Defence & Security · GS - III

Explain how fake news and disinformation pose threat to Internal Security and Public Order in Indian context? In this regard, discuss salient features of amendments in respect of Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules 2021.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2026	GS - III	Defence & Security

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Fake news, disinformation, communal tension, social unrest, deepfakes, cyber warfare, IT Rules 2021, intermediary due diligence, grievance redressal

Model Answer

Fake news is deliberately false or misleading information, while disinformation involves intentional manipulation to influence perceptions or behaviour. In India, their rapid digital dissemination can affect both internal security and public order.

Threats include:

1. Communal polarisation and mobilisation through fabricated content.
2. Panic during disasters, conflicts or public-health emergencies.
3. Deepfakes and impersonation undermining institutional credibility.
4. Foreign information operations and influence campaigns.
5. Misinformation affecting elections, markets and law-enforcement operations.

The IT Rules, 2021 strengthened intermediary due diligence through grievance officers, time-bound grievance handling, removal of specified unlawful content and enhanced obligations for Significant Social Media Intermediaries. The framework also introduced additional compliance mechanisms, including a nodal contact person and monthly compliance reporting.

Subsequent amendments and proposed changes have increasingly focused on synthetic information and deepfakes. MeitY's 2025 draft proposed stronger due-diligence obligations concerning synthetically generated information, while its 2026 consultation addressed intermediary compliance and digital-media oversight.

However, regulation must balance security with freedom of speech, privacy and due process.

Thus, effective response requires platform accountability, rapid fact-checking, media literacy, cyber-forensics and transparent legal safeguards rather than content regulation alone.

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