Youth Perception towards Internet Censorship in India

Dr. Sapna Parihar

Assistant Professor
Shri Vaishnav Institute of Management,
Indore, India

Himanshu Raheja

Management Student
K. J. Somaiya Institute of
Management Studies and Research,
Mumbai

Abstract

The concept of Internet censorship can be defined as the control of what can be accessed, published or reviewed on internet. Government, private organization and various regulatory bodies are responsible to monitor the access of content on internet. The degree of censorship depends on nations to nations. Few nations have moderate censorship but countries like China where extensive control is imposed to the citizen in order to avoid various political and securities issues to protect culture and moral. There has been a constant rise in the demand to remove various content available on you tube, and various porn site across the world. Most of the contents were asked to remove because of political harms or speech which aggravates people and may increase the risk of riots and national security. India is one of the countries suffering from terrorism and internal riots in the boundaries. Resources says that India stand on 49% (0=most free & 100 least free) on the scale of internet censorship and partly free from censorship. The current study is conducted to find the perception of youth toward internet censorship in India. The present study tries to find the perception of youth towards internet censorship, its importance and effects on the society and national security. The study is exploratory in nature and aimed to inquire about the perception of youth aged between 15-25 on the control over the access of various sites and material on internet. A self designed questionnaire on 5 point likert scale is used to collect the data from 120 respondents in Indore city. They were asked about the positive and negative effect on national security and e-commerce, control and influence by internet censorship. Independent sample t-test has been used to compare the groups. The result shows that youth has positive inclination toward the control of access of content on internet. Study concludes that Indian youth is in the opinion of internet censorship irrespective of their gender and age categories. Youth is on the agreement that this is a necessary step to be taken to control religion based riots, antisocial activities and maintain culture and decorum of society. The Indian youth considered the internet censorship as a tool to preserve the national security and cyber crime.

Keywords: Security, Internet, Control, Freedom.

Introduction

Conceptual Framework

In the era of globalization and Information technology the freedom to speech and freedom to share has been eased. The access of knowledge from internet gave new direction for development. But each coin has

two faces. Excellent knowledge sharing system, access of information, liberty to speech and facilities to convey the message created many issues such as religion based riots, deterioration of moral values, negative influence on youth by terrorist and motivated the antisocial elements. Therefore strategic control on the access of unwanted messages and speeches are required to control without disturbing the required knowledge base for the development of society by regulatory bodies.

Internet Censorship

The concept of Internet censorship can be defined as the control of what can be accessed, published or reviewed on internet. Government, private organization and various regulatory bodies are responsible to monitor the access of content on internet. The degree of censorship depends on nations to nations. Few nations have moderate censorship but countries like China where extensive control is imposed to the citizen in order to avoid various political and securities issues to protect culture and moral. A number of religious texts, publications, and materials are banned or have their distributions artificially limited in the PRC. Foreign citizens are also prohibited from proselytizing in China, and information concerning the treatment of some religious groups is also tightly controlled. China has strict rules that govern acceptable web content. The government bans pornography, violent images or messages, and online speech that criticize the communist party. The ruling party of China "Communist Party of China" implemented the internet censorship basically for political reasons and also to have control over the population. As the government assumes that they have legal right to control the internet content in their own region. Where the censored media include all the resources reaching wide range of audience such as television, print, radio, theater video game and the most important resource is internet. Another idea is to encourage the domestic competition like ecommerce giant Alibaba, online media firm Tencent, and search engine Baidu by blocking international rivals from the market.

Censorship in India

There has been a constant rise in the demand to remove various content available on you tube, and various porn site across the world. Most of the contents were asked to remove because of political harms or speech which aggravates people and may increase the risk of riots and national security. India is one of the countries suffering from terrorism and internal riots in the boundaries. Resources says that India stand on 49% (0=most free & 100 least free) on the scale of internet censorship and partly free from censorship although there are different view on the monitoring system. According to the report Freedom on the Net 2012 the past, instances of the central government and state officials seeking to control communication technologies and censor undesirable content were relatively rare and sporadic. However, since the November 2008 terrorist attacks in Mumbai, which killed 171 people, the need, desire, and ability of the Indian government to monitor, censor, and control the communication sector have grown. Given the range of security threats facing the country, many Indians feel that the government should be allowed to monitor personal communications such as telephone calls, email messages, and financial transactions. India has huge history of banning various website in order to control the law and order, national security and unwelcomed issue in the country. Deccan Chronicle (2015) reported the government of India has banned access to at least 857 websites it considers pornographic in a bid to "protect social decency" in August 2015. The order was directed to the internet service providers (ISPs) citing that they violate "morality and decency" of Article 19 (2) of the Constitution and Section 79(3)(b) of the IT Act. This shows that the current government is also inclined to tightly censor the easy access of internet. The Indian youth is highly penetrated to internet hence if government takes the decision to tightly control the web content in India, there is a strong need to understand the perception of young India also. The objective of the study is to know the youth perception towards the internet censorship as the Internet penetration is higher among youth.

Internet Freedom Across The World Visualized
Free Partly Free Not Free
@StatistaCharts Source: Freedom House
statista

Objectives

- To study the perception of Indian Youth towards the control on Internet access.

- To study the perception of Indian Youth on the positive effects, security issues and impact on ecommerce from internet censorship.

Review of Literature

Initially censorship on the Internet was broadly seen as a vain effort, with Internet pioneer John Gilmore famously saying, "The Net interprets censorship as damage and routes around it." most of the countries denied the control over access on internet but gradually governments learned from their mistakes, and today's censorship techniques are increasingly effective and widespread and are used by dictatorships and democracies alike. Although various countries have different opinion. Internet censorship in China is extreme due to a wide variety of laws and administrative regulations. More than sixty Internet regulations have been created by the government of China, which have been implemented by provincial branches of state-owned companies, and organizations. The apparatus of China's Internet control is considered more extensive and more advanced than in any other country in the world. The governmental authorities not only block website content but also monitor the Internet access of individuals.

Peace (2003) studied the academician reviews and gave a clear impression that censorship is not generally desirable to institutions. A majority of U.S. institutions do not censor in any way, and over 50% of those institutions with formal policies in place specifically state that the Internet should not be censored. However, in todays changing legal and technological climate, staking claim to principles such as privacy and freedom of speech can have major consequences.

Simpson (2008) studied after the Australian Government decision to impose mandatory Internet service provider level filtering to home and school users. This policy has been championed by various religious groups suggesting that a particular set of values influences the law in this area. It is argued that the result of this policy may well be new forms of censorship of the Internet in the future.

Ang and Nadarajan (1996) studied the perception of Singapore government and revealed that government is well aware that it cannot do much to censor the Internet. In fact censorship can impact the workings of the Internet and disturb the faith of users in the system. But also agree on the main means of censorship is to control access. The rationale is that this will allow only the determined to get at the materials, thus excluding the novice and the casual user. The issue is not just censorship of pornographic material,

but also censorship of what the authorities perceive as "misinformation," especially when political debates are increasingly occurring in cyberspace. Singapore's government is trying to both control information and yet reap the benefits of the information age.

Shankar (2012) has revealed that as greater proportion of human activity is mediated through Internet-based technologies, the extent of our online rights - and what really mean by "Internet freedom" - will take on greater importance in political and economic life. Government officials and their private sector counterparts have a key role to play in all of this. We need to formulate acceptable international definitions of Internet freedom, aggression, and cyber security. We also need to continually articulate the distinction between political speech permissible and truly illicit online activity (like child pornography, cyber crime, and terrorism).

Techniques for censorship vary, ranging from directly interfering with Internet traffic to pressuring content providers to remove offending material. A variety of motivations for censorship also have appeared, such as political control, child protection, and protection of revenue for copyright holders. Gill el.at (2015) studied the technology used for web censorship across the countries. The considerable variability observed in Internet filtering worldwide. Future measurement studies should account for decentralization of censorship infrastructure that can lead to variation between ISPs in the same country, political events that cause censorship behaviors to change or even cease over time, the type of content that is used to test for blocking, and the types of blocking technologies that it triggers.

Most of the western countries are not very much strict for censoring the internet access while the East Asian countries like china are fully censored. Most of the research has been carried out on the government's views on Internet Censorship and very little research has been done on the perception of citizen of the countries towards internet censorship.

Data and Research Method

India is partially censored country. The present study tries to find the perception of youth towards internet censorship, its importance and effects on the society and national security. The study is exploratory in nature and aimed to inquire about the perception of youth aged between 15-25 on the control over the access of various sites and material on internet.

A self designed questionnaire is prepared which consists of 18 items about the internet censorship. The reliability analysis was done which gave the satisfactory Cronbach

Alpha .926. Convenient sampling method has been used and 120 respondents were asked to give their responses in 5 point likert scale ranging from 1= strongly agree to 5= strongly disagree. The data has been collected from school and college students of Indore city from Oct-Dec 2017. The collected data has been analyzed through independent sample t test. The statistical analysis has been done by SPSS 16.0 version.

Main Hypotheses

H0A: Internet censorship is necessary to control unwanted events/riot and protect moral in the society and country.

H0B: If India become fully Internet censored it brings the positive changes in the society and country.

H0C: Internet censorship is helpful to preserve national security.

H0D: Internet censorship will not affect the international online trade/e-commerce.

Sub Hypotheses

H0A1: Male and female have the same opinion that Internet censorship is necessary to control unwanted events/riot and protect moral in the society and country.

H0A2: Different age groups have the same opinion that Internet censorship is necessary to control unwanted events/riot and protect moral in the society and country.

H0B1: Male and female have the same opinion that If India become fully Internet censored it brings the positive changes in the society and country.

H0B2: Different age groups have the same opinion that If India become fully Internet censored it brings the positive changes in the society and country.

H0C1: Male and female have the same opinion that Internet censorship is helpful to preserve national security.

H0C2: Different age groups have the same opinion that Internet censorship is helpful to preserve national security.

H0D1: Male and female have the same opinion that Internet censorship will not affect the international online trade/e-commerce.

H0D2: Different age groups have the same opinion that Internet censorship will not affect the international online trade/e-commerce.

Results Analyses

Table 1: Group Statistics and Independent Samples Test									
	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	DF	Sig	
Control unwanted events	Male	60	2.5862	.99764	.18526	.025	118	.980	Not Significant
	Female	60	2.5797	.86729	.18084				

As table 1 shows that p value is .980 >.05 hence the null hypothesis is accepted and Male and female have the same opinion that Internet censorship is necessary to control unwanted events/riot and protect moral in the society and country.

Table:2 Group Statistics and Independent Samples Test									
	AGE CAT	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	DF	Sig	
Control unwanted events	15-20	60	2.553	.84658	.14519	.310	118	.758	Not Significant
	21-25	60	2.638	1.10295	.25997				

As table 2 shows that p value is .758 >.05 hence the null hypothesis is accepted and aged below 15-20 and aged 21-25 have the same opinion that Internet censorship is necessary to control unwanted events/riot and protect moral in the society and country.

Table 3: Group Statistics and Independent Samples Test									
	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	DF	Sig.	
Positive Effects on Society	Male	60	2.8571	1.01224	.18481	.934	118	.355	Not Significant
	Female	60	2.5918	.97655	.21310				

As table 3 shows that p value is .355 >.05 hence the null hypothesis is accepted which reveals that male and female both categories are in the same opinion that that If India become fully Internet censored it brings the positive changes in the society and country.

Table :4 Group Statistics and Independent Samples Test									
	AGE CAT	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	DF	Sig	
Positive Effects on Society	15-20	60	2.7662	.91041	.15848	.176	118	.861	Not Significant
	21-25	60	2.7143	1.16574	.27477				

As table 4 shows that p value is .861>.05 hence the null hypothesis is accepted and both age categories are in the same opinion that internet censorship will bring the positive effects in society.

Table 5: Group Statistics and Independent Samples Test									
	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	DF	Sig.	
National Security	Male	60	2.4000	1.35443	.24728	.375	118	.710	Not Significant
	Female	60	2.2609	1.32175	.27560				

As Table 5 shows that p value is .710 >.05 hence the null hypothesis is accepted and male and female both are in the same opinion that internet censorship is necessary to prevent the national security.

Table 6: Group Statistics and Independent Samples Test									
	AGE CAT	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	DF	Sig.	
National Security	15-20	60	2.2571	1.31379	.22207	.626	118	.534	Not Significant
	21-25	60	2.5000	1.38267	.32590				

As table 6 shows that p value is .534 >.05 hence the null hypothesis is accepted and both age categories are in the same opinion that internet censorship is necessary to prevent the national security.

Table 7: Group Statistics and Independent Samples Test									
	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	DF	Sig.	
ecommerce	Male	60	2.8333	1.39168	.25409	.06	118	.93	Not Significant
	Female	60	2.8095	1.40068	.30565				

As table 7 shows that p value .93>.05 hence the null hypothesis is accepted that male and female are into the same opinion that internet censorship will not affect adversely international trade and e commerce.

Table 8: Group Statistics Independent Samples Test									
	AGE CAT	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	DF	Sig.	
ecommerce	15-20	60	2.8788	1.45253	.25285	.383	118	.70	Not Significant
	21-25	60	2.7222	1.27443	.30039				

As table 8 shows that p value .70 > .05 hence the null hypothesis is accepted that both age categories are into the same opinion that internet censorship will not affect adversely international trade and e-commerce.

Conclusion and Discussion

The study concludes that Indian youth is in the opinion of internet censorship irrespective of their gender and age categories. Youth is on the agreement that this is a necessary step to be taken to control religion based riots, antisocial activities and maintain culture and decorum of society. The Indian youth considered the internet

censorship as a tool to preserve the national security and cyber crime. Many a time it has been observed that anti social elements are taking undue advantage of social media and use this platform to influence the young India to become the part of such unwanted activities. Therefore this step may help to curb such situation.

They are also in the belief that internet censorship promotes equalities and peace. Indian youth are also in the opinion that control on illegal content from internet will not affect their communication and information sharing at the same time creates more positive image globally. Control on what to access and what not to access will filter the content and cater only fruitful information to the citizens. This ultimately will not affect the knowledge processing. Although this is the era of online business, the Indian youth perceive that this step will not adversely affect the international business and e-commerce and promote the domestic business. Therefore by a large the Indian youth are in the favor of Internet censorship.

Limitations

The study has been done on young India with a small sample size in Indore city. The further study can be conducted with different professional group, different age groups and with different regions in India. The Indian parents views can also be studied which may give the same results. As they also want their child to limit the access on Internet. There are various acts given by Supreme Court for internet access. This can also be taken as one of the direction in the same contexts.

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