



Indian Microblogging platform Koo has a stronger network than Twitter: Study by IIIT Delhi

New Delhi, 30th March 2021: A team of students from IIIT Delhi, one of the most well-renowned research-driven institutes in the country, have recently conducted a study on India's local language microblogging platform, Koo, revealing that it has a stronger network compared to Twitter. During the study, the three students, namely Asmit Kumar Singh, Chirag Jain, and Rishi Raj Jain examined 4 million user accounts under the guidance of Professor Ponnurangam Kumaraguru. They were supported in their endeavor by Jivitesh Jain and Shradha Sehgal from the International Institute of Information Technology, Hyderabad.

The team from IIIT Delhi found that the app garnered new users in droves during the August of last year when Koo was conferred with the Aatmanirbhar Bharat App Innovation Challenge Award. It should be noted though, that nearly 50% of the 4 million users that were analyzed, had joined the app during the first two months of 2021. A major spike in posting was also noticed during February 2021, after the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology posted a tweet promoting Koo, which encouraged several prominent government figures to join the platform.

"The Koo network has a noticeably high local clustering coefficient of 0.561, which represents how well connected the neighborhood of a vertex is. This indicates a strong modular structure in the network, presumably due to Koo only catering to audiences from a single country. In contrast, Twitter, which caters to worldwide audiences, only had an average local clustering coefficient of 0.072 during its early years in 2009, indicating much weaker communities," read the study, titled Koo: The new king? Characterizing India's emerging social network.

In simple terms, compared to Twitter users, Koo users are better interconnected with each other. Clustering is an important property of social networking platforms, as friends of one user are likely to be friends with each other as well. A high local clustering coefficient, therefore, indicates that the communities on Koo are stronger as compared to Twitter.

The study also showed that 92.1% of the profiles where gender was specified belonged to males, whereas female profiles only accounted for 7.5% of the aggregate. 0.36% identified themselves as other genders. However, the female users had more followers on average as compared to male profiles – the ratio being 632.9:117.

Koo has been designed to promote dialogue in Indian languages and Hindi has emerged as the most preferred language on the platform – with over 1.7 million users and 3.7 million posts. It is then followed by English, Kannada, Telugu, Marathi, Gujarati, Tamil, Bangla, Malayalam, Assamese, Punjabi, and Oriya, in this particular order. The study observed that the users on Koo showed a tendency to follow other users who communicated in the same language as them. For instance, according to figure 13 of the study, Tamil-speaking users mostly had Tamil-speaking connections. The same was observed for other languages as well. It could very well explain why Koo is showing a stronger network as compared to Twitter.