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RESEARCH ARTICLE

DOES CONTENT DISSEMINATION THROUGH FACEBOOK MATTER FOR GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS: A STUDY OF KERALA POLICE DEPARTMENT'S FACEBOOK PAGE

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Abstract

Government organisations are generally known to be lagging behind their citizens in the use of social networking sites; with half of the departments having little or no presence in such platforms. This study aims at understanding what type of content affects citizen's attitude towards a Government Department's social media pages and how they perceive the message disseminated through such platforms. The researchers have selected the case of the Kerala Police Department's (KPD) Facebook page for the present study. Respondents who are post graduate students from various departments of Mahatma Gandhi University, Kerala were subject to different type and formats of content stimuli to assess their attitude towards the content type/format itself and attitude towards the department through a questionnaire. Not only will such a study contribute towards the knowledge base on social media research, this study will also help police department across states in India to develop appropriate content for social media to reach their citizens. In order to test the hypotheses and identify interactions between the dependent and independent variables, one-way ANOVA and independent sample t-tests were used. The results revealed significant differences in attitude towards KPD across stimuli and also attitude towards the stimuli itself. Among the various content type provided as stimuli, "Hilarious memes" generated the most favourable attitude towards the department. The attitude of the respondents towards "post re-posting user content" was the most favourable. Image/photo content generates more positive attitude towards the department compared to video content. The study has also revealed that there is a significant difference between the attitudes of respondents who have had prior interaction with the Facebook page of KPD versus those who have had no prior interaction.

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Introduction:-

With the proliferation of affordable internet connectivity, consumers today actively seek relevant information, to form opinions and to take decisions. To reach these consumers, various forms of internet and social media enabled communication tools are integrated by businesses –small and big alike - into their overall marketing strategies. Digital Content marketing through Social Networking Sites (SNSs) has been heralded as a very important relationship marketing tool (Hollebeek and Macky, 2019). Following this trend, various government organisations,

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agencies and departments are also disseminating digital content through SNSs like Facebook to provide information and engage in dialogue with citizens, with varying degrees of success. (Hofman et. al., 2013; Singh, 2016). However, Government organisations are generally known to be lagging behind their citizens in the use of social networking sites with half of the departments having little to no presence in such platforms (Bonson et al., 2012). Though the benefit of communication through SNSs has been well recognised by the corporate world and therefore widely used, the public sector is yet to fully leverage its potential. (Hofmann, et al., 2013). Government organisations and departments often lack the ability to communicate with their biggest stakeholders, the citizens, which increases the ‘distance’ between the two. Though Facebook is regarded as an instrument to engage stakeholders in public utility firms, issues which affect citizens are not given due emphasis on most such accounts (Bonson et al. 2012). The adoption and use of SNSs varies across various government departments as this depends on both interest of social media practitioners and guidance of top management, which are not uniform across countries, states, or at local governmental levels (Mergel 2013). Although many researches have tried to understand how social media, especially presence in Social Networking Sites helps government and political organisations to improve communication, interaction and engagement with users, little is known about their use by government and government departments in an Indian context. Studies have concentrated on what are the most frequently used content format and type by Government Facebook accounts and how these formats and types influence the participant’s engagement in a social media environment (Cvijikj et al., 2011; Kim et al., 2015), What researchers have not yet examined is to identify what type of message format leads to the creation of the most favourable attitude towards the government department with relation to its Facebook page.

This paper tries to examine how a local government department uses social media presence to reach citizens. The researchers have selected the case of the Kerala Police Department’s (KPD) Facebook page for the present study. This page, managed by a six-member social media cell of the department (Balakrishnan, 2018), has over 1.1 million followers, the largest following amongst all other state police departments in the country (Singh, 2016). The page created on 12th August 2011 post the following type of contents – (1) Self-promoting photos and videos, (2) photos and videos providing general information/ awareness/tips, (3) photos and video of hilarious memes, 4) postings of user post mentioning the Police department (Facebook, 2019). Respondents who are post graduate students from various departments of Mahatma Gandhi University, Kerala were subject to these content stimuli to assess their attitude towards the content itself and their attitude towards the department. The study tries to answer questions like - What is the attitude of the respondents towards the Facebook page of the KPD? Which content type generates more positive attitude towards the KPD?; Which content format generates more positive attitude towards the KPD? Does having prior interaction with the Facebook page of KPD influence the user’s attitude towards the department?

According to a study conducted by Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) conducted in 2018 (Devulapalli, & Padmanabhan, 2019), less than 25% of Indian population “trust the police highly”. Researches have shown that e-governance in general and social media interaction in particular would help such government organisations to create an environment of trust and transparency (Bonsón et. al., 2012; Morgeson et. al., 2011). Not only will such a study contribute the knowledge base on social media research, this study will also help police department across states in India to develop appropriate content for social media to reach the citizens.

Theoretical Background:-

Social Media

With the advent “new media” during the 1990s, the way entities interact and communicate with each other have undergone major changes – be it individuals, business or non-profit organisations or government. New media which includes web sites, internet applications, CDs, DVDs, PC games and similar media have three distinct characteristics – (1) integration of telecommunications, data communications and mass communications into a single platform, (2) interactive content and (3) digital format (van Dijk, 2014). Social Media, which is a sub group of new age media can be defined as “a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of the Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Types of social media include “collaborative projects, blogs, content communities, social networking sites, virtual game worlds, and virtual social worlds” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Banday and Matoo (2013) gives a four category classification of social media: (1) online networks and ecosystems, (2) online publications (3) online collaborative platforms, and 4) online feedback systems. Xiang and Gretzel (2010) divide social media into (1) virtual communities where users can exchange opinions and experiences on topics of common interests, (2) reviews, (3) blogs, (4) social networking sites and (5) media sharing sites.

The best known and widely used social media is – Social Networking Sites (SNSs)- such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, MySpace, etc. Social networks are “web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a common interest and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system” (Boyd and Ellison, 2007). Together these platforms provide users a tool to create and share information and collaborate interactively with other users. (Banday and Matoo, 2013). Often, the term social media is understood by many as referring to Social Networking Sites. Hence in this paper, we have used the term social media and SNSs interchangeably in many places.

Facebook as a marketing tool

To study the use of Social media/ SNSs by government, this research uses the medium of Facebook and its use by the Kerala Police Department. The selection of Facebook as an underlying platform was based on the reasoning that Facebook has the largest number of active users. (Facebook, 2019). A Hubspot market research found that Facebook is the SNS most used by the companies for marketing communications, in particular for B2C businesses. Many a time, search engines themselves are known to promote social media sites while generating search results (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010).

Within a Facebook brand/ institution’s page, users can engage with it by (1) posting content on the wall (depending on the communication policy set by the company), (2) commenting on the existing posts shared by the moderator, (3) indicating interest in an existing post by pressing the “like” button, i.e., liking, and (4) sharing the post on their profile wall. Each of these actions generates a story, which appears on the wall of each of the fan’s Facebook friends. A communication through Facebook page can be termed effective only if it was able to elicit user interaction and involvement by way of “like”, “share” and “comment”. The higher the willingness of users to interact with the posts the higher their “engagement” or feedback rate and therefore the more successful the post (Chuan et al 2010). Online engagement can be regarded as a psychological state of users characterised by interactive, co-creative user experiences with a focal agent and object (Bonsón and Ratkai, 2013; Brodie et al., 2013).

Individuals use Facebook as a platform to share content for interacting with their friends (connect), completing group tasks such as games (group joy), share useful information (altruism), portraying once achievements to gain attention (achievement), self-expression and seek companionship (loneliness) (Fu 2017). Businesses, small and big, across industries are using SNSs, especially to manage their brands by means of an interactive communication process.

The use of Facebook page as a platform for company initiated promotional communications can have a positive causal effect on the perception about company (Haigh et al. 2013) and offline customer behaviour (Mochan 2016). Since most corporate Facebook pages also allow users to post content, it can be viewed as customer service platform (Grančay 2013). This customer initiated social interaction can generate word of mouth by interacting with each other and the firm on its Facebook page as well as by commenting, liking and sharing content (Berger and Schwartz 2011; Mochan 2016).

Government’s use of Facebook

The use of Social media in Public sector can be considered as a form of technology innovation in itself as this is markedly different from the highly formalised interaction process between them and the citizens using traditional media such as press releases. (Mergel 2013). Social media in Government can be defined as “a group of technologies that allow public agencies to foster engagement with citizens and other organizations using the philosophy of Web 2.0” (Cvijikj 2013). With the penetration of Web 2.0 technologies into the day to day life of ordinary citizens, the government and governmental agencies and departments have also embraced Internet and Social media based interaction with its stakeholders. Thus evolved the term e-government, which can be divided into two distinct phase – *Web 1.0* based or *Government 1.0* and *Web 2.0* based or *Government 2.0* (Chuan et. al. 2010). The stage *Government 1.0* is characterised by a uni-direction flow of information, i.e. from the government to the public, with limited feedback from citizens. During this phase e-government has evolved from mere digital presence to simple web-based interactions to online transaction services (Bower and Christensen, 1995).

Government 2.0 is the stage of shared governance or participative decision making through the use of *Web 2.0 technologies* (Chuan et. al. 2010). “Web 2.0 Technologies” refer to a collection of social media through which users

are actively participates by creating, liking, sharing, commenting on and rating Web content. Government agencies and departments around the world have adopted Web 2.0 tools, such as social networking sites, blogs, microblogging, wikis, multimedia sharing, mashup applications, tagging, virtual worlds, and crowdsourcing, among others (Criado 2013), though SNSs remains the most used among them.

Like any other ICT adoption process, the use of e-government also goes through three distinct phases of adoption (Mergel 2013). First, agencies experiment informally with social media outside of accepted technology use policies by individuals who have some experience with the technology prior to becoming members of the organization or from non-work-related activities. This phase is called the *intrapreneurship and experimentation*. Next, order evolves from the first chaotic stage as government organizations recognize the need to draft norms and regulations. This phase is called *order from chaos*. Finally, in the *institutionalization* stage, institutions evolve by clearly outlining formalized social media strategies and policies. Every government department in India that uses some form of SNSs are in one or the other stage of this evolution process. The KPD and the Delhi traffic police departments, for example, has constituted a separate cell to manage the social media pages and interact with their citizens, placing them in the second stage. However, these departments are so far from the *institutionalization* stage due lack of clear policy and conduct guidelines. The lack of policy guidelines in the maintenance of a social media page by public sector entities and government can lead to unaccountability. Drafting such a policy guideline for the use of social media in e-governance can itself be challenging, as a uniform policy may not fit all departments and agencies alike (Banday & Mattoo, 2013).

Previous studies have highlighted the successful application of Facebook communication by various public institutions to meet their ends. Social media tools have helped in successful execution of presidential campaigns (Mergel 2013), enhancing communication and interaction with citizens by municipalities (Lev-on and Steinfeld 2015) and local government (Hofmann, 2016), building a smart tourism ecosystem by tourism departments of governments (Park 2016), for performance improvement and meeting the needs of customers by local government (Reddick 2016). Thus the use of Social Networking Sites such as Facebook. When governments use social media platforms like Facebook, there are opportunities for democratic participation, co-production, and crowdsourcing solutions and innovations (Chuan et al 2010; Cvijikj 2013). SNSs tools help to improve the perception of government transparency, accessibility, responsibility and effectiveness (Song and Lee, 2016; Tolbert and Mossberger, 2006); public service delivery, knowledge management and also increases citizens' participation in policy-making and engagement (Bonsón et al., 2012). Government departments can use Facebook and SNSs for marketing organizational activities, raising awareness of community events, and promoting specific organizational agendas (Reddick 2016). However, the focus should also be to develop a new paradigm of shared governance model with the participation of citizens, thus leading to the creation of what can be called, *e-democracy* (Chuan et al. 2010).

Type and format of content on Facebook pages

Content, according Halvorson and Rach (2012) is “what the user comes to read, learn, see, or experience,” from the social networking site, which helps to propel the brand [government departments image] into the hearts and minds of prospects, customers, and others. Content can be information, words, images, graphics, etc. that helps to tell the story about the organisation in order to capture or maintain the target audience's attention (Holliman and Rowley 2014).

However, different researchers have identified different classification for these message types and formats. Leung (2017) classified Facebook posts as four message formats: word/text, picture, web link and video and three types of message content, brand related, product related, and interactive. Studies have showed that the most widely used format in Facebook is post with a photo (Cvijikj et al., 2011; Kim et. al., 2015), which also drew more consumer responses than text-only content as well as video content (Kim et. Al., 2015). Photos are preferred over text-only and video posts as they are more eye catching than text and convey a story or message more quickly than video respectively (Lev-on 2015).

Posts can also be classified as Informational posts, Entertainment posts and Remuneration posts activity (De Vries et al., 2012; Luarn 2015; Muntinga et al., 2011). Cvijikj and Michahelles (2013), add *Social post* to this list. The informative content of posts informs users about product, brand or events, public information in case of Government departments. Entertainment posts are typically humorous videos, anecdotes, teasers, slogans or word play that helps the users to relax. Remuneration features posts contain content featuring promotions, trials, coupons, special offers

and other offers intended to attract attention, but providing a direct or indirect economic benefit to the users. *Social posts* encourage users' participation by seeking response to a question or statements, facilitating interaction (Cvijikj and Michahelles, 2011; Cvijikj and Michahelles, 2013). Remunerative posts are typically used by corporates to promote their product or service and in general government agencies or departments do not make use of such posts. (Reddick et al., 2017). A similar classification is given by Ferria (2017), who proposes content as having three dimensions: informativeness dimension, entertainment dimension and irritation dimension. His study concludes that with Facebook ads, consumers have a more favourable attitude toward the brands posts on official pages over all the three dimensions. Researches have shown that user engagement or feedback to a message posted on Facebook page, measures by the number of "likes", "comments" and "shares", is influenced by the message type and format. (DeVries et al., 2012).

Numerous studies have classified posts based on their vividness and interactivity also. (Cvijikj and Michahelles, 2013; De Vries et al., 2012; Leung 2017) Status posts are considered as having *No vividness* as these are written in the form of a short text. Because of their pictorial content, photos and images are of *Low vividness*. Links are considered as having *Medium vividness* as they redirect the user toward additional text and images, and videos are classified as having *High vividness*. Similarly, Leung (2017) classifies posts with statuses and photos as *No interactivity* because of their static nature; links to a website as *Low interactivity* as the enable viewing additional content; *Medium interactivity* for requests for users to like, post or comment to win prizes; and *High interactivity* for questions and quizzes.

What users seek from and what institutions -both Public and Private- post on their official pages of Facebook varies. Hedonic motivation, utilitarian motivation, compliance motivation, conformity motivation, and affiliation motivation all had a positively influence on user's engagement in the Facebook page (Criado 2013). Dholakia et al. (2004) identified four types of value that users look for in Facebook content—purposive, interpersonal, social enhancement and entertainment. Reddick's (2016) study shows that the most commonly posted content on local governments Facebook page includes public information, announcements, advocacy and tips. There has been no conclusive result as to what type and format of content is preferred by user on Facebook pages. One study proved that entertainment had a stronger positive effect on value compared to informativeness (Xu 2009). This is in line with Yuki's (2015) research finding that content that made people feel happy was most likely to be shared and Humorous messages are more viral (Taecharungroj and Nueangjammong 2015).

The timing of the posts is also known to affect the engagement levels of the users with them. Posting after work, when people are in transit, and during free hours elicit better response from users (Peruta and Shields, 2018).

Attitude towards content and attitude towards the Facebook page

In a social media environment, it is important to learn how content, its format and type affects the user's attitude towards a Facebook page. The purpose of Facebook as a communication tool in itself is to influence how the users perceive the brand, in case of business and to improve the trust of citizens in them, in case of Public entities. Therefore, a new construct, called 'attitude toward the page' (website) is evaluated. Belch & Belch (2003) defines attitudes as a "summary construct that represents an individual's overall feelings toward; or evaluation of; an object". 'Attitude toward the page' can be considered as a users' "predisposition to respond favourably or unfavourably towards the page content. The right content format has been found to favourably influence the users Attitude towards the Facebook page (Leung 2017). However, the effect of content type on the user's attitude towards the Facebook page has not been conclusively proved. Neither has it been analysed whether attitude of the users varies with the message content itself. Attitude towards the content can be understood as Facebook page user's favourable or unfavourable feelings toward the Facebook post based on the type of information provided in the message. Studies have shown that the content and its value to respondents, affects the attitude toward the object (Daugherty et al., 2008). Disseminating trustworthy content by [government] organisations thus become important as the perceived content and its credibility has a strong positive impact on their attitude towards the message (Friedman & Friedman, 1979). However, the effect of the type of content on brand attitude is yet to be explored by researchers.

KPD's Facebook page post the following type of contents – (1) Self-promoting photos glorifying actions taken and achievements of the department and its personnel, (2) Self-promoting videos (3) photos providing general information/ awareness/tips, (4) videos providing general information/ awareness/tips, (5) photos/images of hilarious memes, (6) hilarious video memes (7) re-postings of user post mentioning the Police department (Facebook, 2019).

With following hypothesis, we try to understand how the user's attitude towards the Facebook page of KPD and the attitude towards the content itself is influenced by the type of content disseminated through the page:

H₁: Respondents form more positive attitudes towards the Kerala Police Department when Self-Promoting content is displayed on the Facebook page.

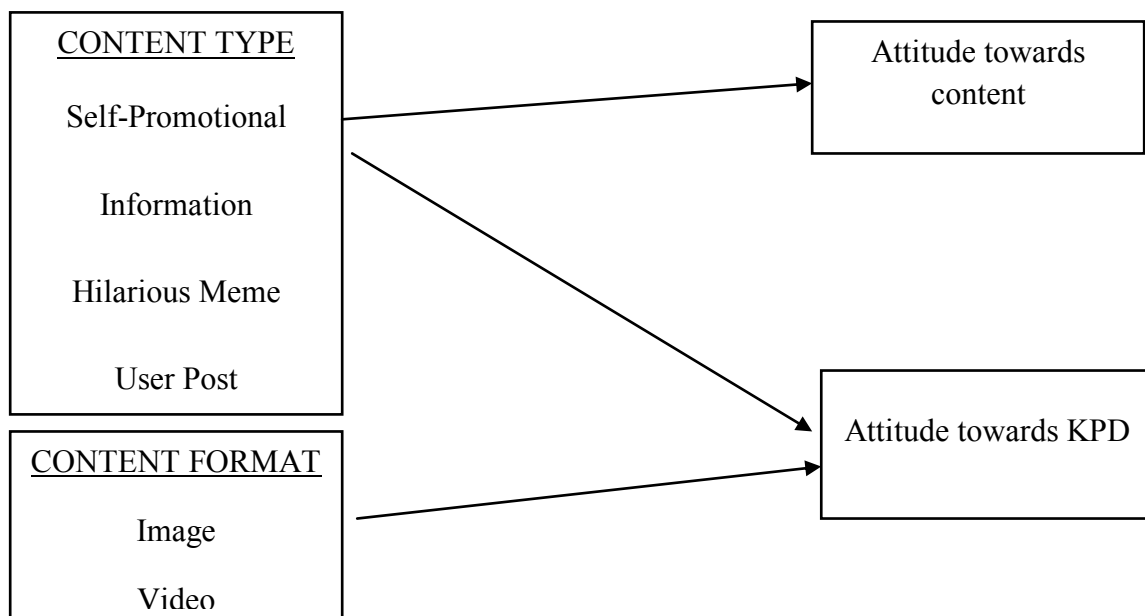
H₂: Respondents have more positive attitudes towards the Self-Promoting content displayed on the Facebook page of the Kerala Police Department as compared to other type of contents.

H₃: Respondents have more positive attitudes towards the photo/ image content displayed on the Facebook page by the Kerala Police Department as compared to video contents.

To understand whether the exposure a social media content itself have changed the attitude of the users towards the KPD, we posit one more hypothesis:

H₄: Respondents who have had previous interaction with the Facebook page of Kerala Police Department have more positive attitudes towards the Department.

Figure 1:- Conceptual Model.



Methodology:-

Method

The mediators of the KPD's Facebook page post the following type of contents – (1) Self-promoting photos glorifying actions taken and achievements of the department and its personnel, (2) self-promoting videos (3) photos providing general information/ awareness/ education/ tips, (4) videos providing general information/ awareness/tips, (5) photos/images of hilarious memes (trolls), 6) hilarious video memes (7) re-postings of user post mentioning the Police department (Facebook, 2019). Since hilarious video contents were posted very rarely, this was not considered for the study. To study the influence of these content types and format on the attitude of the respondents towards the Kerala Police Department and to the content itself, four stimuli were shown to the respondents:

- (1) A Self-promoting video on a recent achievement of the police department (S₁),
- (2) A video for public awareness/ education (S₂),
- (3) A hilarious meme image (S₃),
- (4) An image of the post re-posting a user post mentioning the Police department (S₄).

One group was taken as control group and therefore no stimulus was shown to them (C₁). All the stimuli were adopted from actual posts that appeared in the Facebook page of Kerala Police Department. In case of content that appeared in the photos/ image format (S₃ and S₄), a screenshot of the actual post was shown. This shows the image within the Facebook page of the department itself, to give a more realistic experience of the page. The respondents who were subject to the video content (S₁ and S₂), were shown the video, along with the screenshot of the Facebook

page with the video content. This was done so that the respondent could picture how the content would have appeared on the page.

A questionnaire was administered to the respondents right after their interaction with the stimuli to measure the respondents' attitude towards the stimulus, the department and the perception of the respondents towards the Facebook page of the Department.

Sample and Procedure

The research was conducted among 200 post graduate students of Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam, Kerala. The use of college students for research in social media is quiet common (Criado 2013). They are known to engage in higher levels of self-disclosure and maintain more favourable attitudes toward social media (Chu 2011)

A questionnaire was administered to the respondents to measure the respondents' attitude towards the stimulus, the department and the Facebook page of the department. The students were selected from among the post-graduate students of the University after an initial screening to identify Facebook users. Randomly selected respondents were subject to the four stimuli, S₁, S₂, S₃, and S₄ using an online questionnaire. The online form allowed the researchers to attach the images and/ or the video stimuli to the questionnaire itself. One group was taken as control group and therefore no stimulus was administered to them (C₁). After rejecting incomplete responses, 40 responses were obtained from each of the four stimuli and the control group.

In order to test the hypotheses, one-way ANOVA and independent sample t-tests were used. To analyse if there were any significant difference in the attitude of the respondents towards the department (H₁) and towards the content type (H₂), ANOVA was conducted with S₁, S₂, S₃, S₄ and C₁ as independent variable and the towards the department and attitude towards the content type as dependent variables respectively. To test whether the attitude of the respondents towards the content varies significantly with the content type, independent sample t-tests were conducted, with one sample of photo content and another of video content. To test whether attitude of respondents who have had prior interaction with the Facebook page of Kerala Police Department varies significantly from those with no prior interaction, an independent sample t-test was conducted.

Instrument

The data was collected using an online questionnaire. The online form allowed the researchers to attach the images and/ or the video stimuli to the questionnaire itself. The first part of the questionnaire constituted demographic details such as their name, age, sex, course they have enrolled for and semester. The respondents were also asked certain questions to understand their usage of Facebook, such as 'with what frequency they checked their Facebook account' and 'using what platform they checked their Facebook account'.

The second part of the questionnaire employed previously developed scales, to measure the subjects' attitude towards the stimulus, attitude towards the department and attitude towards the Facebook page of the department. Table 1 lists the scale items used to measure these variables.

The scales for both attitudes toward Kerala Police Department and the Facebook page of Kerala Police Department were adaptations of the attitude toward advertising scale developed by Muehling (1987) and adopted to study the attitude towards social media (Leung et. al, 2017; Chu, 2011). This scale use three five-point semantic differential items: "bad/good," "negative/positive," and "unfavorable/favorable". The attitude towards the content type/ format measure contained six items derived from Chen and Wells, 1999. This includes five-item measured using a five-point semantic differential scale. (boring/ interesting, unimpressive/ impressive, not attractive/ attractive, unappealing/appealing, unlikable/ likable).

Measures of constructs (measured on five point semantic differential scale)	Cronbach's alpha
<i>Attitudes toward KPD</i>	
1- bad; 5-good	0.918
1- negative; 5 –positive	
1- unfavorable; 5-favorable	
<i>Attitudes toward Facebook page of KPD</i>	
1- bad; 5-good	0.933

1- negative; 5 –positive	
1- unfavorable; 5-favorable	
Attitudes toward content	
1-boring; 5-interesting	0.963
1-unimpressive; 5-impressive	
1-not-attractive; 5-attractive	
1-unappealing; 5-appealing	
1-unlikable; 5-likable	

Table 1:- Validation of Items of Scale.

Data Analysis:-

Descriptive Statistics

This study tested the effects of different stimuli on the same set of dependent variables: attitude towards the content on the Facebook page of KPD and attitude towards the KPD. The analysis of these results involves comparing mean values and analysing variances. In order to test the hypotheses and identify interactions between the dependent and independent variables, one-way ANOVA and independent t-tests were used. To assess the reliability and validity of the various items of the scales used in this study, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were computed. All the alpha values, ranging from .918 to .963 indicate good reliability (Table 1). To ensure that the statistical methods to be used were appropriate for this dataset, the normality of data was verified by applying the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test. The data was also checked for outliers but no extreme values were found.

The sample consisted of 46 per cent (92) male and 56 per cent (108) female, ranging in age from 20 to 29 years, with an average age of 22.7 years. 35% of the respondents access their Facebook account 'several times a day' and 22% access it 'once or twice daily'. Only 18% of the respondents said that they 'rarely' access their Facebook account.

97 % percent of the respondents access their Facebook account through a mobile platform, either using the Facebook App (79.5%) or logging in directly to the site from using their mobile internet (17.5%). A total of 85 respondents have had some levels of previous interaction with the Facebook page of the KPD. 78% of the respondent said that they would "follow" the Facebook page of the KPD if they come across the page through their Facebook account.

Hypothesis Testing

Influence of Content type on attitude towards KPD

According to H_1 self-promoting content results in more positive attitude towards the KPD. The results of the ANOVA test taking the content type, S_1, S_2, S_3, S_2 and C_1 as independent variables showed significant difference in the attitude of the respondents towards Kerala Police between these stimuli ($F(200)=2.625, p<0.05$). Hilarious meme" image (S_3) generates the most positive attitude towards the Kerala Police Department (Mean=11.325), followed by post re-postings a user post (S_4) (Mean=9.90), Self-promoting videos, S_1 (Mean = 9.775) and public awareness/ education (S_2), (Mean = 9.075). Thus H_1 is not supported. Though the content type affects the attitude of the citizens towards the respondents, self-promoting posts are not the type that helps to generate the most favourable attitude towards KPD.

Attitude towards Content type

To test whether Self-Promoting content displayed on the Facebook page of the Kerala Police Department attracts the most favourable attitudes as compared to other type of contents, the data was analysed using ANOVA test. The content type, S_1, S_2, S_3 , and S_2 were taken as the independent variable and attitude towards the content as the dependent variable. The result showed that there is a significant difference in the attitude of the respondents towards these stimuli ($F(200) = 26.325, p<0.001$). The most positive attitude was marked towards "post re-posting user content", S_4 (Mean = 17.10). The mean value of the positive attitude generated by hilarious meme image (S_3) was 11.475, Self-promoting videos, S_1 was 10.975 and public awareness/ education (S_2) was = 9.825. Thus, H_2 is also not supported.

Attitude towards Content format

The independent sample t-test to test H_3 that photo/ image content displayed on the Facebook page by the Kerala Police Department generates more positive attitude as compared to video content showed that there is significant difference between the two formats of content ($t = 2.351$, $p < 0.05$). Comparing the means, it can be concluded that images/ photos (Mean = 10.612) generate more positive attitude towards the department compared to video content (Mean = 9.450). This supports our hypothesis, H_3 .

Influence of previous interaction with KPD's Facebook page on attitude towards KPD

To test H_4 , an independent samples t-test examined attitudes toward KPD of users who have had previous interaction with the Facebook page of KPD and those who have not had previous interaction with their Facebook page. The result showed a significant difference between the attitudes of these two groups. Thus, H_4 is supported by the analysis.

Discussion And Managerial Implication:-

This study tests whether the content format and content type positively influence the Facebook user's attitude towards the Government department and towards the content itself. The researchers use the case of the Facebook page of Kerala police department. The results of the study revealed findings, some of which concur with the results of previous studies and others which contradict them. The study found that the type of content influences the attitude of the citizens towards the Government Department's page. It brings out the importance of "Hilarious meme/ trolls" towards attitude creation. The influence of humour in attitude formation is already recognised (Zhang, 1996). Humour/ entertainment is known to influence behaviour in SNSs users (Lin and Lu, 2011) and generate higher engagement (Luarn et al., 2015).

The study also showed that Facebook posts of the KPD, that were actually re-post of user posts that glorified KPD generated the most positive attitude towards the content. Previous studies have also found that user submitted content generates a significantly higher level of proportional engagement (Peruta and Shields, 2018); Bonsón, et al, 2015). Images/ photos generates more positive attitude towards the Government department compared to video content. This may be due the fact that users may simply opt not to watch videos that require them to spend too much time (Kim 2013).

The study has many managerial implications. The study in particular has unearthed the importance of humorous meme images which are not used by many Government Facebook pages. This is of great practical implication as social media cell of every government organisation/ department can post such content in their Social Networking Sites. However informative content cannot to be ignored as some studies have proved its importance in attitude formation (Cervellon, 2015) and generating user engagement (de Vries et al., 2012). Informative content is also important as it is likely to improve the user's knowledge (Kim and Lee 2012). Social media cell moderators of Government departments should also realise the importance of citizens' posts. Presently, government departments do not allow citizens to post on the "wall" of their Facebook page. Reddick et. al (2016) found that citizens were being consulted and requested feedback only in a limited manner by Government department through SNSs. The study has also revealed that there is a significant difference between the attitude of respondents that have had previous interaction versus those who have had no interaction. This is a crucial finding as this suggests the importance of Government departments' interaction with citizens through Social Networking Sites. The difference in attitude towards the different type and format of content, along the results of the previous studies reveal that solely having a profile in the social media by Government departments is not enough. Careful planning and research will greatly benefit non-business entities as they attempt to develop social networking (Waters et al, 2009).

Conclusion:-

With the advent of social media, e-commerce and user generated content, marketers are obliged to introduce new channels of marketing communication that provide authentic and useful information to the consumers during all phases of their buying cycle. This is true not only for business firms but also for various state and central governments and their departments. Research findings have also shown that Facebook enhances citizens' perceptions of government transparency and improves citizens' trust in government (Bonsón et. al., 2012; Morgeson et. al., 2011, song & Lee, 2016). This study reveals that social media interaction of citizens with Government Departments - in the present study, the Kerala Police Department - would lead to favourable attitude creation towards the department. Thus it is important to for the Government agencies to include social media tools to their

communication strategies. However, since Facebook page can carry only limited information and therefore cannot be considered a substitutes for other forms of reaching stakeholders, including websites (Grančay2013).

Though this research throws light on what content is most effective in developing favourable attitude toward the government department, the researchers have not analysed whether various combinations of stimuli would produce better results. Further research has to be conducted to analyse how consumers perceive complex stimuli. We can say with confidence that Facebook content leads to positive attitudes among current users, but would that be true if a more diverse group was studied? Future studies could also broaden the study to other departments of the state and country. A thorough content analysis of the Facebook pages of Indian Government Departments is also an issue that also deserves further attention. Nonetheless, this study contributes to the growing literature of social media content use by government organisations.

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