KEPT IN THE DARK

SOCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACTS OF NETWORK SHUTDOWNS IN INDIA

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Acknowledgement

About the paper

The paper is a continuous effort of Digital Empowerment Foundation's (DEF) comprehensive research to understand the social and psychological impact of network shutdowns (including Internet/data and SMS) on the lives of people. This paper documents on-ground stories and experiences to build a strong and effective case against network shutdowns, with specific focus on the social and psychological impact. The paper has analysed media reports of shutdowns (till August 2017) and conducted interviews in the affected areas of Haryana and Jammu and Kashmir to find the inter-link between Internet shutdowns and their impact on the socio-cultural-economic well-being of citizens.

Introduction

In January 2017, a group of singers from Nagaland, performing under the stage name 'The Amazing Voice of Nagaland', participated in the reality show 'Rising Star', broadcast on national television. Contestants of the show were to be judged by a panel of judges and the audience, which could vote in real time, to move to the next round. This was

one of the few times that an act from the geographically and culturally secluded north eastern part of the country had made it to the final round of a television show. However they suddenly found themselves unable to go forward as mobile services in Nagaland were suspended by the state government and audiences in their home state were unable to vote for them.

Mobile services and mobile Internet services in the state had been suspended due to ethnic violence in the region. The group appealed to the state to resume mobile services so that the public would be able to vote for them via their mobile phones. These days many shows use live audience voting to raise their Television Rating Points. For a group from one of the north eastern states to participate in a national-level contest meant a great amount of exposure and a step towards tackling the social exclusion they face based on their ethnicity. However this was not to be since the shutdown meant audiences were unable to give them the votes they needed to reach the next round.

Like Nagaland, 15 states have recorded 85 network shutdowns in India till June 2017, according to DEF's tracker (Annexure 1).

When such network connectivity (mobile and mobile Internet) is suspended, many citizens specially the youth are badly affected, as many of them have come to depend on mobile data services to communicate, lead their social lives, and carry out their tasks. These Internet shutdowns are a threat to human rights and affect us all in our increasingly digitalised lives. They affect day-to-day activities like accessing information, booking tickets, filling job applications and examination forms, and staying in touch with loved ones or business associates, and they disrupt daily life.

The government imposes shutdowns for various reasons, ranging from precautionary and preventative measures to curbing the spread of rumours during volatile situations. The most common reason given for such shutdowns is "to safeguard national security" and maintain law and order. However, the excuse of safeguarding national security as a justification for network shutdowns is used widely. With no definition of "national security" or threats to it spelled out in clear terms, citizens are never given precise reasons for shutdowns. Ironically, during the

shutdowns, even government services are negatively affected at a time when there is a major push by the government to transfer a majority of its services online and promote the mission of the much celebrated 'Digital India' programme.

Experts across the globe have agreed that network shutdowns are undemocratic and infringe upon our human rights. The United Nations in several instances has reiterated that access to the Internet is a human right and ensuring free access to the Internet is imperative to upholding human rights like the freedom of expression and freedom of assembly and association.

Cutting off access to the Internet in this day and age, when a large portion of social and economic transactions take place online, not only takes away the right to free speech, expression, association and assembly but also infringes upon social and cultural rights. Journalists, activists, taxis and travel services, banking services, businesses, even emergency services like ambulances and medical are all adversely affected during shutdowns.

This research, Internet shutdowns — A study of social impact in India, is the second in the series of DEF's efforts for advocacy against Internet shutdowns. The previous research report, *Anatomy of virtual curfews: Human rights vs National security* highlights the existing and emerging threats to fundamental rights and human rights on account of arbitrary, unnecessary, and disproportionate imposition of Internet shutdowns in India. The current research paper is an effort to understand the social and psychological impact of network shutdowns on the lives of people.

This study identifies how such shutdowns impact the lives of people at the micro level. It concerns itself with the psychological and social impact that network shutdowns have on those affected. By analysing media reports and conducting interviews with citizens living under dire conditions, this paper seeks to identify the impact network shutdowns have on various social and cultural rights, like — access to education and amenities, impact on livelihood, and psychological impact of social exclusions due to restricted access to the Internet.

Research objectives and methodology

The research was conceptualised to better understand the social and psychological implications of Internet shutdowns in India. The existing literature provides insights into economic and monetary losses that network shutdowns cause as well as how they limit the freedom of expression and assembly and association. However, there is only limited and fragmented evidence on social and emotional distress caused by Internet shutdowns, which are also a human rights violation considering the fact that access to the Internet has been declared a human right by UN special rapporteur David Kaye.

This research paper seeks to fill that gap. Its objectives are as follows:

a. To assess social and emotional cost borne by citizens during State imposed network shutdowns and in that way add to the knowledge around the harms and costs of Internet shutdowns.

b. To assess the impact of network shutdowns on small business owners and the subsequent effect this has on their well-being.

c. To provide recommendations and urge the State with qualitative analyses and evidence of the harm of shutdowns to uphold our constitutional rights of Freedom of Expression (FoE) and Freedom of Association and Assembly (FoAA) by not imposing Internet shutdowns.

d. To create an evidence-based interlink between network shutdowns and its infringement upon human rights with particular focus on the restrictions it causes to education, basic necessities, and livelihood, and the psychological distress they cause.

More specifically, the research paper seeks to explore the following research questions:

a. How are Internet shutdowns felt by ordinary citizens in their day-to-day life in terms of social and economic impact?

b. How, if at all, do Internet shutdowns affect their economic and social rights in that sense?

In order to fill this gap, we realised that documentation and compilation of such incidents, based on on-ground research and analysis, is

necessary. Hence, we used two methods to conduct the research:

Literature Review: This research paper draws on existing insights and recommendations made by United Nations Human Rights Council resolutions, Special Rapporteur reports, and existing reports such as Brookings Institution's report, which provide guidance and international standards to establish the harm Internet shutdowns cause to civil and political liberties. It has also looked at reports by NGOs and academic and media reports, to identify the chosen area of research - i.e., social and emotional impact of network shutdowns – as a gap in existing literature, as well as to source incidents. Government/official responses and analysis of trends and instances could not be a source because the authorities ordering shutdowns rarely provide intimation or information and requests under the Right to Information Act (RTIs) are often rejected, as our team has also observed while documenting and monitoring cases and incidents of Internet shutdowns from 2012 onwards.

Media Monitoring: Media reports have been used to establish the magnitude of impact and collect real-time perspectives from the people who have been affected.

Interviews: After conducting regular media monitoring and literature review, our research teams travelled to Haryana to conduct further interviews with relevant stakeholders in person. Haryana accounts for among the highest numbers of shutdowns (nine in total) in India. Rohtak and Sonipat in Haryana were chosen because of the maximum number of cases reported and taking into account time limitations and geographic convenience As the maximum number of cases and prolonged durations of Internet shutdowns in India have been observed in Jammu and Kashmir, it was necessary to gather data from that region as well. Hence DEF's partners and supporters conducted in-depth interviews in Jammu and Kashmir as well.

The aim has been to gain information on practices and experiences over a wide spectrum in order to assess how groups or individuals are affected. We have chosen to interview these stakeholders to better understand how the loss of social well-being, or distress caused to livelihood, and restricted access to basic amenities during Internet

shutdowns cause social isolation, exclusion and emotional peril in the Indian context. The case studies collected have primarily covered individual experiences during shutdowns. They seek to identify emotional distress and hardships faced by the individuals and stakeholders.

a. Mobile sim card sellers, to identify the losses they incurred, as they rely on sales for their daily income

b. Cyber café owners whose sole income come from providing Internet access and services

c. Small business owners and non-profits whose income depends on Internet enabled communication technologies

d. Individuals whose access to livelihood, education, necessities, and communication tools are affected during network shutdowns

Background

The power of social media and the Internet

Information is power, and in recent years, social media platforms have become a vital source of information. Social media sites serve not only as platforms where users can socialize with family and friends but also give users an avenue to promote and conduct their business effectively at a low cost. The most compelling of contemporary events that was significantly facilitated by the Internet and social media was the Arab Spring in 2011. During the movement the world witnessed the reach and might of this worldwide network of people that culminated to claim their independence using the Internet. It was a landmark indication of how fundamental and essential the Internet has become to our lives and how imbued it is in the fabric of our contemporary society.
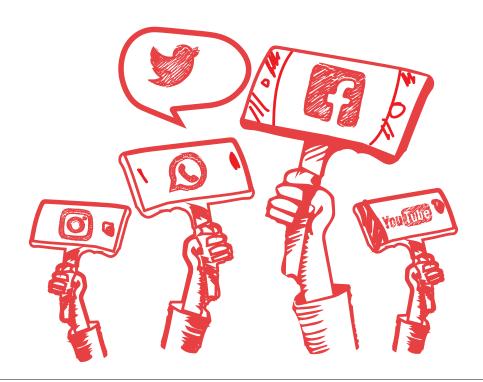
Technology and culture experts have reiterated that democratising public life, social engagement and the process of citizens' political participation is increasingly being facilitated by the networked realm of social media. Since 2011, the world has realised its potential and shortcomings and the challenges that it creates. Since 2012, in particular, there has been an increase in India in the number of state-led crackdowns on freedom of expression and speech on the Internet. The nature of attacks ranges from censorship of websites and network shutdowns to the ar-

rest of citizens for engaging in online activities to form associations on corporate platforms like Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp.

Technological and social media advancements can potentially trans-form human rights movements by giving voice and means to the remotest of areas and issues. Today, an activist armed with just a smartphone, Twitter account and YouTube account can disseminate information far and wide about violations occurring in their region. Attention to actual or potential abuse can be drawn instantly to seek redressal in real time via "live-tweeting", as has been detailed by Hu-man Rights Watch in its work on the benefits of ICTs for data gather-ing and distribution (Levine, 2014).

This is especially relevant in India in conflicted areas like Jammu and Kashmir. Residents have realised the power of social media and the Internet in disseminating information and have been using it to reveal to the world the atrocities that take place in the region. Authorities have responded by banning mobile Internet services under the guise of "national security". However residents are fighting back. The gov-

ernment of Jammu and Kashmir imposed a shutdown on April 9, 2017 during the bypoll in Srinagar Parliamentary constituency to maintain law and order and stop the alleged misinformation flow. This prevented Kashmiris from broadcasting videos of ongoing clashes on Facebook. However, the videos were still shot on smartphones and were uploaded later when services were restored. Youth in Kashmir are increasingly using social media and video streaming services to "show the world what was going on ground", while authorities are enforcing shutdowns to prevent this from happening.

Shutdowns may also be only partial, as when only particular services are banned. A young Kashmiri pointed out, "The government bans WhatsApp, we have Hike. They ban Snapchat, we use Instagram. The ban is quite pointless, really. The only thing the curfews and bans do is give us more time to kill and actively use social media." The constitution guarantees every citizen of India the right to freedom of speech and expression. The right should be extended to the use of social media to exercise their freedom of speech and expression. Interviewees in Kashmir pointed out that bans on specific social media sites do little to achieve authorities' objective, i.e., to prevent dissent. Instead people find alternatives. People have been using virtual private networks (VPN) to circumvent the ban and surveillance and alternative social media sites. All that these bans achieve is to alienate residents from the rest of the country and increase mistrust in State authorities. Social media platforms have become vital avenues for freedom of expression and freedom of assembly and association, and State authorities ought to protect these rights of the people.

This has been reiterated by UN Special Rapporteur, Frank La Rue, who identifies, in his report, the Internet as a key means by which individuals can exercise their right to freedom of opinion and expression, as guaranteed by Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The Special Rapporteur underscored that access to the Internet has two dimensions, namely: access to online content without any restrictions except in a few limited cases permitted under international human rights law; and the availability of the necessary network infrastructure.

Similarly, Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Assembly and Associa-

tion, Maina Kiai, also reaffirmed and recognised the Internet as a platform to exercise freedom of assembly.

With specific context to India, the landmark Shreya Singhal Judgement, the Supreme Court upheld the Internet as an essential medium to further our constitutional right to freedom of speech and expression in 2015.

Internet shutdowns in India

Yet in India, the Internet is shut down with increasing regularity, either partially or completely. This is frequently done "in the interest of national security". Minimal legal procedures are followed. In a majority of cases, section 144 of the Indian Penal Code, which prohibits the assembly of more than four persons, has been imposed.
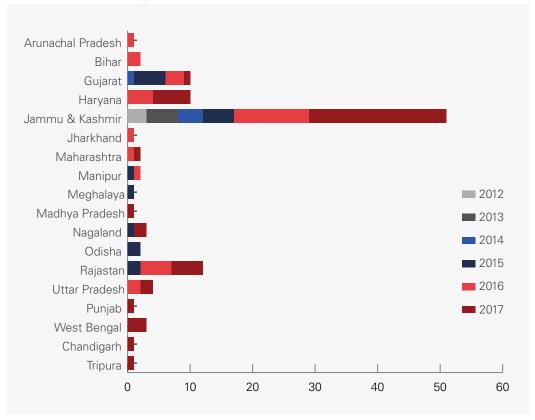
The table below shows the kind of network shutdowns and the measures taken by the state:

Table 1: Network shutdowns in India and justifications stated by respective governments

State	No. of cases	Voice Services	Mobile Data Services	SMS Services	Precautionary Measure	Preventive Measure	Prevent Deterioration of Law and Order	Notice or Intimation issued
Arunachal Pradesh	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
Bihar	2	0	2	0	0	1	1	0
Gujarat	10	1	10	2	2	7	2	2
Haryana	10	1	9	1	5	2	3	1
Jammu & Kashmir	51	8	51	6	26	11	14	6
Jharkhand	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
Maharashtra	2	0	2	1	1	1	0	0
Manipur	2	0	2	0	0	0	2	0
Meghalaya	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
Nagaland	3	0	3	1	2	1	1	0
Odisha	2	0	2	0	1	1	0	0
Rajasthan	12	1	11	3	5	4	3	1

State	No. of cases	Voice Services	Mobile Data Services	SMS Services	Precau-tionary Measure	Pre-ventive Measure	Prevent Deterio-ration of Law and Order	Notice or Intima-tion issued
Uttar Pradesh	4	0	4	0	1	2	1	0
Madhya Pradesh	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
West Bengal	3	0	3	0	1	2	0	1
Tripura	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0
Punjab	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1
Chandigarh	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1

Table 2: This table shows year-wise network shutdowns in India from 2012-2016

Kept in the dark: The social and psychological impact of network shutdowns in India

In most cases, no notice is issued. Notice was issued only in five cases. Most shutdowns are ordered as precautionary or preventative measures. The vague excuses given for shutdowns do not include concrete evidence of threats nor do they explain to citizens the motivations behind such actions, leading to more confusion and panic.

On August 8 2017, the Department of Technology released a notification titled Temporary Suspension of Telecom Services (Public Emergency or Public Safety) Rules, 2017. Prior to this, there was no designated authority to impose the shutdowns. In most cases, the District Collector would provide orders to Internet Service Providers (ISPs) or telecom operators to terminate all connections, without providing valid reasons or justifications.

The notification states,

> "Directions to suspend the telecom services shall not be issued except by an order made by the Secretary to the Government of India in the Ministry of Home Affairs in the case of Government of India or by the Secretary to the State Government in-charge of the Home Department in the case of a State Government (hereinafter referred to as the competent authority), and in unavoidable circumstances, where obtaining of prior direction is not feasible, such order may be issued by an officer, not below the rank of a Joint Secretary to the Government of India, who has been duly authorised by the Union Home Secretary or the State Home Secretary … shall be subject to the confirmation from the competent authority within 24 hours of issuing such order."

The order will have to contain reasons for such directions. Upon release of the order:

1. A Review Committee will be set up latest by the next working day. The Review Committee will be constituted by the Cabinet/Chief Secretary, Secretary of Law, and Secretary to the Government, Department of Telecommunications or Secretary to the State Government (other than the Home Secretary) in the case of state governments or the respective individuals in the case of the Union government. This Committee must ensure that orders were issued in accordance with the said Act.

2. The order will be "conveyed to designated officers of the telegraph authority or to the designated officers of the service provider"

3. Telegraph authority and service providers shall designate nodal officers to receive and handle requisitions for suspension of telecom services.

Internet shutdowns and Digital India

We have established the power that the medium has to disseminate information and the inherent power that access to information holds. Access to information is a fundamental right and hence access to the Internet should be an imperative need in our times. Social media show early promise as a tool for transparency and openness despite attempts at censorship (McKinnon, 2008).

In 2015, the Indian government launched the Digital India initiative with the vision of empowering the country digitally in line with the sustainable development goals.

Governments across the globe are adopting digital technologies for information and service delivery of welfare and entitlement schemes. These services were earlier provided manually without the Internet. In this day and age, speedy and wider reach, affordability, and lower requirement of manpower have been the major reasons for governments to shift their management and delivery to online systems.

The UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are aimed at reducing poverty, gender and income inequality, and advancing education, access to information, livelihood, and health. They were adopted by the United Nations (UN) in 2015. One of the principal understandings laid down in the SDGs is that Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are a paramount enabler of rights, as SDG goal 9 mentions, "increase access to information and communications technology and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in the least developed countries by 2020". The UN General Assembly has reiterated "the importance of building confidence and trust in the Internet, not least with regard to freedom of expression, privacy and other human rights so that the potential of the Internet as, inter alia, an enabler for development and innovation can be realized" .

The UN has declared access to the Internet a human right. India's Digital India initiative aims to provide its citizens with services and social schemes via digital avenues. Internet shutdowns are completely antithetical to rolling these initiatives out effectively.

During the Digital India launch event, the Indian government, too, recognised digital access as a human right and an enabler of rights. Out of 15 digital India services, nine services directly focus on access to the Internet, The Internet has become a main enabler of access to education, healthcare, and financial services in empowering people in semi-urban and rural areas. Equitable access to the Internet and digital tools is now critical to access entitlements such as rations, RTIs and livelihood schemes like Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) which are now exclusively digitally enabled services. With the government attempting to make Aadhaar mandatory to avail of social schemes, owning a mobile phone with a functioning number and access to the Internet to fill applications has become an urgent necessity for the population for whom access to infrastructure is the weakest.

It would be logical and reasonable to expect the government to provide unfettered access to the Internet in order to make a success of the Digital India initiatives by consistently providing their services and truly empowering citizens. However, the startling instances of Internet shutdowns put these initiatives in jeopardy and severely hamper freedom of expression and speech online in addition to having an adverse effect on other basic rights such as the right to food and access to health services.

In the following three sections, we will examine in detail how Internet shutdowns have affected the social and economic rights of Indians.

Information is power

SDG 4 ensures the inclusive and equitable education, and promotes learning opportunities for all. Digital India also supports the use of technology to make education and learning opportunities more accessible. The three ways in which Digital India is attempting to transform the education system are: i) creation of a knowledge based society; ii) improve attendance in schools; and iii) bridge the digital divide. All three programmes use smartphones and mobile Internet/data services to provide e-Book services, help children learn basic academic and life skills, and enhance their overall cognitive, socio-emotional and physical development. However, our research has found Interenet network

shutdowns put these initiatives at jeopardy and hinder citizens' rights to essential services such as health services, education, and even social pleasure, to name a few.

Access to education

In times of network shutdowns, education takes a major hit, although this is rarely reported in the media. This is highly problematic in an area like Kashmir that faces constant political turmoil and social unrest. Frequent and long network shutdowns, sometimes lasting for months, create further marginalisation in the valley.

One interviewee from Srinagar states,

"For example if being a parent, I have to fill entrance forms for my child, and there is no Internet access, I will get frustrated. Because it is not a matter of a few weeks, but an entire year. If I am not able to fill the form from this place, it's completely insane that I am being asked to go to Jammu or Delhi to fill that one form. It is like pulling us back to the Stone Age. I have seen parents who weren't able to fill the forms for their children, national level entrance exams for AIIMS, NEET and similar other exams - and dropping a year because of that matters a lot."

Another respondent from Kashmir remarked,

> *"The biggest example of Internet shutdown or mobile network shutdowns affecting students is that students who should have been in their 4th semester now are delayed by one or two semesters. Students could not access notes for their exams, which is done through Internet these days, which they couldn't do. A lot of the students had to apply for exams or fill forms for the next year, which again they were unable to do, because of the blbockade. So a lot of students ended up having to waste a year or a semester because of the Internet blockade and that might affect him in the future too."*

Similarly, the network shutdown in Darjeeling due to political unrest in the region has directly affected residents' access to education, with college and school administrators facing many difficulties. The process of online registration for class ninth and class 11th students was delayed because of the Internet ban. Prakash Pradhan, the director of Kalimpong's Rockvale Academy says,

> *"The online registration process of the students in ICSE schools will have to be completed by mid-August after linking them with Aadhaar numbers and most students do not have Aadhaar numbers, so cannot apply for them without access to the web."*

Students in Darjeeling who have been facing a network shutdown for more than 50 days, have also been unable to submit their online college application forms. Yasang Subba, a 19- year old student who lives in a village outside Darjeeling, had to travel about 70 kilometers to access the Internet at a cyber café in Siliguri to submit her online college application to the Polytechnic College of Kurseong. Since the Internet was inaccessible in the hills, she had to travel with her mother from town to town along the border with Nepal. The trip to Siliguri usually costs Rs 300, but it ended up costing Subba's family Rs 4,500, or 15 times as much. The political turmoil in the region caused a complete shutdown with supply lines of essential necessities adversely affected thus making the situation very dire. Like Yasang, many other college students are facing the same issue and have been unable to submit their online application forms.

> Diminished access to education is an inadvertent effect of Internet shutdowns. Countless students are unable to submit forms required to apply to universities or school leaving examinations. While others are made to show Aadhaar cards to process admissions.

In a distinctive case, district collectors in Gujarat asked to ban mobile Internet services between 10 AM and 2 PM on October 13, 2016, so that mobile Internet services would not be used by candidates to cheat and use unfair means for the written examination test for the post of class IV non-Secretariat clerks and office assistants. Asit Vora, chairman of the Gujarat Subordinate Service Selection Board (GSSSB) says, "We are taking all precautionary measures to ensure that the examination is held without use of unfair means."

It is interesting to see that while on the one hand, State authorities feel that mobile Internet services will be used to cheat, but on the other, students use it to access education-related information. The problem of cheating could have been addressed by disallowing mobile phones into exam centres instead of banning services in the state and inconveniencing more people than necessary.

This case also makes clear how curbs on access to information can have much wider ramifications, including on one's right to political determination. When Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal visited Gujarat to address a rally in Surat in October 2016, mobile Internet was banned due to the incident narrated above thus making people unable to access the real-time relay of Kejriwal's address. Citizens need free and full access to information to realize their full social, political and economic rights. The ban was not called to specifically prevent Kejriwal's speech from being heard but had the unintended effect of snuffing a political opponent.

Access to social activities

The Indian government often cites national security, protection of peace and harmony, and protection from terrorist activities as reasons to impose shutdowns. However, there is little to no evidence that the shutdowns have resulted in achieving the mentioned objectives. There is evidence, in contrast, that supporting these measures creates disproportionate inconvenience as residents have restricted access to e-banking services and communication tools. Shutdowns adversely affect commerce and access to essential services leading to disruptions in daily life.

Since social media and ICTs mediate a large fraction of social interactions, Internet shutdowns adversely effect social activities. Travel plans, online chats with friends and family living in different places are curbed leading to social isolation.

This has been the case in Darjeeling, where Internet services have been suspended since June 15, 2017. The entire state has been in shutdown mode and schools have been closed. Children and teens are left with little to do since many of their social activities and recreational activities take place online. With Internet services switched off too, they have no respite from idleness or access to the means to socialise leading to feelings of listlessness and frustration.

Vivek Giri, 13, a student of Class 7 states, "Our parents don't allow us to go outside and play. The police uncles are not allowing us to play on the road. Inside the house, there is no Internet. We cannot play online games." Similarly, Roshan, student of St Joseph's North Point feels isolated and states, "We have been unable to check our Facebook accounts or WhatsApp messages. We are totally cut off from the outside world as cable networks have also been snapped in a few areas." The Internet and social media have become such an entrenched part of socialising that without it, people are left bereft.

Citizens' access to leisure and well-being has been under critical threat in Darjeeling during the shutdown. A school student from St. Joseph's North Point says, "My father had planned to take us to Digha sea beach during our vacation. I have never been to a sea beach, but now due to this shutdown, all our plans have gone for a toss."

Shahid Ahmed* from Kashmir believes the impact of such an absence of social activities can be far-reaching and detrimental to the Indian state:

> "… teenagers will have nothing to enjoy, at least they will go to the mosques and this thing will create a problem for them. Last time, a political analyst said Kashmir is getting more Islamic and because they don't have any entertainment, they will become more and more Islamic and that will be a problem for them… Don't you see that more students have beard than previous times and don't you see girls, how they are beating the security personnel. This is going to be detrimental for them, by all means. They are becoming unsafe by these steps. Not us." (sic)

Social exclusion has become a major consequence of network shutdowns. Social exclusion refers to both individual exclusion and group exclusion from society or other groups. It results in denial of access to opportunities, public goods, public information, and self-respect in the public sphere. Power & Wilson (2000:27) recognise that the basis of social exclusion can be race, ethnicity, gender, religion, language, region, or caste. Social exclusion is crucially related to the issue of equal opportunity. Though modern liberal democracies formally recognise full citizenship, very often they create unequal citizenship in actual practice, as the structural accommodation through citizenship and affirmative action policies fails to bring about the desired change. By preventing citizens from accessing information crucial to their wellbeing and overall development by imposing network shutdowns, State-imposed network shutdowns are setting a dangerous precedent that leads to social exclusion of particular groups.

Access to essential services

Internet connectivity has also become essential for the efficient delivery of services. SDG 3 ensures access to universal health services. Similarly, Digital India also promotes access to health services such as ePharmacy, eDiagnostics, eInsurance, etc., using mobile data services. The State promotes use of digital mediums to enhance health services, including telemedicine, and accessing doctors and medical records. However, if the network has been suspended even if only for few hours or a day, patients face difficulties accessing health services. Network shutdowns for longer durations magnify hardships for patients and hospitals.

Administrators need to recognise the importance of the Internet for essential services, especially in light of the Digital India initiative. According to a report examining the negative impact of Internet shutdowns in Pakistan published in 2015 by the Institute for Human Rights and Business, it is clear that lack of access to emergency services can lead to a large number of lives lost and psychological distress. The report states,

> *"During network shutdowns injured people are unable to call via a mobile phone emergency services, such as an ambulance, hospitals, fire and rescue, and emergency services are unable to communicate*

Emergency services, medical services and services like banking, helplines and online economic activities suffer during network shutdowns. These activities are essential to the normal functioning of daily activities, disrupting which causes numerous inconveniences.

and locate people. People who need to contact police under different circumstances, such as to report crimes or in the event of an accident or a hostage situation face similar situations."

This has been the case in Kashmir as well. A Kashmiri health professional notes,

"People don't use the landlines anymore, we are entirely dependent on mobile phones. So whenever there is a shutdown, it creates a panic, because I am not able to call anyone, my family, or if my kids are in school and I want to contact them."

He adds, "We have a mobile number for our front desk, which was not working during shutdowns and we noticed at least a 50% drop in patients' presence at our hospital."

Dr. Shafeek Muhammad*, who works at SKIMS Hospital in Srinagar, speaks of the difficulties he faces in dispensing his medical duties in times of shutdowns:

"One is that as far as our contact with our colleagues, staff, juniors, and resident doctors is highly affected, we don't get to do that efficiently. Secondly, we can't take an update on the condition of the patients or give out instructions to patients. Even when the patients want to call us, that also does not happen. Sometimes they call the doctors directly, even that is affected."

He speaks of the difficulties he faces even in consulting with colleagues about a certain treatment, or in looking up alternative and better treatments, when access to the Internet is cut and mobile devices are not functioning:

"Sometimes you want to talk to your senior colleague who is outside the state, but you can't even do that. On the other hand, you have your family, parents, relatives; you can't even talk to them, or your friends."

Apart from businesses, education, and health; services, NGOs and legal helplines also suffer a great deal during shutdowns as Pankti Jog, an RTI activist who also runs a legal helpline for rural and nomadic communities in Gujarat, pointed out in an interview with us. These

services heavily rely on the Internet and are time bound: every minute counts. Her daily work gets hampered and people who need critical support lose opportunities as they are already marginalised and are living in remote and difficult areas with little to no connectivity with the rest of the world "In an instance of shutdown, lack of connectivity disempowers them, their ability to respond or seek information becomes half", says Pankti Jog. Adding,

> *"For example, in a case of sexual assault, lack of Internet connectivity for sending or receiving information can severely affect the justice seeking process. The amount of psychological trauma that the victim is already going through will increase manifolds. In this scenario does the government then take responsibility? Who is accountable here then?"*

Pankti's organisation and people associated with it are also using the Internet to enhance accountability in the region and to avail of government schemes. For example, the Internet has facilitated downloading data about ration stocks available with different ration dealers, which can then be shown to the dealer or the authorities if they try to cheat people or conceal the availability of rations.

Shutting down the Internet or any other communication medium can also be counterproductive in cases where social media can come in handy to deploy quick rescue missions in emergency situations. There are various examples of police departments using social media tools to remedy instances of communal violence. The Bangalore police department is a good example of this. They use social media tools like Facebook or Twitter to communicate with netizens and give traffic and safety updates. Similarly, during the Jat agitation in February 2016, it was reported that the intelligence services relied heavily on WhatsApp communication to send alerts to each other of build-up and violence. Moreover, terrorists or anti-social elements can always avail of alternative means of communication such as satellite phones.

Economic is social

Much has been said about the economic impact of network shutdowns and their effect on enterprise and education, and it is important to reiterate this. A report by Brookings Institution estimates that Internet shutdowns have cost the Indian economy USD 968 million in 2016 alone.

According to Yochai Benkler, the modern economy is centred on information and cultural production, made possible by advances in telecommunications infrastructure and the decentralised nature of production that these networks encourage, thus leading to the formation of the "networked information society" (Benkler, 2006). The declining cost of technological infrastructure and the relative availability of information and knowledge (in this case the raw material for production) has placed the means of material production in the hands of a much larger proportion of the world's population. Hence, access to the Internet and information—whether in the form

of material information, digital skills or knowledge – is vital if one is to actively participate in this changing economic system and reap its benefits. The "networked information society" has in many cases given workers more agency and helped them surmount barriers to access employment and livelihoods.

In India, Internet connectivity and digital technologies have enhanced small businesses, starting with Internet café owners, sim card and recharge shops, the leisure service sector (which includes catering, grooming, and food deliveries), and e-commerce. Small business owners have leveraged ICTs in their entrepreneurial ventures allowing them greater control over their economic lives. Fishermen in Kerala routinely use mobile phones to ascertain the price of their catch while they are still at sea, stock brokers use mobile phones to exchange information in real time so they can make split second decisions, farmers track weather conditions, and fruit and vegetable sellers use mobile devices to access market information (Krishnamurthy, 2008).

Additionally, sociality has changed immensely thanks to digital technologies and the "networked information society". As the number of mobile Internet users in India reached 420 million in 2017 (Press Trust of India, 2017), social interactions have shifted to social media platforms, and messaging and Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) applications that require an Internet connection to function. WhatsApp and Facebook are particularly popular in India, with WhatsApp having 200 million active users in India (Singh, 2017) and the app being the most downloaded Android app between 2016 and 2017 (Gadgets Now Bureau, 2017).

Economists have pointed out that good interpersonal relations among economic actors may reduce transaction costs by promoting co-operation, sharing of resources, and strong social networks. Trust within a community and a positive atmosphere is conducive to the success of entrepreneurial ventures (Gui and Sugden, 2005:4-6). Since ICTs have in many cases replaced physical bonding practices, access to them is crucial for the success of economic ventures and social well-being.

The United Nations also has taken cognizance of this and in the 2011 report to the United Nations Human Rights Council by former UN

The modern global economy is shaped by ICTs and the flow of information and data. It comes as no surprise that the economic loss caused by Internet shutdowns are substantial. Today, economic activities are conducted via mobile phones and ICT-enabled sociality is an important factor in conducting business.

Special Rapporteur, Frank La Rue states,

> "... *without Internet access, which facilitates economic development and the enjoyment of a range of human rights, marginalized groups and developing States remain trapped in a disadvantaged situation, thereby perpetuating inequality both within and between States*".

In India mobile penetration is higher than that of computers and even landlines, owing to the proliferation of cheap local and Chinese made devices. This is why a majority of the population accesses the Internet through mobile devices. Network shutdowns in India usually target mobile Internet connectivity thereby affecting the less advantaged sections of society, who keenly feel the loss of even a few days' wages. Moreover, economic losses affect personal and social well-being and this cannot be ignored when we talk about the impact of network shutdowns in the country.

Network shutdown in Gujarat August 2015

When Internet services and mobile connectivity (like bulk messaging) were suspended across Gujarat for over a week in August 2015 during the Patel agitation, to "contain rumour mongering" (Express News Service, 2015a), commerce took a hit in various parts of the state. Banking, public distribution services, fuel stations, and restaurants and hotels that make most transactions over credit or debit card were affected. Although broadband services were working, mobile Internet connectivity was hit, affecting small traders and small business owners. Megha Tank, who runs a bakery in Ahmedabad says, "My sales have gone down by 25 to 30% as a lot of orders come via WhatsApp and Facebook. I have not been able to source raw materials for my new orders and I won't be able to take on more orders this time because of the delay." (Express New Service, 2015).

In Saurashtra, during the same shutdown, travel agents were hit, as were banks, government departments, and postal services. The textile industry was affected, with the Federation of Surat Textile Traders Association president Manoj Agrawal stating, "In textile trading business, most business communication happens on WhatsApp." The Surat Diamond Association president Dinesh Navadia also states, "Traders and

During the Internet shutdown in Gujarat, small and big business owners were affected. Those using social media platforms to solicit business were heavily impacted.

brokers use [the] Internet to send the photos of diamonds to other parties. We wish such services are started at the earliest."

The shutdown, which started on August 25, 2015, lasted about a week, with losses being reported from all sectors by as early as the third day of the shutdown. A representative from a private 3G Internet service provider states, "We have incurred losses [of] up to Rs. 25 lakh per day in Vadodara alone." (Express News Service, 2015a).

What compounded the chaos was the fact that the shutdown coincided with the closing date to file income tax returns. This affected residents and chartered accountants immensely, as the most convenient method of communication had been blocked.

Joint Secretary of Vadodara Chamber of Commerce and Industries (VCCI), Himanshu Patel, says the industry had decided to take up the matter with the state government, stating, "Today, many small businesses receive their orders through email. In turn, it is going to affect the state revenue." (Express News Service, 2015a).

It is ironic that a shutdown that caused such widespread loss took place in Gujarat, the home state of Prime Minister Narendra Modi who has made a strong push for Digital India and the promotion of business and digital services since his entry into the Prime Minister's Office. Residents echoed these sentiments: "This is pathetic that the government, which claimed that normalcy has returned to Gujarat, continues the Internet blockage on mobiles," says a 35-year-old businessman in Navarangpura area of Ahmedabad (Langa, 2015).

Advocate Shailesh Amin made a salient point about the ban when he states,

> *"In January this year, the Government of Gujarat held a Vibrant Gujarat event with eight partner countries and seminars, involving 14 countries that brought in proposed investment of Rs 25 lakh crore, according to government data. The thoughtless blanket ban on Internet services is detrimental to the development of the state as no partner country would compromise on the principle of communication. Gujarat has unwittingly clinched the record of*

being the first state in the world to ban Internet services for law and order problems." (Express News Service, 2015b).

Shop owners in Kashmir

Kashmir has faced the highest number and longest periods of Internet shutdowns in the country. The government orders a network shutdown at any instance of social unrest on the pretext of "national security". When such shutdowns take place, mobile Internet services are the first to be disrupted. The shutdowns are frequent and last for as long as a few days to several weeks, without residents being given any prior warning or reasons for the shutdowns. The incidents that trigger concerns for "national security" are numerous and varied, ranging from instances of stone pelting, the death of a militant, operations by military forces, and clashes between residents and state personnel. These shutdowns affect business owners, as they disrupt their right to a livelihood in addition to causing emotional distress and feelings of isolation as well as mistrust in the Indian government.

Sairee Chahal from online career portal for women, Sheroes, tells us how the businesses of their members are affected:

> *"We sit in Delhi so we are not affected by shutdowns directly but Sheroes is a member based organisation and these women members are spread across the country and they get affected. We can't get in touch with them when required and they can't reach us which causes severe delays and lags, which in turn affects our efficiency as an organisation. Kashmir definitely tops the list for these recurring situations. A lot of women work from home, they log in to the platform and they work with us. Now, imagine a situation where I've employed a professional in Kashmir and I'm her remote employer. How do I make sure that you are readily and reliably available to me? And this happens over and over again. The professional sitting in Kashmir then loses credibility. It's stressful; it affects their work and even their ability to get employed again. So then it means by imposing the Internet shutdown, the government has taken away their fundamental right to communicate, to livelihood and is also causing emotional trauma to an individual.*

Shop owners in Kashmir saw their livelihood depleted during times of Internet shutdowns. Many have had to change businesses or move out of the region in search of better opportunities.

How will you give back someone their credibility which they have not tarnished for their own fault?"

Such challenges are not only faced by those with remote employers. Ismail Naqash* , who owns a stationery and gift shop that also provides online documentation services in Regal Chowk, Srinagar, reported a 80-90 per cent drop in income during Internet shutdowns, since his main source of income is online documentation work which is dependent on good Internet connectivity. He says of shutdowns,

> *"What happens is that, for example, we are doing documentation work, this work is completely dependent on Internet and mobile services, if that is down, your business goes down 100 per cent. And once you are affected, your customers get affected because of that."*

Hisham* who runs Ran internet cafe in Regal Chowk in Srinagar spoke of the difficulties he faced getting work done since most of his work involves emailing, Internet banking, and receiving and sending payments through online transactions. The proliferation of mobile devices has made PCOs and STD booths and landlines obsolete, making telecommunications difficult in the absence of mobile connectivity. Hisham pointed out that there was nothing else they could use to communicate adding, "… if we have to talk to a business associate, we end up having to go to them personally and makes everything cumbersome." (sic)

With the uncertainty that residents face with respect to network shutdowns, access to education and information, and opportunities for livelihood, many young people have been forced out of their jobs and out of their homeland in search of employment in other places. Saif*, owner of a shop offering mobile recharges, tech accessories and documentation services, had to let go of his staff. He says,

> *"I work with online application of passports and PAN cards. Last year, during the Internet shutdown, I suffered almost Rs. 10,000-15,000 of loss per day. I also had a boy working here with me who would manage all the affairs here, but I had to let him go because I could not afford to keep him."*

In addition, his cousin and business partner had to look for other

employment to make up for their losses. From earning around Rs. 300-400 on recharges per day, his income dropped to Rs. 90 per day, which just about covered his daily expenses. Because Saif* did not own a landline, he could not get a broadband connection which might have helped him overcome his losses.

Kabir*, a 29-year-old owner of an electronics and Internet-based documentation shop spoke of the frequency of shutdowns, saying that shutdowns were taking place almost 50 per cent of the time. The shutdown of WhatsApp affected their business as they couldn't send details of transactions and cheque through the messaging app. Kabir sells his products on e-commerce sites like OLX, Quikr, JustDial, and Yellow Pages. Sales suffer in times of shutdowns and so do the other Internet based documentation services that he offers. He sources his products from Delhi and uses the Internet to find the best prices. In the absence of the Internet he is forced to go to Delhi and search the entire market, when he could have just searched online and made enquiries over the phone if connectivity had been available. He pointed out that people also have a hard time finding his shop in the absence of search engines and online maps, because his shop isn't located in the city centre.

> *"I get customers from all the districts when the Internet is working, from Islamabad, Pahalgam, Ganderbal. But when the Internet is banned I don't get anyone, I mean I am just sitting idle all day."*

This sense of idleness has been reiterated by a number of people. The Internet has become a vital part of social and economic life. When Internet shutdowns are ordered to "check rumour mongering" and stop the spread of misinformation, communication lines are stifled, affecting both social interactions and business transactions. Communication is such an integral part of economic activity in the modern economy that to cut it off communication lines is to disrupt the entire economic process. Livelihoods are taken away from young people and ambitions thwarted. Many young people have had to leave their homeland to find employment in Dubai and other far off places.

Kabir says,

> *"Most of my friends have shifted out of Kashmir. In about 12*

friends, only two live here. The rest of them are either in India or in Dubai. We stay here because we are among those people who want to stay in Kashmir because we feel homesick and we love to stay here. Why should we have to leave our home town for these reasons?... Why should I have to leave my own place due to these reasons... These actions are leaving a bad impression on the minds of the children of India who would've liked India –and now they blame India for everything."

Internet shutdown in Haryana during Jat agitation

Haryana state authorities invoked Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code and ordered the Internet and bulk messaging services to be shut down when the agitation by the Jat community for reserved seats in government jobs and educational institutions grew violent. Authorities took this decision to curb the spread of rumours. Section 144, which prohibits unlawful assembly, had been imposed in some districts, namely in Rohtak, Sonipat, Jhajjar, Bhiwani, Charkhi Dadri, and Dadri, at different times during the Jat agitations in February and March 2017 and in February and June of 2016.

During the shutdown in mid-February 2017, authorities shut all mobile Internet services, including 2G, 3G, 4G, pocket Wi-Fi, and GPRS. Some broadband subscribers also spoke of slow connections. This came just after demonetisation and the government's push towards digital payment services. "More than 50% of our payments are done via mobile wallets. Such move will not only affect our business but also shake our trust in going digital," says Pankaj Chawla, who runs a bakery shop in Rohtak (Anand, 2017).

When Internet services were shut down in June 2016, a government spokesman states,

> *"These services could also be used in illegal activities such as blocking roads, highways and railway tracks, damaging government property, and disrupting essential services and supply of food. Social media such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Flickr, Tumblr, Google Plus, and mobile Internet could be misused for this purpose."* *(Indo-Asian News Service, 2016).*

But some find this short-sighted. In an interview with Sairee Chahal who runs a career portal for women called Sheroes, she called the Internet "a lifeline in our times", saying,

> *"Increasingly all forms of communications, transactions, and media for communications are designed for the Internet, for example bookings, payments, digital payments. Therefore in my opinion it's worse than an offline curfew. It basically also points out towards the (lack of) maturity of understanding of technology by the government, also the agencies that control the shutdowns. To me it seems like their own depth of understanding the medium or the technology or understanding its implications is very shallow."*

To what extent people on the ground are impacted depends, however, on the kind of shutdown that is imposed. An owner of a cyber café and online form filling service in Sonipat says he felt "handicapped during the Internet shutdown". However because BSNL broadband services were working, he did not suffer economic losses. "My earning increased due to [the] Internet shutdown: because phone Internet was not working, people had to come to cyber café to work." People had to go the cyber café to carry out the work they would have usually done on their phones i.e., to send emails, to check Facebook, to fill out online application forms, to book tickets, and take necessary printouts.

Vikas Kumar*, who runs a form filling shop in Sonipat, says many job applicants suffered because they were unable to fill out their forms in time due to the shutdown. Wahid* says he lost about 10 per cent of his earnings during the shutdown because customers did not come to him to get their phones recharged. His losses were not bigger because broadband services were not affected and customers came in for photocopy services, etc.

Psychological well-being and its political implications

Fundamentally, the Internet has been designed to connect people and networks. In trends observed so far in India, the State usually imposes shutdowns during times of protest or social unrest, exacerbating the situation by shutting down lines of communication so that families cannot keep in touch.

The psychological cost of network shutdowns seems to depend on how often people are confronted with such shutdowns as well as on the nature of the shutdowns. In Haryana, some districts experienced Internet shutdowns for a few days in the past year due to Jat agitation. The agitation saw normal life come to a standstill as protesters gathered to push their agenda. Authorities shut down mobile Internet services and bulk messaging to curb the spread of rumours. When asked about the legitimacy of such shutdowns, most residents felt that the move was necessary to stop the situation from escalating. Residents were aware of the harm that misinformation, spread on WhatsApp and Facebook, could wreak and they felt that a shutdown was necessary to preserve peace.
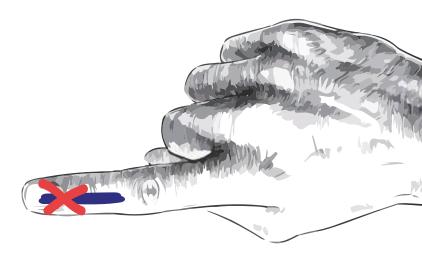
Wahid says of shutdowns:

> *"Whatever steps the government takes, it's for common people, for the sake of larger interest. So that common people should not suffer. I agree with the government for shutting down the Internet during such times because we are surrounded by antisocial elements which can take advantage anytime by misleading people with fake news and rumours."*

The sentiment in Kashmir is starkly different. Residents have seen many prolonged shutdowns that have adversely affected livelihoods, education, and daily life and they were vehement in their opposition to shutdowns. The political situation in Kashmir is precarious, and granted there are factors other than Internet shutdowns that shape these sentiments. However, Internet shutdowns in Kashmir have become a tool by which residents' human rights are being throttled and many sections of society feel this keenly.

Towards mid-2017, the situation in Kashmir had become suffocating and the isolation meant that people were living in constant fear. One resident is quoted saying,

> *"It is very suffocating to have curfew on the first day of the holy month. The phones are blocked and mobile Internet is shut. Everything is shut. It's very disturbing. We don't know what is going to happen in the next moment and how much the situation would escalate."*

Hisham speaks of the uncertainties that relatives experience during these shutdowns:

> *"Our family members don't let us leave from home, because they know they can't contact us. They insist that we stay at home, because that is safer. It affects the business and our social life and we can't do much about it. If someone leaves for some work, the family members end up worrying about them all the while."*

Kabir, too, points out that when the ability to communicate with the world and stay connected is taken away during the Internet shutdown, it creates stress and unnecessary panic:

> *"My brother is in Dubai, he used to call us through [the] Internet most of the time, because the phone call rates are too high, so usually people call through [the] Internet. When the net is down, he is unable to call us for two or three days, he gets panicked over there. Not us. We know the situation and we are dealing with it, and we have been living in tough times since we were born. So we take it a little easily. But the people who want to connect to us, who are calling us and can't connect, they get frustrated and start calling our relatives, to ask if everything is okay and why the phones are not connecting."*

In one incident from Jammu and Kashmir, people found out only after mobile calling services were restored that eight people had been killed

during the hours of shutdowns because of the clashes. During a shutdown, there is no information flow in and out of the affected area or within it. Even the rights of the press and media to report on such cases are curtailed (Zaid, 2016). In such a scenario, we cannot even begin to measure the amount of social and psychological distress and despair that it must have caused the members of the families of the eight persons killed. The prolonged shutdowns in Kashmir have left people helpless and in constant fear and feeling of isolation as the region is already feeling isolated from the rest of the country.

Hisham notes:

> *"We are helpless, we can't do anything about it. If we keep thinking about the work and the loss we have to bear, a person can get frustrated. But we are used to dealing with such situation and we have to do it."*

Another respondent from Kashmir points out:

> *"When the situation is like that, it is understood that there is nothing we can do about this. In such a situation we are helpless to do anything about it, and we know that. We just keep wondering about the situation, about the kind of place that we have been born in and what is going to happen next and whether we will be able to survive it today or in the future or not. We wonder that maybe we are not in the right place to survive."*

Several interviewees expressed their mistrust in the government and felt India does not apply democratic ideals to the governance of their state. The fact that so many have had their education stalled or business enterprises disrupted because of the state's actions over a prolonged time has had a profound impact on the way they view the government.

Maroof Rahim* says that Internet shutdowns only raise the anger of people:

> *"Common people who ideally wouldn't think much about politics or conflict are forced to think about it and then they feel that this is oppression, someone closing down your Internet, as far as I have seen and heard from people."*

Kabir, too, says:

> *"These actions are leaving a bad impression on the mind of the children, of India, who ideally would have liked India, and now they blame India for everything. Kashmiris had started to grow on liking the concept of India in the last eight to 10 years, but ever since these kind of actions are being taken, they are turning the sentiments back. India is showing their actual face and that is turning people away from them."*

Residents of Darjeeling have mentioned similar sentiments of feeling excluded from the mainland, with one youth stating:

> *"The amount of unrest in Darjeeling and the draconian methods of [the] government in handling the situation makes me wonder why we are being treated like we want to secede from India when in fact my kinsmen and I just want a niche we can call our own, to end this identity crisis that has plagued us for over a century and be recognised as proper Indians."*

Some residents of Kashmir have found ways to circumvent authorities' ban on social media in particular by using VPNs. A Kashmiri respondent during the research has pointed out that the recent social media ban in the valley is helping anonymise everyone. He says,

> *"Banning the social media is government's frustration. What has banning social media done, we are now using VPN to access it. That is a shame on them. Especially now by using VPN, people's online presence is hidden, so nobody knows who is who."*

However, when Internet access is completely cut, alternative solutions are hard to come by, and all those interviewed in Kashmir felt that network shutdowns ought to be the last resort and were not convinced of the reasoning given to them by authorities. Residents felt that what authorities claimed to be threats to national security were unwarranted and did not justify the disruption it caused to everyday life and the feelings of helplessness that come with a network shutdown. Prolonged network shutdowns in the Valley had made them despondent, with many saying they just had to deal with it since there was nothing that could be done about it. Dr Shafeek Muhammad expressed the

sentiments of the people succinctly saying,

> *"Because I think this is encroaching on the human rights of people. Now they are taking people as if they are not human beings. On the one hand they are saying digitalisation, but on the other hand, these things are happening. I don't know what digitalisation they are talking about. If it is really a problem, they could do a selective are ban and for short periods, say one hour or two hours, not these prolonged bans. Last year Internet ban was for 6 months! Where in the world does it happen like that. This is totally against democracy. How can it happen in the largest democracy for six months? This is too much! What sort of governance we have."*

Conclusion

The study has shown just how inherent and necessary the Internet has become to daily life. The United Nations has declared the right to access the Internet as a human right that should be extended to all citizens of the world. The Internet has become so closely entwined in social, cultural, and economic practices that denying access to it has serious consequences to livelihood, health, and well-being. This study sought to trace the social and psychological impact of network shutdowns as experienced by those living through it. By monitoring media reports of network shutdowns and conducting interviews with residents in affected areas, the study delves into the ways that network shutdown impact citizens' access to education, essential services, and emergency services; the adverse effect on small business owners; and the psychological distress shutdowns cause as a result of communication blackouts.

This study shows the different ways network shutdowns have affected citizens living in different regions of the country. Kashmir, Gujarat, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh recorded the highest incidents of network shutdowns over the last two years. However, the shutdown in Darjeeling district in West Bengal due to political unrest has been one of the longer ones recorded with Internet services being shut in mid-June and continuing till early October. In Darjeeling and Kashmir, most shutdowns recorded were called in response to ethnic and communal violence, and political unrest. Authorities commonly justify shutdowns

by stating that they are: i) preventative or precautionary measures, ii) to stop the spread of misinformation, and iii) to safeguard national security. These justifications are broad and encompass a rather wide range of situations where network shutdowns can be ordered, hence causing disproportionate inconvenience and difficulties to those in affected areas.

Interviews with residents in Haryana and Kashmir revealed a stark difference in sentiments regarding network shutdowns. The difference in sentiment stems from the fact that the shutdowns in Haryana lasted a few days, and while shop owners did lose income from daily earnings, the loss did not affect their livelihood. Broadband services were running and there were alternatives for those who absolutely needed to access services. While respondents seemed to agree that the network shutdown was justified in that situation, most of them reiterated the need for alternatives to be present. In Kashmir, on the other hand, the sentiments expressed were grimmer. Since Internet shutdowns in the region are common and usually prolonged lasting from a few days to several weeks, its impact on livelihood is profound. Prolonged shutdowns have adversely affected small businesses and the way medical personnel carry out their work. The ill effects of shutdowns are reflected in citizens' mistrust of the government, their isolation from the rest of the country and the suffocation they feel when communication lines are cut. It is easy to see the devolution of the situation and the sentiments of residents—Haryana is where it starts, and if cases of shutdowns increase and become more common, trust in the government and democratic values can break down and mirror those in Kashmir. It becomes of utmost importance that such a devolution does not occur. In order to prevent this, the government needs to define the "threat to national security", what it constitutes, and not treat network shutdown as the first response during times of social unrest.

While this study was ongoing, the government put in place protocol to follow when ordering a network shutdown. Although the effects of this protocol, whether it prevents arbitrary shutdowns or not, remains to be seen, it sets a dangerous precedent. By legalising shutdowns, the State is legitimising the act of denying its citizens' access to a basic right—the Internet. However, having an official documentation in

place should allow advocacy groups and citizens to take a legal route for recourse. However, with access to the Internet being declared a basic right by the UN, this is not an acceptable solution. This study demonstrates the myriad social and psychological effects network shutdowns have, and other studies have shown their impact on economic output. Platform owners, Internet service providers, and law and enforcement authorities should work together to find effective ways of using the Internet to address pertinent issues.

While the State has been justifying network shutdowns as matters of "national interests", it is interesting to note that the effect has been the total opposite. Interviewees in Kashmir and Darjeeling have stated that their mistrust in the Indian government has grown due to these actions. These sentiments must be taken seriously and addressed if the authorities' intentions are truly to protect the autonomy of the country. Network shutdowns cannot be the knee-jerk reaction of administrations at the slightest sign of social unrest. The potential of social media and the Internet instead needs to be harnessed to address these problems. The State should define "national interest" in lucid terms so citizens and law enforcement officials are on the same page. There should be mechanisms in place to hold the State accountable when these definitions are crossed.

Shutdowns exclude entire communities from fully participating in social, political, and economic self-determination. This has been especially true during the prolonged shutdown in Darjeeling in West Bengal. The shutdown left residents feeling even more isolated and excluded from the mainstream. Every step they take towards self-determination has been made more difficult, tedious, and expensive. This will have dire consequences on the development of the state and its people in the long run. Disruptions that take place in underdeveloped areas like the north-east, Odisha and Bihar are sure to adversely affect the state's plans for development and residents' attempts to build better lives. In light of the Digital India project, the government should be pushing for wider and better access to Internet facilities.

The potential the Internet holds for development and empowerment are huge and authorities should be harnessing this as opposed to curbing access. While there are limitations to access to the Internet due to

lack of infrastructure, governments and those in positions of authority have the responsibility of ensuring that access is unconditional and assured.

The findings in this paper should act as evidence of the adverse impact of network shutdowns on the psychological well-being of citizens, social cohesion, and micro-economics. While countries in Europe and North America treat access to the Internet as a right as important as voting, governments in Asia and Africa treat Internet shutdowns as a means of exerting control. However, this study asserts that network shutdowns do not have the intended effect but rather increase mistrust in the government. When we interviewed university students about the future of the Internet, a large number stated that raising awareness of Internet-related issues and responsible use was high on their list of priorities. Educational drives and advocacy about responsible use of the Internet to create a community of digitally literate and educated users should be an alternative to shutdowns.

We would like conclude this paper by articulating two concerns that need to be explored in future research:

1. In the age of fake news, viral content, polarising politics, and violence, to what extent can a network shutdown be justified?
2. What is the role of private stakeholders? Are they accountable and if so, to what extent? When they claim to be acting within community guidelines, who constitutes the community?

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Annexure 1:
Rules Temporary Shutdown of Telecom Services Internet Shutdowns Aug 2017

भारत का राजपत्र
The Gazette of India

संचार मंत्रालय

(दूरसंचार विभाग)

अधिसूचना

नई दिल्ली, 7 अगस्त, 2017

सा.का.नि. 998(अ).—केन्द्रीय सरकार, भारतीय तार अधिनियम, 1885 (1885 का 13) (जिसे इसमें इसके पश्चात् उक्त अधिनियम कहा गया है) की धारा 7 द्वारा प्रदत्त शक्तियों का प्रयोग करते हुए, लोक आपात या लोक सुरक्षा के कारण दूरसंचार सेवाओं के अस्थायी निलंबन का विनियमन करने के लिए निम्नलिखित नियम बनाती है, अर्थात्:-

1.   (1) इन नियमों का संक्षिप्त नाम दूरसंचार अस्थायी सेवा निलंबन (लोक आपात या लोक सुरक्षा) नियम, 2017 है ।

     (2) ये राजपत्र में उनके प्रकाशन की तारीख को प्रवृत्त होंगे ।

2.   (1) दूरसंचार सेवाओं को निलंबित करने के लिए निदेश भारत सरकार के मामले में भारत सरकार के गृह मंत्रालय के सचिव द्वारा या राज्य सरकार के मामले में गृह विभाग के राज्य सरकार के भार साधक सचिव (जिसे इसमें इसके पश्चात् सक्षम प्राधिकारी कहा गया है), द्वारा किए गए आदेश द्वारा ही जारी किए जाएंगे अन्यथा नहीं और अपरिहार्य परिस्थितियों में, जहां पूर्व निदेश अभिप्राम करना व्यवहार्य नहीं है, वहां ऐसा आदेश ऐसे किसी अधिकारी द्वारा, जो भारत सरकार के संयुक्त सचिव की पंक्ति से नीचे का न हो, जिसे, यथास्थिति, केन्द्रीय गृह सचिव या राज्य गृह सचिव द्वारा सम्यकतः प्राधिकृत किया गया हो, द्वारा जारी किया जा सकेगा :

परंतु केन्द्रीय गृह सचिव या राज्य गृह सचिव द्वारा प्राधिकृत अधिकारी द्वारा जारी दूरसंचार सेवाओं के निलंबन के लिए आदेश, ऐसे आदेश के जारी किए जाने के चौबीस घंटे के भीतर सक्षम प्राधिकारी से प्राप्त पुष्टि के अध्यधीन होगा :

परंतु यह और कि दूरसंचार सेवाओं के निलंबन का आदेश उक्त चौबीस घंटे की अवधि के भीतर सक्षम प्राधिकारी की पुष्टि के प्राप्त न होने की दशा में अस्तित्वहीन हो जाएगा ।

4764 GI/2017   (1)

(2) उप-नियम (1) के अधीन सक्षम प्राधिकारी द्वारा जारी किए गए आदेश में, ऐसे निदेश के लिए कारण अन्तर्विष्ट होंगे और ऐसे आदेश की प्रति अगले कार्य दिवस तक सम्बद्ध पुनर्विलोकन समिति को अग्रेषित की जाएगी ।

(3) उप-नियम (1) के अधीन जारी किए गए निलंबन के लिए निदेश तार प्राधिकारी के पदाभिहित अधिकारियों को या ऐसे सेवा प्रदाताओं, जिन्हें उक्त अधिनियम की धारा 4 के अधीन अनुज्ञप्तियां अनुदत्त की गई हैं, के पदाभिहित अधिकारियों को, पुलिस अधीक्षक की पंक्ति या समतुल्य पंक्ति से अन्यून अधिकारी द्वारा लिखित में या सुरक्षित इलैक्ट्रॉनिक संसूचना द्वारा सूचित किए जाएंगे और सुरक्षित इलैक्ट्रॉनिक संसूचना और उसके कार्यान्वयन का ढंग तार प्राधिकारी द्वारा अवधारित किया जाएगा ।

(4) तार प्राधिकारी और सेवा प्रदाता, यथास्थिति, प्रत्येक अनुज्ञप्त सेवा क्षेत्र या राज्य या संघ राज्यक्षेत्र में अधिकारियों को दूरसंचार सेवाओं के निलंबन के लिए ऐसी अध्यपेक्षाओं को प्राप्त करने और उन पर कार्रवाई करने के लिए नोडल अधिकारियों के रूप में पदाभिहित करेंगे ।

(5) यथास्थिति, केन्द्रीय सरकार या राज्य सरकार पुनर्विलोकन समिति का गठन करेगी ।

(i) केन्द्रीय सरकार द्वारा गठित की जाने वाली पुनर्विलोकन समिति निम्नलिखित से मिलकर बनेगी, अर्थात् :-

(क) मंत्रिमंडल सचिव   -अध्यक्ष

(ख) भारत सरकार के विधि कार्य विभाग के भारसाधक सचिव - सदस्य

(ग) भारत सरकार के दूरसंचार विभाग के सचिव   -सदस्य

(ii) राज्य सरकार द्वारा गठित की जाने वाली पुनर्विलोकन समिति निम्नलिखित से मिलकर बनेगी, अर्थात् :-

(क) मुख्य सचिव   -अध्यक्ष

(ख) भारसाधक विधि सचिव या विधि परामर्शी-विधि कार्य   -सदस्य

(ग) सचिव, राज्य सरकार (गृह सचिव से भिन्न)   -सदस्य

(6) पुनर्विलोकन समिति लोक आपात या लोक सुरक्षा के कारण सेवाओं के निलंबन के लिए निदेश जारी करने के पांच कार्य दिवसों के भीतर बैठक करेगी और इस बारे में अपने निष्कर्ष अभिलिखित करेगी कि क्या उप-नियम (1) के अधीन जारी किए गए निदेश उक्त अधिनियम की धारा 5 की उप-धारा (2) के उपबंधों के अनुसार हैं ।

[फा. सं. 800-37/2016-एएस.II]

प्रमोद कुमार मित्तल, वरिष्ठ उप-महानिदेशक (एएस)

MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS

(Department of Telecommunications)

NOTIFICATION

New Delhi, the 7th August, 2017

G.S.R. 998(E).—In exercise of the powers conferred by section 7 of the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885 (13 of 1885) (hereinafter referred to as the said Act), the Central Government hereby makes the following rules to regulate the temporary suspension of telecom services due to public emergency or public safety, namely:-

1. (1) These rules may be called the Temporary Suspension of Telecom Services (Public Emergency or Public Safety) Rules, 2017.

   (2) They shall come into force on the date of their publication in the Official Gazette.

2. (1) Directions to suspend the telecom services shall not be issued except by an order made by the Secretary to the Government of India in the Ministry of Home Affairs in the case of Government of

India or by the Secretary to the State Government in-charge of the Home Department in the case of a State Government (hereinafter referred to as the competent authority), and in unavoidable circumstances, where obtaining of prior direction is not feasible, such order may be issued by an officer, not below the rank of a Joint Secretary to the Government of India, who has been duly authorised by the Union Home Secretary or the State Home Secretary, as the case may be:

Provided that the order for suspension of telecom services, issued by the officer authorised by the Union Home Secretary or the State Home Secretary, shall be subject to the confirmation from the competent authority within 24 hours of issuing such order:

Provided further that the order of suspension of telecom services shall cease to exist in case of failure of receipt of confirmation from the competent authority within the said period of 24 hours.

(2) Any order issued by the competent authority under sub-rule (1) shall contain reasons for such direction and a copy of such order shall be forwarded to the concerned Review Committee latest by next working day.

(3) The directions for suspension issued under sub-rule (1) shall be conveyed to designated officers of the telegraph authority or to the designated officers of the service providers, who have been granted licenses under section 4 of the said Act, in writing or by secure electronic communication by an officer not below the rank of Superintendent of Police or of the equivalent rank and mode of secure electronic communication and its implementation shall be determined by the telegraph authority.

(4) The telegraph authority and service providers shall designate officers in every licensed service area or State or Union territory, as the case may be, as the nodal officers to receive and handle such requisitions for suspension of telecom services.

(5) The Central Government or the State Government, as the case may be, shall constitute a Review Committee.

   (i) The Review Committee to be constituted by the Central Government shall consist of the following, namely:-

   (a) Cabinet Secretary   -Chairman;

   (b) Secretary to the Government of India In-charge, Legal Affairs   -Member;

   (c) Secretary to the Government, Department of Telecommunications -Member.

(ii) The Review Committee to be constituted by the State Government shall consist of the following, namely:-

(a) Chief Secretary   -Chairman;

(b) Secretary Law or Legal Remembrancer In-Charge, Legal Affairs   -Member;

(c) Secretary to the State Government (other than the Home Secretary) -Member.

(6) The Review Committee shall meet within five working days of issue of directions for suspension of services due to public emergency or public safety and record its findings whether the directions issued under sub-rule (1) are in accordance with the provisions of sub-section (2) of section 5 of the said Act.

[F. No. 800-37/2016-AS.II]

PRAMOD KUMAR MITTAL, Senior Dy. Director General (AS)

RAKESH SUKUL

Digitally signed by RAKESH SUKUL
Date: 2017.08.09 20:18:50 +05'30'

Annexure 2 :
Compilation of Media Reports of Incidents of Network Shutdowns in India from 2012-2016

	Link	Detail	Date	Year	State
1	http://www.hindustantimes.com/india/mobile-phone-blackout-in-Jammu & Kashmir/story-UR9E-S3PoX4jnASE5FuCZQN.html	Mobile phones across Jammu & Kashmir Valley stopped functioning as service providers shut off connectivity as part of the high security drill for the 63rd Republic Day	26th January	2012	Jammu & Kashmir
2	https://india.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/09/21/telecom-services-blocked-to-curb-protests-in-kashmir/?_r=1	Mobile internet services were suspended on 21st September 2012 till 5:00 pm owing to the protests over the movie 'Innocence of Muslims'	21st September	2012	Jammu & Kashmir
3	http://kashmirmediawatch.com/kashmir/mobile-service-suspended-in-kashmir-for-security-reasons/13187	Mobiles services were suspended in Kashmir valley for security reasons on 66th Independence Day.	15th August	2012	Jammu & Kashmir
4	http://zeenews.india.com/news/jammu-and-kashmir/mobile-phone-services-suspended-in-kashmir_869121.html	Mobile telephone services were suspended all over Jammu and Kashmir as a precaution on Independence Day.	15th August	2013	Jammu & Kashmir
5	http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/tech/tech-news/Internet-services-suspended-in-Jammu & Kashmir-Valley/articleshow/21145412.cms	Authorities suspended internet services on mobile phones and through dongles in Jammu & Kashmir Valley as precautionary measure followed by killing of four persons in firing.	18th July	2013	Jammu & Kashmir

	Link	Detail	Date	Year	State
6	http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/tech/internet/mobile-internet-services-restored-in-Jammu & Kashmir-valley/articleshow/18527772.cms?intenttarget=no	Mobile and Internet services were suspended in Jammu & Kashmir although there was no official word on the suspension of Internet connectivity. In order to prevent the spread of rumours, authorities had asked the cable operators to suspend broadcast of news channels too.	9th February	2013	Jammu & Kashmir
7	http://www.deccanherald.com/content/307793/mobile-phone-services-suspended-kashmir.html	Ahead of Republic Day parades in Srinagar and elsewhere,mobile phone services were suspended across Kashmir Valley as part of a security drill.	26th January	2013	Jammu & Kashmir
8	http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/mobile-internet-services-suspended-in-jammu-and-kashmir/articleshow/21759366.cms?intenttarget=no	Mobile Internet services were suspended in Jammu and Kashmir following tension in the region, which have been hit by communal riots.	10th August	2013	Jammu & Kashmir
9	http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/vadodara/Internet-services-blocked-in-Vadodara-after-riots/articleshow/43674499.cms	To control rumours, police banned mobile internet services including cellular data services, including 2G and 3G internet services barring landline broadband, group SMS as well as MMS services.	27th September	2014	Gujarat
10	http://www.livemint.com/Politics/rl4LLwxLZE8sgMGVHTse0M/Curfewlikerestrictions-in-Jammu & Kashmir-Valley-mobile-Internet.html	Mobile internet services were suspended as part of precautionary measures in Jammu & Kashmir to curb the spread of "rumours".	9th February	2014	Jammu & Kashmir

	Link	Detail	Date	Year	State
11	http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/mobile-phone-services-hit-in-kashmir-valley/articleshow/29396681.cms?intenttarget=no	Mobile phone services were suspended across Kashmir Valley as part of security precautions on the Republic Day.	26th January	2014	Jammu & Kashmir
12	http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/defence-ministry-seeks-selective-ban-on-mobile-internet-in-j-k-114031100760_1.html	To prevent misuse of mobile phone services by terrorists, the Defence Ministry has asked the Department of Telecom to selectively ban mobile Internet in some places considered 'hot spots' in Jammu and Kashmir	11th March	2014	Jammu & Kashmir
13	http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/mobile-services-temporarily-suspended-in-kashmir-valley/articleshow/40308174.cms?intenttarget=no	Mobile Internet services were blocked as a part of a security protocol on the occasion of Independence Day on 15th August, 2014. The services were restored within a few hours after the official ceremony was completed.	15th August	2014	Jammu & Kashmir
14	http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/mobile-in-ternet-services-banned-in-rajkot-as-patidar-threat-looms/	The Rajkot administration banned mobile internet services in the district, ahead of the 3rd India Vs South Africa One-day International cricket match, after Patel quota stir leader Hardik Patel threatened to stage a protest at the Khanderi stadium during the match.	17th October	2015	Gujarat
15	http://indianexpress.com/article/in-dia/gujarat/gujarat-internet-services-in-godhra-suspended-for-24-hours/	Mobile internet services were suspended in Godhra for a period of 24 hours as a precautionary measure, after a derogatory message against Islam made rounds on the mobile social application WhatsApp.	28th September	2015	Gujarat

	Link	Detail	Date	Year	State
16	http://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/Hardik-Arrested-in-Surat-Mobile-Internet-Banned/2015/09/19/article3036722.ece	The Gujarat state administration banned mobile internet services to curb spread of rumours.	19th September	2015	Gujarat
17	http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/surat/Internet-banned-in-Navsari-from-midnight/articleshow/48935102.cms	Internet services were blocked in Navsari district of South Gujarat as a precautionary action prior to the Reservation Quota Rally organized by Patidar Anamat Andolan Samiti (PAAS).	12th September	2015	Gujarat
18	http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2015-09-02/news/66144045_1_state-wide-ban-mobile-internet-social-media	Police lifted the ban on mobile internet, social media and SMS services in the wake of violence during the Patel stir in various parts of State. The authorities said the ban was to prevent anti-social elements from using the social media platform to spread rumours.	25th August	2015	Gujarat
19	http://www.firstpost.com/india/mobile-internet-services-blocked-in-Jammu & Kashmir-for-pm-modis-rally-in-srinagar-2498760.html	Mobile internet services were blocked as a precautionary measure of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's rally in Srinagar. Only BSNL broadband was working in the area.	7th November	2015	Jammu & Kashmir
20	http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-beef-ban-mobile-internet-services-cut-in-jammu-after-tension-in-udhampur-2132781	Mobile internet services were suspended as authorities feared misuse of social media after tension gripped in Udhampur district due to beef ban.	8th October	2015	Jammu & Kashmir
21	http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/to-avoid-tension-during-eid-ul-zuha-govt-ban-internet-in-jk-for-two-days-from-tomorrow/	To prevent the misuse of social networking sites, all the internet service providers were asked to block mobile internet services in Kashmir Valley to control the beef controversy in view of Eid celebrations.	25th September	2015	Jammu & Kashmir

	Link	Detail	Date	Year	State
22	http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2015-08-15/news/65525213_1_mobile-internet-services-independence-day-bakshi-stadium	Mobile phone and mobile internet services were blocked as a precautionary measure in wake of the spurt in militant activities in Kashmir Valley on Indian independence day	15th August	2015	Jammu & Kashmir
23	http://zeenews.india.com/news/jammu-and-Jammu & Kashmir/internet-blocked-temporarily-due-to-sikh-police-clash-in-jammu_1607966.html	In wake of the clashes between the Sikh community and the state police, the Jammu administration had shut down internet services to maintain peace.	5th June	2015	Jammu & Kashmir
24	http://scroll.in/article/753108/why-a-blanket-ban-on-the-internet-in-troubled-manipur-is-not-a-good-idea	Access to internet has been blocked in Manipur following a violent protests.	2nd September	2015	Manipur
25	http://www.theshillongtimes.com/2015/10/13/admin-justifies-blocking-internet/	Internet services were banned in Meghalaya to ensure the protestors of the polls including pressure groups and the militants do not use internet which is available even in mobiles to send messages through social networking sites to prevent people from voting.	11th October	2015	Meghalaya
26	http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Nagaland-blocks-internet-services-imposes-curfew-in-tense-Dimapur/articleshow/46497164.cms	The Nagaland government has blocked all internet and mobile data services in the state to stop the circulation of videos and images of the lynching of Syed Sarif who allegedly raped his wife's cousin.	7th March	2015	Nagaland
27	http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Rajasthan-police-to-ban-internet-usage-as-per-needs-to-maintain-communal-harmony/articleshow/50258271.cms	Mobile Internet services were disrupted in the district of Bhilwara due to communal tensions.	19th December	2015	Rajastan

	Link	Detail	Date	Year	State
28	http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/communal-tension-in-rajasthan-cities/article7800532.ece	In an incident of communal tension over the alleged killing of a muslim youth, internet services were suspended in some part f Rajastan for 24 hours.	24th October	2015	Rajastan
29	https://www.telegraphindia.com/1160812/jsp/frontpage/story_101982.jsp#.WPRk2PmGPIV	Mobile Internet services were cut off in Arunachal Pradesh after feared law and order situation in the state's capital following the suicide of former chief minister	12th August	2016	Arunachal Pradesh
30	http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/communal-tension-grips-6-bihar-districts/articleshow/54867746.cms	Mobile and broadband internet services were disconnected to prevent misuse of social media platforms due to violent communal clashes in the area.	15th October	2016	Bihar
31	http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/patna/Section-144-imposed-in-ternet-banned-in-Saran-after-deity-desecration-video-goes-viral/articleshow/53571544.cms	Due to communal clashes in the Saran district after a video of the desecration of Hindu deities went viral on social media, all internet services were shut down in the district to prevent spread of rumors.	6th August	2016	Bihar
32	http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/gujarat-curfew-imposed-in-mehsana-as-patels-rally-turns-violent-lalji-patel-injured-2757681/	Mobile Internet services were suspended in a few districts of Gujarat, after a call to court arrest given by Patidar leaders turned violent.	17th April	2016	Gujarat
33	http://deshgujarat.com/2016/02/26/prohibitory-orders-and-mobile-internet-ban-in-mahesana-on-february-28/	District administration in Mahesena has orderd ban on using mobile internet and social networking sites under section 144 of the IPC and to hold a Patidar Women's conference	26th February	2016	Gujarat

	Link	Detail	Date	Year	State
34	http://zeenews.india.com/news/india/mobile-internet-services-blocked-in-gujarat-know-why_1860264.html	The mobile internet services have been blocked for four hours across Gujarat to prevent misuse of cell phones during Revenue Talatis (Accountants) Recruitment Exam in the state.	28th February	2016	Gujarat
35	http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/jat-reservation-agitation-mobile-internet-haryana/	Mobile internet services were suspended at many places in Haryana for possible renewal of the Jat quota agitation that had led to widespread violence.	18th March	2016	Haryana
36	http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/rohtak-jat-reservation-mobile-internet-blocked-haryana/	Mobile internet services were suspended by administration in Rohtak and Jhajjar following a violent protests by Jats in Haryana demanding reservation in government jobs and educational institutions under OBC category.	19th February	2016	Haryana
37	http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/haryana-jat-quota-agitation-sonipat-mobile-internet-service-banned-2835078/	Officials issued order for banning mobile internet service in the district in view of Jat agitation.	4th June	2016	Haryana
38	http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/jat-reservation-live-updates-protest-haryana-hisar-jind-ambala-2835462/	Internet services have been blocked in some parts of Haryana to check rumour & false publicity on security arrangements to deal with Jat agitation followed by tensions in the state.	5th June	2016	Haryana
39	http://www.hindustantimes.com/india/handwara-firing-mobile-internet-services-suspended-in-Jammu & Kashmir/story-iPQHs3vdmiWx-7w0uCGK8NJ.html	Mobile internet services were suspended and imposed restrictions in parts of Jammu & Kashmir to prevent escalation of protests triggered after security forces fired at a group protesting the alleged molestation of a school girl by an Indian Army soldier.	14th April	2016	Jammu & Kashmir

	Link	Detail	Date	Year	State
40	http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-kashmir-unrest-broadband-internet-services-suspended-2244766	After the disconnect from mobile internet services since 9th July, 2016, broadband internet services were also suspended in the Jammu & Kashmir valley as a precautionary measure to prevent rumor mongering due to unrest between the protestors and the security forces.	13th August	2016	Jammu & Kashmir
41	http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/internet-services-suspended-in-jammu-amid-mounting-tension-in-chenab-valley-2954958/	Due to bandhs being declared in the Chenab valley to show solidarity with protests being undertaken by Jammu & Kashmiris, mobile internet services were suspended in Jammu region.	5th August	2016	Jammu & Kashmir
42	https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2016/jul/19/facebook-under-fire-censoring-Jammu & Kashmir-posts-accounts	Jammu & Kashmir unrest has been met with a complete blackout of information both offline and online. Facebook has been actively removing any content relating to the slain rebel Burhan wani's funeral or any post that stands in solidarity with his movement.	19th July	2016	Jammu & Kashmir
43	http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/kashmir/kashmir-unrest-broadband-slow-subscribers-irked/224220.html	The Government has reduced the bandwidth of broadband. Due to this internet in Jammu & Kashmir is working in very low speed	29th July	2016	Jammu & Kashmir
44	http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/mobile-internet-services-suspended-in-kashmir-2902579/	Following the killing of Burhan Wani, Jammu & Kashmir valley faced a suspension of mobile internet services to check the spread of rumors with anti-social elements.	9th July	2016	Jammu & Kashmir
45	http://telecom.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/private-telecom-firms-bsnl-asked-to-suspend-services-in-jk/53220299	All private telecom operators in Jammu & Kashmir have been asked to suspend their services for a day as a precautionary measure in the wake of widespread violence in the state.	15th July	2016	Jammu & Kashmir

	Link	Detail	Date	Year	State
46	http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/jammu-tem-ple-row-mobile-internet-services-re-stored-across-state-2861163/	Mobile internet facility was restored across the state after three days after a violent situation in Jammu & Kashmir	18th June	2016	Jammu & Kashmir
47	http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/Jammu-goes-offline-ahead-of-controversial-wres-tling-event/article14393564.ece	Mobile internet services were suspended in Jam-mu region ahead of a wrestling match, the venue for which is disputed between two communities, and experienced violence in 2014 as well	22nd June	2016	Jammu & Kashmir
48	http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/pir-panjal/mobile-internet-ser-vices-snapped-in-poonch/221112.html	Over a controversial issue, mobile internet services were suspended in Poonch district on operational and security grounds and to main-tain law and order situations.	22nd June	2016	Jammu & Kashmir
49	http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/no-inter-net-in-jammu-districts-unrest-kash-mir-3030006/	Ahead of Eid celebrations, broadband internet services were suspended in Jammu & Kashmir as a precautionary measure in light of violence in the region.	12th September	2016	Jammu & Kashmir
50	http://www.firstpost.com/india/Jammu & Kashmir-govt-orders-shutdown-of-all-internet-ser-vices-except-bsnl-for-next-72-hours-3001464.html	The Jammu & Kashmir government ordered shutdown of internet services of all telecom net-works and also mobile communications except of state-run BSNL for the next 72 hours as a precautionary measure because of the tensed law and order situation in the state.	12th September	2016	Jammu & Kashmir
51	http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/ranchi/Internet-ser-vices-blocked-in-Bokaro-af-ter-communal-tension/article-show/51856786.cms	The district administration blocked internet services in industrial town Bokaro, following communal clashes during Ramnavami celebra-tions.	15th April	2016	Jharkhand

	Link	Detail	Date	Year	State
52	http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/mobile-internet-services-suspended-in-protest-hit-nashik/story-chybNWRPW1j7m-H0onDhJON.html	Mobile internet services and bulk SMS were blocked in Nashik district as protests emerged over the alleged rape attempt of a 5 year old girl by a teenage boy.	9th October	2016	Maharashtra
53	http://www.firstpost.com/india/manipur-internet-services-shut-down-in-imphal-west-dist-following-three-blasts-3161912.html	Manipur state Cabinet has decided to shut down Internet service in Imphal West district	18th December	2016	Manipur
54	http://rajasthanpatrika.patrika.com/story/bhilwara/section-144-imposed-in-bhilwara-ban-on-internet-2404590.html	Internet services were suspended in the district of Bhilwara due to the onslaught of communal tensions coinciding with the preparations of a Muslim religious function.	13th December	2016	Rajastan
55	http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/jaipur/Internet-blocked-in-Bhilwara-to-curb-spread-of-rumours/articleshow/54369844.cms	Internet services were blocked for a day in Bhilwara after the stabbing of a 21 year old Vishwa Hindu Parishad activist as he was returning home after Ganpati Puja.	16th September	2016	Rajastan
56	http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/jat-quota-protests-in-rajasthan-districts-called-off/	Due to the agitations of the Jat community for reservations as OBC, internet services were shut down in the Bharatpur district.	22nd February	2016	Rajastan
57	http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/tech/internet/mobile-internet-blocked-in-jaisalmer-barmer/articleshow/52992932.cms	After the death of a person in police firing, mobile internet services were shut down in Barmer and Jaisalmer as calls for a Bandh was announced by the community members of the person who was killed.	30th June	2016	Rajastan

	Link	Detail	Date	Year	State
58	http://www.sabguru.com/internet-services-blocked-in-bhilwara-city-for-72-hours/	Internet services were suspended in the district of Bhilwara to maintain law and order as the Nagrik Suraksha Manch (a citizens' group) called for a city wide Bandh to protest lack of action taken against the accused in the communal riots.	26th December	2016	Rajastan
59	http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/lucknow/Internet-blocked-in-riot-hit-Azamgarh/articleshow/52300964.cms	Internet has been shut down completely in Azamgarh, the eastern UP district where communal tension broke out.	17th May	2016	UP
60	http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/internet-curfew-up-bijnor-communal-clashes-harassment/1/766952.html	Internet services were blocked in the Bijnor district on 18th September, 2016 for reportedly 48 hours after communal clashes ensued in the region due to the alleged sexual harassment of a muslim girl.	18th September	2016	UP
61	http://indianexpress.com/article/india/jat-agitations-mobile-internet-services-blocked-in-jhajjar-4498224/	With groups of the Jat community starting their reservation agitation, the district administration in Jhajjar has stopped all mobile Internet services, including 2G, 3G, 4G, voice calls and GPRS, SMS services and bulk messages provided on mobile networks in Jhajjar	29th January	2017	Haryana
62	http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/jat-stir-amid-push-for-digital-india-internet-services-suspended-in-haryana-districts/story-qJd3T25cra1KiShqKN5HeO.html	Haryana government has banned shut down the internet services for maintance of law and order due to the Jat agitation	19th February	2017	Haryana
63	http://www.ndtv.com/india-news/high-alert-in-haryana-ahead-of-jat-protests-internet-stopped-in-15-districts-1671102	Internet services and bulk messages have been stopped in 15 districts till 9 am on 19th March 2017 in Haryana due to jat agitation	18th March	2017	Haryana

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	Link	Detail	Date	Year	State
64	http://www.tribuneindia.com/news/haryana/internet-services-suspended-in-sonepat/369471.html	Internet services of 2G, 3G, 4G and GPRS would remain suspended for 24 hours to check the misuse of social media – from 5 pm on February 25 to 5 pm on February 26 within the revenue limits of the Sonepat District.	25th February	2017	Haryana
65	http://www.ptinews.com/news/8352337_Jat-stir-enters-third-day--remains-peaceful.html	Mobile Internet was suspended in districts of Rohtak, Bhiwani, Hisar, Sonipat, and Panipat starting 31st January, 2017 due to the ongoing Jat agitations in various parts of the state.	31st January	2017	Haryana
66	https://www.thequint.com/india/2017/04/09/internet-services-in-kashmir-to-be-suspended-separatists-call-for-two-day-shutdown	Internet services will remain suspended in the entire Kashmir valley till conclusion of the bypoll for Anantnag Lok Sabha seat on 12 April, official sources said on Sunday in Srinagar.	10th April	2017	Jammu & Kashmir
67	http://www.nationalherald-india.com/news/2017/04/17/kashmir-tense-internet-mobile-schools-colleges-shut-down-valley-students-hit-streets-security-forces-policemen	Authorities snapped mobile internet service across Kashmir . Broadband internet and 2G services were spared	17th April	2017	Jammu & Kashmir
68	http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/broadband-internet-services-restored-in-kashmir/articleshow/58130282.cms	State authorities had suspended all internet services on 8th April as preventive measure to stop rumour mongering and mobilisation by separatist elements to diisrupt the by-polls in Srinagar Loksahbha constituency	8th April	2017	Jammu & Kashmir

	Link	Detail	Date	Year	State
69	https://kashmirobserver.net/2017/local-news/internet-snapped-day-yet-again-16710	Internet service of all cellular companies, including Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) Broadband, was snapped for a day yet again across Kashmir on 13th April because there was a repoll at 38 polling stations in Budgam district of central Kashmir.	13th April	2017	Jammu & Kashmir
70	http://www.huffingtonpost.in/2017/04/27/with-31-internet-shutdowns-in-four-years-kashmiris-unhappy-with_a_22057991/	The government of Jammu and Kashmir ordered the blocking of access to 22 social-media web-sites in the troubled Kashmir Valley	26th April	2017	Jammu & Kashmir
71	https://www.nagalandpost.com/ChannelNews/State/StateNews.aspx?news=TkVXUzEwMDEwO-TUyNA%3D%3D	Mobile services both SMS and internet/data, in Nagaland remain suspended after the government snapped the services on January 30 following the public upheaval in order to thwart rumour mongers.	30th January	2017	Nagaland
72	http://www.nagalandpost.com/ChannelNews/State/StateNews.aspx?news=TkVXUzEwMDEwOD-Q5MQ%3D%3D	Section 144 of the CrPC has been invoked in the Phek District on January 17th after vadalism and violence was witnessed in the wake of coming elections.	17th January	2017	Nagaland
73	http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/odisha-in-communal-violence-hit-bhadrak-48-hour-ban-on-social-media-to-stop-rumours/story-SiJld454csGkNrLj4zUctL.html	The Home Department of Odisha Government restricted access to social media for 48 hours to prevent spread of rumours	10th April	2017	Odisha
74	https://odishatv.in/odisha/body-slid-er/odisha-orders-48-hour-inter-net-ban-in-kendrapara-208295/	Odisha government after the Bhadrak unrest, promptly clamped down internet services in Kendrapara after tension surfaced over an objectionable post on social media purportedly targeted towards a particular community.	19th April	2017	Odisha

	Link	Detail	Date	Year	State
75	http://indianexpress.com/article/india/rajasthan-sec-144-imposed-mobile-internet-suspended-after-clash-in-sikir-district-4593891/	Mobile Internet services were suspended in the Sikar district of Rajasthan on 31st March, 2017 after clashes amongst youngsters during a religious procession resulted in stone-pelting, injuring one policeman.	31st March	2017	Rajastan
76	https://www.nyoooz.com/news/jaipur/788628/net-banned-in-udaipur-after-abusive-post-on-facebook/	Tension prevailed in Udaipur and nearby areas when some people through their posts on social networking sites attempted to hurt religious sentiments of a community In order to plug it and avoid the things to go haywire, the Udaipur police have banned the internet on Tuesday that continued on 19th	19th April	2017	Rajastan
77	http://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2017/may/24/mobile-internet-messaging-services-suspended-in-saharanpur-1608735.html	Mobile internet and messaging services were suspended in Saharnpur district of Uttar Pradesh	24th May	2017	UP
78	http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/05/india-imposes-ramadan-curfew-kashmir-violence-170528110100694.html	Internet services and calling services were cut off in Kashmir due to the death of Hizbul Mujahideen group leader for security reasons	27th May	2017	Jammu & Kashmir
79	http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/five-killed-in-farmers-stir-in-mp-mobile-internet-suspended-117060601475_1.html	Five farmers were killed were killed in Mandsaur district of Madhya Pradesh during a farmers's agitatation. As tension prevailed, mobile internet service were suspended in Mandsaur, Ratlam and Neemuch districts since morning to check spread of rumours	6th June	2017	MP

	Link	Detail	Date	Year	State
80	http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/mobile-internet-services-suspended-in-kashmir-after-civilian-s-death/story-2Nk-KH4w71aDWLlfmH2DUoK.html	Authorities cut off high-speed mobile internet services in Kashmir as the separatist Hurriyat called for a shutdown in Kashmir on Friday to protest the killing of a civilian by security forces, sparking fresh tension in the valley. Tuesday night, the authorities suspended 3G and 4G services, a precautionary measure that has become common in the valley	7th June	2017	Jammu & Kashmir
81	http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/internet-services-in-darjeeling-hills-disrupted-set-back-for-gjm-agitators/story-wiT-GYO1gvwUZztDfeBg6yI.html	Internet services in and around Darjeeling were disrupted following instruction allegedly issued by the state government.	17th June	2017	West Bengal
82	http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/gun-toting-militants-at-let-mans-funeral/article19199300.ece	Internet services were suspended and restrictions imposed during the funeral of slain Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) commander Bashir Lashkari in south Kashmir	2nd July	2017	Jammu & Kashmir
83	http://www.hindustantimes.com/jaipur/anandpal-encounter-court-orders-fresh-autopsy-rajasthan-bans-internet-in-churu-nagaur/story-1aVMWm7sNCwWqaxblIF-NlK.html	Mobile Internet was suspended on 30th June, 2017 to prevent rumour mongering after the protests by the Rajput community over the encounter killing of gangster intensified.	30th June	2017	Rajastan
84	http://www.tribuneindia.com/news/nation/farmers-stir-z-category-security-for-milk-trucks-in-maharashtra/417851.html	Mobile Internet services were suspended in Nashik for a few hours on 5th June, 2017 as the State-wide strike called by farmers turned violent	5th June	2017	Maharashtra

	Link	Detail	Date	Year	State
85	http://www.financialexpress.com/india-news/saharanpur-violence-minutes-after-bhim-armys-chandrashekhar-arrested-authorities-suspend-internet-services/708019/	Internet services were suspended in Saharanpur district again on 8th June, 2017 following the arrest of the main accused in Saharanpur violence, for a period of two days, to prevent any unrest.	8th June	2017	UP
86	http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-darjeeling-unrest-internet-services-face-complete-shutdown-2479227	Days after mobile Internet services were shutdown in Darjeeling, broadband services were also suspended in the area for a period of 7 days on 20th June, 2017 in the interest of public safety, following the indefinite strike by Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM) for a separate Gorkhaland.	20th June	2017	West Bengal
87	http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/complete-internet-shutdown-in-kashmir-from-tonight/1/996137.html	The Jammu and Kashmir Police directed internet service providers to completely suspend their services in Kashmir from 10 pm on 6th July till further orders in view of the first death anniversary of Hizbul Mujahideen commander Burhan Wani	6th July	2017	Jammu & Kashmir
88	http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/jammu/internet-services-suspended-in-jammu-after-killing-of-amarnath-yatris-in-kashmir/254426.html	Internet services were suspended as a precautionary measure following the killing of Amarnath pilgrims in the Kashmir Valley	10th July	2017	Jammu & Kashmir
89	http://www.news18.com/news/india/internet-services-suspended-in-kashmir-1457457.html	Authorities suspended Internet services in the Kashmir Valley as a precautionary measure after separatists appealed to people to launch a "Kashmir awareness" campaign on social media soon after the administration had restored the services only on Sunday	10th July	2017	Jammu & Kashmir

	Link	Detail	Date	Year	State
90	http://www.financialexpress.com/india-news/west-bengal-communal-violence-baduria-internet-services-disrupted-mamata-banerjee-facebook-post-north-24-parganas-protest/749676/	After clashes triggered in Baduria and Basirhat areas of West Bengal's North 24 Parganas over a Facebook post, Internet services were disrupted. The decision was taken after an angry mob had torched police vehicles, vandalised shops and blocked roads leading to the India-Bangladesh border after a derogatory post on social media.	5th July	2017	West Bengal
91	http://www.firstpost.com/india/caste-based-violence-kills-two-in-gujarat-internet-services-snapped-in-morbi-surendranagar-districts-3812289.html	Internet services have been suspended in Morbi and Surendranagar districts to curb rumour-mongering on social media due to the violent clashes between members of Bharwad and Rajput communities in Gujarat, as per a government order.	14th July	2017	Gujarat
92	http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/kashmir/high-speed-mobile-internet-broadband-services-suspended-in-anantnag-in-south-kashmir/255150.html	The mobile Internet services were suspended following the killing of three militants in an ambush and the broadband services were snapped on next day	17th July	2017	Jammu & Kashmir
93	http://kashmirreader.com/2017/08/01/shutdown-pulwama-anantnag-killing-hizb-militants/	A complete shutdown was observed in Pulwama district and parts of Anantnag district, a day after two Hizbul Mujahideen militants were killed in a gunfight in Tahab area of Pulwama. Internet services remained suspended in Pulwama district for the second consecutive day.	31st July	2017	Jammu & Kashmir
94	http://www.tribuneindia.com/news/jammu-kashmir/schools-colleges-shut-in-valley-internet-snapped/445515.html	In an attempt to contain the fallout of the killing of the two militants, the state government ordered an immediate shutdown of mobile Internet services and also ordered a closure of all schools and colleges in the region.	2nd August	2017	Jammu & Kashmir

	Link	Detail	Date	Year	State
95	http://www.tripurainfoway.com/news-details/TN/87940/Union+Home+Ministry%27s+stern+warning%2C+B-JP%27s+bold+stand%2C+lack+of+-food%2Cshelter+force+IP-FT+to+end+NH-8+block-ade+on+Thursday+%3A+11+-days+blockade+marks+Tripura+C-M%27s+massive+failure.html	Internet and SMS services has been taken down to avoid spread of false propaganda from Indige-nous Peoples Front of Tripura (IPFT)	20th July	2017	Tripura
96	http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/kashmir/youth-clash-with-forces-in-beerwah-internet-suspend-ed/255454.html	Mobile Internet services were suspended on 21st July, 2017 in Budgam district of Kashmir as a precautionary measure after a young tailor was killed in army firing in Beerwah town of the district. The services were reported to have been restored on 25th July, 2017, four days after they were suspended.	21st July	2017	Jammu & Kashmir
97	http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/mobile-internet-services-suspend-ed-across-kashmir-valley/article-show/59860448.cms	Mobile Internet services were suspended yet again across Kashmir on 1st August, 2017 as a precautionary measure fearing clashes after the killing of Lashkar-e-Toiba commander Abu Dujana and his aide in an encounter with the security forces. The services were restored on 2nd August, 2017 after remaining suspended for over 24 hours.	1st August	2017	Jammu & Kashmir
98	http://www.risingkashmir.com/news/amargrahencounter-cellu-lar-mobile-internet-services--sus-pended--in-baramulla	Mobile Internet services were suspended in Baramulla district of Kashmir as a precautionary measure on 5th August, 2017 after three LeT militants were killed in an encounter with the security forces in the Sopore town of the district.	5th August	2017	Jammu & Kashmir

	Link	Detail	Date	Year	State
99	http://www.indiatvnews.com/news/india-anandpal-encounter-one-killed-32-injured-violent-protests-saanvrad-village-updates-latest-breaking-news-today-390954	Internet services were suspended in the evening of 11th July, 2017 in the districts of Nagaur, Bikaner, Churu and Sikar to prevent spread of rumours after the violence in Sanvrad with Rajput community demanding Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) enquiry in the encounter of gangster Anand Pal Singh. The services reportedly resumed on 14th July, 2017.	11th July	2017	Rajastan
100	http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/kashmir/shopian-kulgam-pulwama-observe-shutdown/257660.html	Complete shutdown was observed in Shopian, Kulgam and Pulwama districts on Monday against the killing of three militants in a gunfight and two civilians in clashes with government forces at Awneera village of Shopian district. The authorities have also snapped mobile internet services in entire Shopian, Kulgam and Pulwama district causing massive inconvenience to the netizens.	14th August	2017	Jammu & Kashmir
101	http://www.tribuneindia.com/news/jammu-kashmir/i-day-internet-mobile-phone-services-suspended-in-kashmir/452460.html	Internet and mobile phone services were suspended in Kashmir Valley as a precautionary measure on Independence Day on Tuesday, officials said. Only BSNL landline service was functional in the valley.	15th August	2017	Jammu & Kashmir
102	http://kashmirlife.net/tral-gun-fight-cellular-internet-services-suspended-in-pulwama-district-147819/	The government suspended Internet and cellular services in Pulwama district following the killing of three militants at Gulab Bagh village of Tral township. Reports said that Cellular and mobile Internet services were snapped in to contain law and order situation.	9th August	2017	Jammu & Kashmir

	Link	Detail	Date	Year	State
103	http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/kashmir/internet-services-snapped-in-pulwama-after-killing-of-let-commander-ayub-lelhari/257804.html	Mobile Internet services were suspended in Pulwama district of south Kashmir after the killing of Lashkar commander Ayub Lelhari. An official said that mobile Internet services were snapped to prevent "rumour-mongering" and law and order issues.	16th August	2017	Jammu & Kashmir
104	http://telecom.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/mobile-internet-services-suspended-in-punjab-haryana/60209242	Mobile Internet services have been suspended for 72 hours in Punjab ahead of the court verdict in the sexual exploitation case against the Dera Sacha Sauda sect head	24th August	2017	Punjab
105	http://telecom.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/mobile-internet-services-suspended-in-punjab-haryana/60209242	Mobile Internet services have been suspended for 72 hours in Haryana ahead of the court verdict in the sexual exploitation case against the Dera Sacha Sauda sect head	24th August	2017	Haryana
106	http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/ram-ra-him-verdict-violence-in-sriganga-nagar-prohibitory-orders-imposed/article19562071.ece	Mobile Internet services have been suspended for 48 hours in Sriganganagar and Hanumangarh districts of northern part of Rajasthan, ahead of the court verdict in the sexual exploitation case against the Dera Sacha Sauda sect head	25th August	2017	Rajastan
107	http://indianexpress.com/article/india/gurmeet-ram-rahim-singh-dera-sacha-sauda-chief-rape-case-cbi-punjab-haryana-security-dera-followers-live-updates-4810979/	Mobile Internet services have been suspended for 72 hours in Chandigarh, ahead of the court verdict in the sexual exploitation case against the Dera Sacha Sauda sect head	24th August	2017	Chandigarh
108	http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/kashmir/internet-services-suspended-in-pulwama-after-fidayeen-storm-district-police-lines/258693.html	Internet services were suspended in south Kashmir's Pulwama district as a "precautionary measure" to prevent law and order situation	26th August	2017	Jammu & Kashmir

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KEPT IN THE DARK

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