

“No amount of image makeover via PR firms will get you off the hook and allow you to kill Thoothukudi people via your toxic copper smelter. (Tweet)

Overview

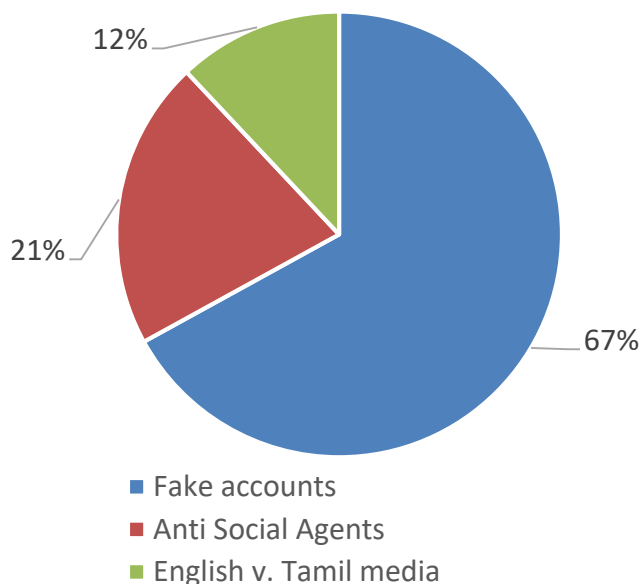
Negative public sentiment towards Vedanta Limited has increased 4% in the past two weeks to a staggering 91% despite the company’s attempts to shape public opinion. Fake accounts, bots, and trolls saturate online discussions creating anxiety and confusion among Thoothukudi citizens. The company’s lack of a coherent communications strategy enables external influencers (e.g. social media trolls) to erode public trust and tarnish Sterlite’s brand.

Findings: Topic Modeling

Tamil and English social media discussions, across twenty-one (21) online social media platforms, revealed three (3) trending topics:

- Intrusion of online trolls and fake accounts:
 - 67% of discussions concern the role of automated trolls that use social media hashtags to trigger unrest (e.g. hashtags #ReOpenSterlite, #WakeUpTamilNadu)
- Anti-Social Agents:
 - 21% of discussions are related to the group Makkal Athikaram and its leader Pon Pandi who instigated violence in May and June
- Disparities between English and Tamil media:
 - 12% of comments point to the persistent disparity between English and Tamil news websites in reporting about Thoothukudi

Trending Topics



"Anti-Social" elements have been spreading this photoshopped image in the name of Puthiya Thalamurai TV channel using their handle @PTTVOnlineNews” (Source: Twitter)

“Money! What @sterlite_copper and @VedantaLimited and their employees care about now! They will go anywhere, say anything, do anything to just spread fake news and try to bury their criminal acts. #DemolishSterlite” (Tweet)

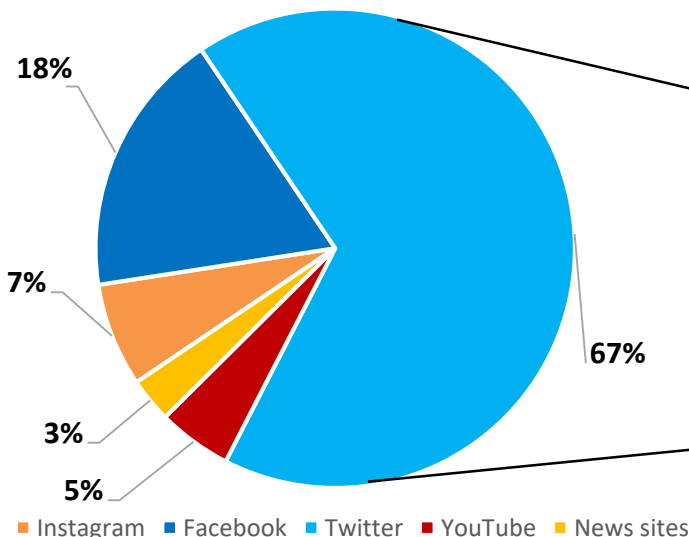
Findings: Social Media Analysis

- 91% negative public sentiment associated with the Sterlite Plant and Vedanta’s brand
 - 4% increase in negative sentiment in the past two (2) weeks
- 76% of all Twitter posts were created by “troll factories”
- People see a “troll war” between automated fake accounts that generate positive and negative Sterlite-related messages
 - 52% pro-Sterlite messages with hashtags #ReOpenSterlite and #FacetheFact
 - 48% anti-Sterlite messages with hashtags #WakeUpTamilNadu and #WakeUpTN

Sample of 6,550 fake tweets using identical text in support of Sterlite

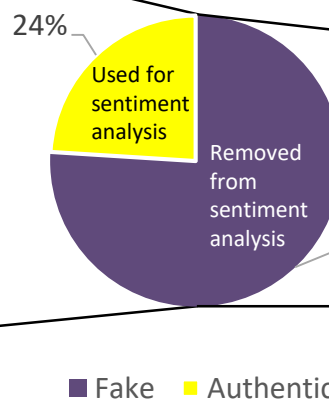


Social Media Use Per Platform

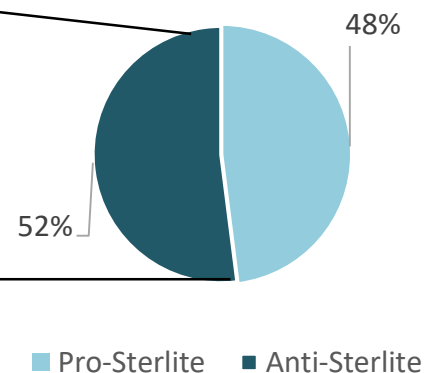


Share of fake

Twitter accounts



Share of polarization within fake accounts



***“Your company kills wherever it’s located #JusticeForThoothukudi
#KeepSterliteShut” (Tweet)***

Recommendations

- Stop using consultants and public relations firms to harvest bots and fake accounts
- Design and implement a comprehensive Information Operations (IO) strategy in order to build trust and transparency with Thoothukudi’s community
 - Create a communications plan that emphasizes Vedanta’s commitment to re-establishing trust with Thoothukudi’s community
 - ❑ Purge fake accounts across all social media platforms
 - Monitor changes in public sentiment through real-time “Social Listening” to evaluate and modify the IO and communications campaigns
 - Conduct Social Network Analysis to identify key influencers (i.e., political actors, NGOs, and community members) who shape public perceptions



Data Analytics

ENODO’s social media exploitation examined 625,879 Twitter posts, 421,987 Facebook posts, 89,457 news websites, 14,320 YouTube Videos and comments, 7,987 Google+ posts, 6,770 Instagram posts, and 5,430 blogs to conduct topic modeling and measure troll/bot activity



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