultural awareness to be able to convincingly and effectively engage in conversation with target audiences. Such individuals are likely to be found in theatre and not at Service HQs. Thus we need to decide whether we will make use of contractors or locally employed civilians.

Responsiveness is the keyword in Info Operations. It is said that the US WebOps based at CENTCOM believe you only have around 15 minutes to engage with a story, before the imitative is lost and you lose the opportunity to control the narrative. We need to empower units or organisations that are conducting Social Media exploitation to react when required. Formal boarding of every individual message will reduce effectiveness. They need mission command, but be given clear direction what their left and right of arcs are, what can and cannot be said and done (including lines to take, narratives etc). Like we give a soldier a loaded weapon and trust them to operate within the Rules of Engagement, we must be able to trust our soldiers with a keyboard and twitter account, after we provide our Armed Forces with the appropriate training and direction. The policies designed need to be robust enough to prevent the Armed Forces from breaching legislation, but flexible enough to be usable with evolving and emerging technologies. These also need to be updated regularly.

Options to Conduct Online Information Activities

Online information activities can be conducted in an overt manner, covert manner or in a combination of both. Overt action provides you with authority, credibility and consistency, but only with certain audiences. It is a matter of conjecture how our target audiences will react to overt messaging from a military organisation as people already have an established bias. Overt ops have less legal/policy constraints and there is lesser training requirements as there is less need to obfuscate our digital footprint. Covert Ops provides the option of Grey or Black information activities and there are no established bias. These can be used to amplify white information activities. Messaging can be more irreverent, less formal and more attuned to what resonates with the target audience and can be more passionate and emotive. However, Covert Ops comes with a heavier training burden (tradecraft etc). Irrespective of the option that we choose, we need to have things in place as it will take time to create credible profiles and place them within desired groups and work must begin in that direction.

Policy Options for Exploiting Social Media in Indian Armed Forces

The first principle in use of social media is fleet footedness and nimbleness. However in the tradition bound Army, change does not come easily to us. There is a need to leverage technology, social media and networks by Indian defence forces. Social media and social networks use web based and mobile technologies which turns communication into an interactive dialogue with the aim to connect people with common shared interest. Social media usage in Indian defence forces is in the form of perception management, open source intelligence, engagement with public and real time situational awareness. Situational awareness is required during aid to civil authorities and disaster management. Social networks can be utilized by the forces for dissemination of information, engagement with service personnel, veterans and their families.

Social networks can be utilized for dissemination of information which should be non-operational in nature, educative and for countering misinformation. While on social media it is very important that the security aspects are taken care of by the organization as well as the users since these platforms are vulnerable and can be misused. No one is anonymous on the internet and we must be careful while airing our grievances or defending our point of view on social media.

Big Data Analytics and Social Media Mining

The 4 V's of Internet ie Volume, Variety, Velocity and Veracity are the key challenges for Data Analytics. There is 40 Zeta Bytes (One Zeta Bytes being equal to 10 to the power of 21 Bytes) of data which the analyst has to sift through. When a pattern is established, a lot of intelligence can be found using Big Data Analytics. Big data analysis is both a challenge and an opportunity because of data explosion and diverse sets of data which are needed, to be analysed to make any sense of it ie in the cognitive domain. The process of big data analytics involves large data volume, high data velocity, variety of data and proper data veracity. An additional challenge for the Armed Forces is that data needs to be collected by user agents ie crawlers – which is a bandwidth, storage and time intensive proposition. The other option is to buy data from Data aggregators. One of the most important facets of this analysis is predictive analysis which is extensively used for preventing crime and the same can be used for the Armed Forces requirements, like predicting areas susceptible to infiltration. Threat vectors are using non-traditional communications. Where an analyst should look is important as there are many alerts and hidden signals in the noise. Lack of actionable intelligence makes it difficult to translate technical findings to leadership and

take action. Analytics thus aims at scale & speed in real time; persistently produce tactical insight. The solution should thus have Flexibility, while being stable, Support numerous integrations ,be mission specific ,Provide Cognitive insight, Security and Anonymity.

Social Media Dynamics in the Extended Armed Forces Family

In 2015, the Indian Army had contracted IBM to do Pro Bono work to find out what ails the Army. The sentiment analysis carried out provided deep insights and one fact emerged that everyone either has a grievance or contributes to it. The same or similar sentiment would most likely be there in the other two services also. So there needs to be a mechanism to address the anguish integral to the organization.We need to have a group of experts/ specialists/ sociologists to work out specific campaigns for eg to justify AFSPA etc. The manpower for this could either be from inherent resources or hired on an adhoc basis, to enable projection of issues in a proper manner. Training on use of Social Media needs to go down to the grass roots level.

Threat to data security and privacy is real and data mining needs to be done. The content is available online to friends & enemies. Social Media at times provides a false sense of connection. The reach of Social media is dependent on carriers and at times the target audience is not fully addressed. Mistakes, when they happen, will go viral and hacking of accounts for misuse is a threat to be guarded against. There are few limitations of existing policies in the Army besides being restrictive. There is no legal mandate of monitoring / blocking anti SF content. There is a need for integration in agencies managing cyber issues and structures and policy to exploit and monitor social media is lacking.

The Armed Forces could consider following the US model and encourage safe use of social media by our soldiers with clearly laid down restrictions.

Conclusion

Social media has revolutionised global communication and professional discourse. In the international arena, one of the most potent impacts of the latent influence of social media is the ushering in of the people's revolution or the Arab Spring and the number of regime changes that this led to. The reach and unstoppable power of social media has forced the world to acknowledge it as a powerful weapon in shaping and influencing opinions. It has demonstrated a capacity for penetration that is historically unprecedented, especially compared to other means of communication.

Existentially, the Armed Forces and social media are at the opposite ends of the spectrum when it comes to access to information openness and freedom of expression. Security of information being paramount, marks most actions of the Armed Forces, while free access is the central theme of social media. However, this historic and fundamental divide must be bridged effectively if the Armed Forces are to remain contemporary in this information age. How the Armed Forces would walk the middle path between the need to keep things secure, vis-à-vis maintaining information dominance would be crucial.

Everyone is enjoying direct connect to the complete spectrum of society, organisation, and administration and everyone seems accessible.This has however led to citizens bypassing existing structures and hierarchy. It is a new exciting phenomenon in a nation like India built around classes, hierarchy, and barriers in official or personal interactions.

By virtue of their operational philosophy, the Armed Forces need to be more rigid and compartmentalised in their functionality. In this regard, social media, on the down side, has now opened avenue for all rank and file to air their opinions, views, cribs, criticism, and target individuals and organisations jumping the hierarchical ladder. Successful conduct of operations and safety of our personnel is non-negotiable. Therefore, we need certain policies for optimum exploitation of the social media. It is also important that the government policies must be able to adapt with every changing social media environment.

The future conflicts will occur in increasingly connected and networked environments, which will be characterised using new communication and information technologies, social media included. The utilisation of social media during a conflict, adds and enhances the conventional tools of mass media for propaganda, influence and deception activities. Thus, control and acquisition of data has become as vital as gaining new territory or dominance over a region. Some of the key issues for leveraging Social Media to boost Armed Forces, specific to our demography and operational philosophy would be bringing about a change in mindset, re-evaluate existing organisational structures, setting up social media monitoring centres, specialised training for sensitive appointments, educating military families, leveraging the veteran community, Big Data analytics and creation of seamless policy guidelines factoring for an over sight mechanism.

Recommendations

At a time when the social media space is changing rapidly and having a huge impact on all aspects of functioning of the Indian Armed Forces, the key recommendations that emerged from the seminar are appended below :-

- **Organization and Structure** Due to the vast scope of social media, there is a requirement to assess the organizational structure for effectively leveraging all aspects of social media.

- **Dissemination of Policy Guidelines**. The policy guidelines on usage of social media should be simple and easily implementable by the defence personnel, with the aim being 'education and regulation'.

- **Hiring Social Media Professionals**. As in depth technical knowledge of using and leveraging various platforms is required, the IW core group should remain with the defence personnel, but specialized tasks should be carried out by hiring information warfare experts from the industry.

- **Creation of Core Groups for Media Campaigns**. Running of successful campaigns needs content generation by experts and specialists. A core group of such experts, with continuity, needs to be created for campaign management. The core group should have full knowledge of the requirement of apex leadership, which will accordingly be manifested in the campaigns.

- **Policies, Procedures & Regulatory Framework.** The use of social media is one of threats and opportunities, however there is a need to effectively operate in this space. There is thus a requirement of detailed policy guidelines on the usage of social media by the members of the Indian Armed Forces personnel with effective oversight mechanisms in place. These should not be restrictive but enabling in nature.

- **Leveraging the Veteran Community**. The Indian Armed Forces have a huge veteran community who should be an intrinsic part of our social media warriors. We need to reach out to the veterans so that their aspirations are understood, solutions provided and a correct message is spread to the masses.

- **Training.** Meaningful and effective training needs to be carried out for educating all ranks and the families of Armed Forces personnel to make them aware of the risks and opportunities of social media.

- **Specialized Training & Longer Tenures**. Social media brings a host of vulnerabilities, especially for persons tenanting sensitive appointments. Specialized training needs to be organized for such personnel on a regular basis. Personnel tenanting such appointments also need continuity.

- **Hosting Armed Forces Unit pages on Facebook**. Hosting of unit pages on the Facebook could go a long way in bringing to fore the rich history, traditions and accomplishments of our defence forces and raise the morale of the defence personnel.

- **Coherent Social Media Campaigns**. For running successful social media campaigns, the campaigns have to be run at all levels of our hierarchy in not only all the three Armed Forces, but also in the related departments in the GoI. The complete organization including the veterans have to be incorporated in the campaign to achieve victory in this space.

● **Mobile Applications for Vetrans**. Though the Armed Forces have launched few apps for use by serving personnel, yet the veteran community feels left out. The Armed Forces could consider launching mobile apps to engage with the retired fraternity also. These apps would be an easy way to spread the right message and dispel any false propaganda by anti-national elements.

● **Big Data Analytics and Artificial Intelligence**. Social Media platforms are a rich source of information which can be used by the defence forces in furtherance of their operational objectives. Important information can be mined using big data analytics and prediction analysis carried out using artificial intelligence. When a pattern is established, a lot of intelligence can be found using Big Data Analytics. Data Analytics aims at scale & speed in real time; persistently produce tactical insight. The Armed Forces need to train defence personnel on priority in these two domains to fully exploit the power of social media.

● **Use of Roman Hindi & Regional Languages.** Like print media, social media is active at large number of regional forums in various languages. Hence exploitation of all regional forums is essential in the Indian context.

● **Speedy Response; Delegation to Units**. Centralized structure for responding on social media cedes space to anti national elements to spread false propaganda. Speed of social media is too fast to be handled by our structures. Our structures and procedures for according approvals for social media need a relook and delegation at the functional level is required.

● **Strategy for Social Media**. The Armed Forces need to work out a detailed strategy for leveraging the social media domain encompassing all aspects of organizational structure, training, human resource, oversight mechanism and its integration with the operational domain.

● **Conceptualizing Social Media Campaigns**. Conceptualizing and running a successful social media campaigns requires detailed planning and content generation. This requires the assistance of experts who have in depth knowledge of that subject of which the content is being generated. Personnel following up such campaigns need continuity in their appointments.

● **Specialization Training for Social Media**. The rapid changes and advancements in technology has huge spin offs in the defense domain. There is a need to undertake specialization training for social media to examine all the means by which social media can be leveraged as an important domain of information warfare.

● **Industry Colloboration to Leverage Social Media for Armed Forces**. Some of the aspects in which the industry can help out are :-

○ *Glorifying our heroes* using social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter to run positive social media campaigns in support of the defence forces. Making 'Follow our Heroes Campaigns' is an example

of one campaign. More such initiatives must be supported like Comics , Apparel wear etc.

o *Highlighting the Samaritan work* by the defence forces in support of the common man as part of 'Winning the Hearts and Minds of the People'. Initiatives such as 'Op Sadbhavna' being implemented by the Indian Army in J&K, need to be brought to the knowledge of the complete world.

o *Launching Recruitment Campaigns* on all social media platforms to help in recruitment of suitable candidates. Such campaigns should thus focus on the benefits that the prospective candidate is likely to get rather than focusing only on the adventure and hardship.

o *Employment of Veterans* by the Industry for running social media campaigns for the Indian Defence forces will also increase collaboration with our veteran community towards common goals and give them employment. The veterans have got in depth knowledge of the functioning and requirement of the Armed Forces which can be leveraged by both the industry and the defence establishment.

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