

How to Cite:

Siddiqui, T., & Gupta, S. (2022). Fake news and declining media trust during COVID 19 pandemic. *International Journal of Health Sciences*, 6(S3), 8344–8356.
<https://doi.org/10.53730/ijhs.v6nS3.7916>

Fake news and declining media trust during COVID 19 pandemic

Taha Siddiqui

Assistant Professor at Graphic Era Hill University, Dehradun, Uttarakhand where she teaches at Media and Mass Communication Department. She is also a trainer with Google news Initiative India Training Network and 'Factshala', both media literacy programs pan India
Email: 13.taha@gmail.com

Dr. Subhash Gupta

Professor at Media and Mass Communication Department Graphic Era Hill University, Dehradun, Uttarakhand. He teaches Media Law and Ethics and TV Journalism. He has an experience of more than 26 years in the industry
*Corresponding author email: Sg2300@gmail.com

Abstract--Fake news is not a new phenomenon and has been an ever-growing threat to many democracies across the globe, especially in India. This paper is an attempt to understand the growing mistrust on media among Indians during covid 19 pandemic. The health crises that emerged during the pandemic jolted many institutions including the fourth pillar of democracy, media. The study has attempted a comprehensive systematic literature review of the growing mistrust around media and tried to assess the various factors that were involved leading to mistrust. The study done during the year 2020 employed a survey and an online focus group discussion to assess the output. The results revealed that misinformation was at its peak during Covid lockdown and a large number of people shared fake posts on social media platforms, thinking it to be true.

Keywords--fake news, misinformation, sharing habits, media trust, covid, information disorder.

Introduction

The changing landscape of media in India has overhauled the information ecosystem in both positive and negative ways. Although fake news is an old phenomenon but it has become a buzzword especially with 2016 US elections. With an ease to access the internet and mushrooming smartphones at an affordable price, it has become far more easy to get any information one needs.

But the panic created during the COVID -19 pandemic opened a pandora box of hoaxes, conspiracy theories, blame games and what not. A humongous amount of fake news stories where being shared on sort of social media platforms especially India. Interestingly as per many researches it has been found that India and other ten emerging economies such as Venezuela, Lebanon, South Africa, Columbia, Kenya, Mexico, Philippines, Vietnam, Jordan, and Tunisia, a strong link between smartphone and social media can be seen.

Literature Review

Understanding Information Disorder

Contemporary discourse across the globe displays a great sense of apprehensions and fears both socially and culturally. The word 'Fake News' became a buzzword, especially after the 2016 presidential elections in the United states, an exercise done democratically but marked with a loads of misinformation and false news. (Albright, 2016.) Several definitions of fake news have been propounded by different researchers and groups, but most of these definitions have one commonness that is its similarity and feel of real news. This can be seen in the ways in which websites look, in the ways in which articles are drafted, how photos and videos include attributions. Fake news disguise itself under being real news and takes on some credibility in trying to appear as close to real as possible. (Edson et al, 2016). Fake news is a loosely defined term that has evolved rapidly in the past few years with the rise of number of social media platforms worldwide. According to Laser, Mathew, and Yochai (2018) in their paper titled, 'Science of Fake News' describe the phenomenon and emergence of fake news. They have defined fake news to be fabricated in- formation that mimics news media content in form but not in organizational process or intent. Fake-news outlets, in turn, lack the news media's editorial norms and processes for ensuring the accuracy and credibility of information. Fake news overlaps with other information disorders, such as misinformation (false or misleading information) and disinformation (false information that is purposely spread to deceive people). (Lazer et al., 2007).

This prospective definition is then tested: first, by contrasting fake news with other forms of public disinformation; second, by considering whether it helps pinpoint conditions for the (recent) proliferation of fake news. A fundamental question raised in the study is: How can we create a news ecosystem and culture that values and promotes truth? In another research, Defining "Fake News": A typology of scholarly definitions, Edson, Zheng, and Richard (2017) have reviewed how previous studies have defined and operationalized the term "fake news." An examination of 34 academic articles that used the term "fake news" between 2003 and 2017 resulted in a typology of types of fake news: news satire, news parody, fabrication, manipulation, advertising, and propaganda. These definitions are based on two dimensions: levels of facticity and deception. Such a typology is offered to clarify what we mean by fake news and to guide future studies.

Human values play an significant role in influencing behaviour, attitudes and sentiment (Fleischmann, 2014). Values can also foresee attitudes toward opinion pieces and also about controversies (Templeton & Fleischmann, 2011). This

scenario is particularly relevant in the social media era in which multiple sources of information is available for user's attention and indirectly pressurize users' capacity to evaluate all of the information that they consume. Some of the questions raised in the study were firstly whether the presence or absence of hyperlinks influence trust, secondly does the type of hyper-link used influence trust and thirdly, do the values of the reader influence trust. The study demonstrates interesting relationships between hyperlinks, trust and human values. Participants showcased greater trust in posts that contained hyperlinks to scientific articles, mainstream media, and hidden URLs than to posts with no hyperlinks or hyperlinks to fake news . (Verma et al, 2017)

Social Media and Fake News

Allcott, Hunt, and Matthew (2017) in their study, "Social Media and Fake News in the 2016 Election." Published in Journal of Economic Perspectives, expressed concern about the effects of false stories ("fake news"), spread largely through social media platforms. 2016 US election led to worldwide concern over the effect of fake news on audience and its influence on the political spectrum. According to the evidence collected by several researches indicate the following: 1) 62 % of US adults received news on social media platform (Gottfried and Shearer 2016); 2) Facebook was among the most popular platform where fake news was shared widely (Silverman 2016); 3) Many news consumers at the receiving end of fake news claimed that they believed it to be true (Silverman and Singer-Vine 2016); 4) Among the fake news the most popular fake news tend to be in favor of Donald Trump over Hillary Clinton (Silverman 2016). Infact so much so that, many political commentators have outrightly made several remarks. Andrew Bosworth a close friend of the firm's chief Mark Zuckerberg, said that Mr Trump was not elected because of "misinformation", but "because he ran the single best digital ad campaign I've ever seen from any advertiser.

Period". (Bosworth, 2020). Putting these facts together, a number of commentators have suggested that Donald Trump would not have been elected president were it not for the influence of fake news (for examples, see Parkinson 2016; Read 2016; Dewey 2016). The above paper talks about the background and history of fake news and its growing importance. It also talks about the various trends in related to fake news and their inclination towards a particular political party, be it republican or democrat. The paper also discusses the producers of these sites who have produced fake news, especially the websites that were created just before the elections. It was seen that websites that supplied fake news were short lived and were later non-existent. The research collected a database of fake news articles that were circulated three months prior to the elections and then coded the content as pro Clinton or pro Trump. The research also states social media as a source of political information. It says that the cost of entering the market is quite minimal which increases the profitability of small-scale strategies adopted by fake news producers. Secondly it is very difficult to judge the veracity of an article due to short snippets and slices of information.

And lastly Bakshy, Messing, and Adamic (2015) suggest that people who get news from Facebook or any other social media platforms are less likely to get facts and evidence about the real and true state of affairs that would negate an ideologically

aligned but false story. Pew survey (Gottfried and Shearer 2016) also found out that 62 percent of US adults get news from social media. To the extent that fake news is socially costly and fake news is widespread on social media, this statistic could appear to be cause for concern.

Media Trust and Health Misinformation around COVID 19

Among the various social media platforms, Facebook is among the most popular platforms among the youth especially. Facebook has become an integral part of the youth of India. It has become part of an individual and defines a person's personality and traits. It has become part of the way we communicate, talk, network, socialize, make friends, and spend leisure time. It has become more significant than any other means of communication outlets due to its easy and increased accessibility and usability (Hellweg 2011). The idea with which Facebook began was openness, transparency, togetherness, new communities, open networks brought news ways of communicating in our lives. It also helped in creating of self-image and virtual personality. Little did the users know about the ways in which it would have issues of privacy, data encryption, hate speech, inflammatory remarks, misinformation and disinformation. Recently in 2019 and 2020, Facebook was under scrutiny for how it inflicts its hate speech policies when the accused are the members of the ruling party. Facebook was also accused of being a propaganda weapon in the hands of ruling party for spreading hatred and disenfranchising certain sections of the society. During the nationwide lockdown, people were largely consuming news and communicating with their friends and family members as Covid-19 fear grappled the country and people were mostly found sitting at home working and doing their work. It was during this time only that Facebook was caught in the controversy over its political inclinations and its incompetency to monitor hate content.

Trust is an important element of public discourse especially when it comes to individuals and institutions. Although trust has been examined, categorised and explained in various ways by multiple researches and social science scholars, but very few studies have been done in order to assess the media trust. There are several studies that examine the relationships among trust, media use, and civic engagement are abundant (e.g., Capella, 2002; Putnam, 1995a, 1995b, 2000; Uslaner, 1998, 1999). Capella, 2002, in his research summarizes various trends in social trust, trust in government, media organisation and other social institute and also analyse media's role in these trends. Other researches focuses on American viewing habits of Television and the trust they have on media. The major decline in social trust and civic engagement in the United States can be associated to increased culture of television viewing habits. He stated that people who watched a lot of television are more likely to feel that real world is 'mean' as the 'television world' and therefore tend to withdraw themselves and lack trust among people in general and decline to participate in civic affairs. . (Putnam, 1998). In most of these studies found related to trust, measures of trust employed in these studies typically capture an over-arching trust in people, i.e., "social trust," however, the forms of trust that individuals assign to specific sources of civic information are important aspects of public engagement (Williams, 2004) that require more attention from researchers.

Fake News and Declining Media Trust

There have been several studies done to assess the media credibility or trust in the media. However the two terms, trust and credibility have often been interchangeably used in different social science research. In a study, 'Why Americans don't Trust the Media?' (Jones, 2015) the research has made an attempt to find out the factors for mistrust in media among Americans in particular. The study points out a correlation between representative democracy and media organisations. It states that the public has been growing weary of the media's apparent obsession with political scandal and political personal lives. The survey done in the study suggests that many Americans are frustrated with scandals, embarrassing mistakes during political speech, issues related to personal lives of politicians, their extramarital affairs rather than real news that matter to them to make meaningful political discussions. Americans have lots of choices when it comes to news sources.

But the those engrossed in Television are merely being "seduced" into thinking they are informed. (Hart, 1994). However they lack the "contextual knowledge" because of being "saturated with bits and bytes of information" (Schudson, 1995). The result did conclude that majority of the respondents who expressed low levels of trust in the government also expressed low levels of trust in media (Jones, 2015). Thus the above study focussed only on the factors for the low level of trust in media among Americans but failed to cover other very important factors like social media platforms and fake news. The study is limited to Americans only with special focus drawn to public leaning towards democrats, liberals and conservative. It does not focus much on the attributes of journalism or the reporting content.

Kohring, Matthias & Matthes, Jörg. (2007) in the paper titled 'Trust in News Media' discusses the various dimensions that individuals apply in evaluating the trustworthiness or credibility of news media. In previous research, however, there is no standardized scale for the measurement of trust in news media. But in this research development and validation of a multidimensional scale of trust in news media has been proposed. A theoretically derived model is tested on a representative sample via confirmatory factor analysis. After some modifications, the model is then validated on another independent sample. These results confirm the hypothesis that trust in news media can be considered a hierarchical factor (of second order) that consists of four lower order factors, including trust in the selectivity of topics, trust in the selectivity of facts, trust in the accuracy of depictions, and trust in journalistic assessment. This model is the first validated scale of trust in news media in communication research. Another research done by Rimmer and Weaver (1987) titled, 'Different Questions, Different Answers? Media Use and Media Credibility' talks about the relationship of media use and media credibility and its correlation.

It said that those who use newspaper or television more often are those who rate the credibility of these media higher than those who use these mediums less. It is to be noted that the above study does not take into account the social media or new media and its credibility. Also, the above two studies mentioned do talk about the conceptual framework on the basis of which media credibility is

assessed but they lack the concept of fake news or information disorder and the rising lack of trust even in the credible of news media.

However, a study by Fisher, C. (2018). *What Is Meant By "Trust" In News Media? Trust in Media and Journalism* did try to correlate the users trust in news media with rising number of fake news being circulated on online media. Based on a review of interdisciplinary literature, this paper maps the changing nature of news 'trust' over the past 80 years. In doing so, it highlights key issues. Firstly, there is no agreed definition of trust in news media. Secondly, there is a growing disconnection between the normative ideal of an informed citizen and the complex influences on perception of news credibility in the digital era. Thirdly, there is a tension between ideal of trust and the push for greater consumer scepticism in the age of 'fake news'. In conclusion it asks whether general questions about public 'trust' in news media continue to be relevant. (Fischer, 2018). However, a related research paper is found that talks about media trust and explores the relationship between individuals' level of media trust and news attention. Three different kinds of media trust is developed: 1) Trust of news information, 2) trust of those who deliver the news, and 3) Trust of media corporations. The findings show that these three different types of media trust related to news attention in context to different mediums.

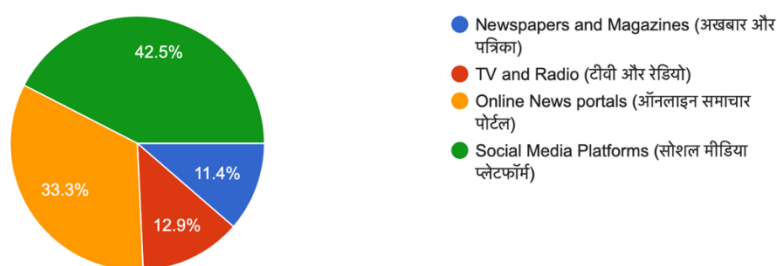
The research further argues that media use patterns are also influenced by perceived source credibility. A lot of work has been documented that the perceived credibility of a news source relates to pattern of usage, selective exposure and selective attention paid to the information. Because there is an abundance of information available therefore the audiences cannot pay attention and assess all kinds of information they receive and therefore make an attempt to choose the information that they think will benefit them the most. Research done on selective exposure suggests that when audience find that the information does not seem to be trustworthy, they try to seek information from somewhere else. (Williams, 2012).

Among several researches done during and post pandemic, one particular research focusses on the various types of harmful information during the pandemic in Europe. The research talks about the ways in which information disorder has made people become more vulnerable in as many as six ways. But none of these six consequences talking about the declining trust in the real news that exist. The present study will attempt to do that. In another research paper, the author has made an attempt to understand fake news and hoaxes and explore the manner in which it tarnishes the reputation of an organization. The research has cited various case studies like Pepsi-Cola, Dominos etc. These companies, among many other companies have often faced allegations and false claims that syringes were found in pepsi bottles or dominos served contaminated food to its customers and likes. Such kinds of hoax often invites attention through tradition as well as contemporary new media. Popular websites and controversial television personalities frequently argue that well-documented crises themselves are hoaxes. In the present research, the potential for claims of crisis as hoax to destroy the discourse of crisis renewal is explored and understood through an analysis of three cases. The research argue that overcoming such disruptions requires corporate social responsibility, a focus on the issues rather than the hoaxers, and

continued efforts to improve media literacy campaigns. The above research has successfully drawn a parallel relationship between fake news and information disorder but has not talked about the consequences that it might have on the real news. It does not talk about the trust issues that an audience might have with a real, authentic piece of news information. The present study is an attempt to have a holistic picture that includes, fake news, information disorder and media trust.

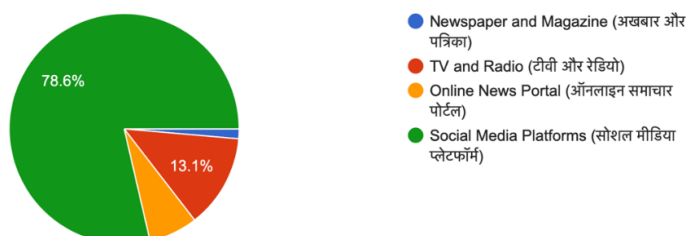
Results and Analysis

The survey conducted reveals that social media platforms (SMP) are the main source of information for the people. 42.5 % of the respondents stated that they use SMP as their main source of information. 33 % of the respondents were dependent on online News Portals as the main source of information followed by TV & radio (13%) and lastly newspapers as 11%.



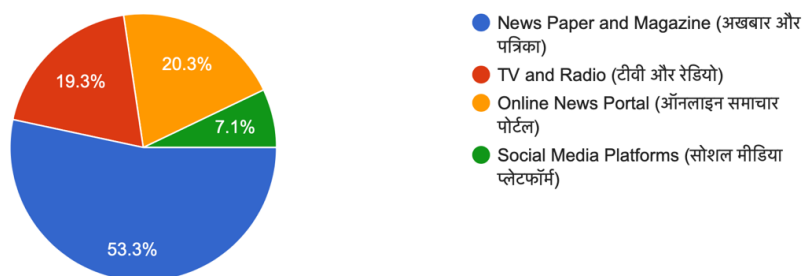
What is the main source of information during corona?

However, Since pre-independence days, India has had a long history of print media. The Indian print media played an important part in achieving independence. Following independence, many forms of media have played an important role in instilling democratic ideas. The key to maintaining the print media's reputation is accurate, factual, and fair reporting. But the circulation of print media including newspaper and magazine faced a huge set back because of the fear of spread of corona. Perhaps this could be one of the reasons for low percentage pf people in citing newspapers and magazines as the main source of information.



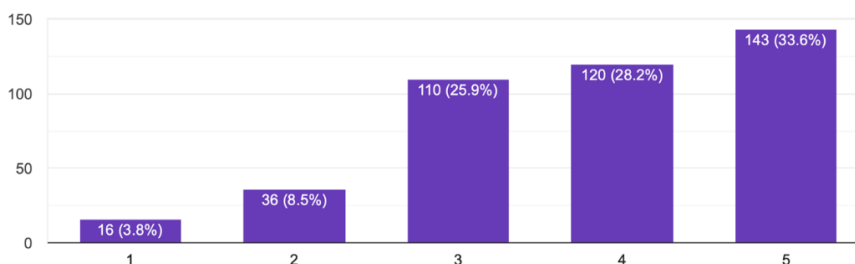
According to you which among these is most likely to spread fake news around covid-19?

During the survey, it is quite clear that social media's usage has drastically increased however people don't rely on social media. A total of 78% respondents clearly stated that fake news spreads fastest through social media platforms. TV and radio are also among those platforms that spread fake news. 13% respondents believe that main reason for spreading fake news is broadcast/telecast media) which means that people also don't trust TV and radio that is commonly found in almost every household. This is quite astounding revelation but this is a matter of fact that has come up through this study that news portal is considered less susceptible to fake news as compared to TV& radio and Newspaper.



Which among the following news mediums were most reliable source of news during corona pandemic?

In spite of low sale of newspapers during corona, the study reveals that although newspaper was not the main source of information for most of the respondents, but when it comes to being the most reliable source of information, then newspapers and magazines took the lead. 53 % of the respondents believed that newspapers and magazines are the most reliable source of information around covid, followed by Online news Portal (20%), and TV & Radio (20%) and social media platforms only 7%.



Do you think your trust in media has declined during corona? 1-strongly agree, 5-strongly disagree.

Overall it has been observed that media trust declined during corona period, owing to large number of misinformation spreading around covid. Many studies have revealed that social media platforms have indeed acted as a catalyst in spreading health misinformation. A nationwide study conducted during lockdown in India in this context reveals that Indians who are above the age group of 34 years tend to spread fake news the most, owing to the lack of media literacy initiatives and delayed technology advancements. The research also reveals that the same age group of people also think that it is lawful to share fake news and normal to create and share misinformation during emergency situations like COVID 19 pandemic. (Raj & Goswami, 2020). The panic was further escalated due to large number of misinformation related to health floating around different social media platforms. Further news related to mass killing of patients in China and possibility of extending the lockdown, which led to individuals fleeing from quarantine or isolation facilities and unnecessary travel prior to lockdown in order to return home. Unfortunately, logos, website links, name of renowned health professionals and agencies, news channels, and leading newspapers were being misused in such fake news spreading across various social media platforms. (Kadam & Atre, 2020).

Conclusion and Recommendation

With the influx of information in all forms from all mediums, there is a constant apprehension about the authenticity of the information received. Previously it was believed that more the information the better it is. But the advent of multiple sources of information, the information ecosystem has changed multifold. It has given rise to a disorder in the information environment which also has been termed as 'information pollution' by Jakob Nielsen in 2003. The present study clearly brings out the gravity of the information disorder and points out the dependency of people on social media platforms. It further points out that people still trust the traditional source of media like newspapers and magazines, when it comes to health information. A lot of research has been done in the field of information pollution *vis a vis* information disorder. In the recent times, Information disorder is crucial to be understood and attracts increasing attention. The openness and anonymity of social media makes it convenient for users to share and exchange information, but at the same time it also makes it defenseless to evil practices (Shu et al., 2020).

In the similar light one of the most recent and prominent examples of Information disorder is the creation, transmission and consumption of false information and rumors during the outbreak of COVID- 2019. The terms 'misinfodemics' and 'infodemic' have been proposed to refer to the manner in which misinformation may fuel the spread of diseases (Gyenes and Mina, 2018; Zarocostas, 2020). Talking about media literacy levels, people may lack the necessary health literacy – the ability to acquire, understand, and use health-related information – to recognize false information concerning the pandemic, adopt appropriate precautions and protective behavior, and thereby avoid unnecessary risks for infection with or spread of the virus (Paakkari and Okan, 2020).

The sudden onset of the coronavirus pandemic was one of the biggest setback and jolt to the health sector across the globe but also it led to an explosion of misinformation about the disease. As the COVID 19 pandemic spread across the globe physical movement got restricted in almost all sphere of social life. Work, education, entertainment, tourism, economy, health sector, and almost all areas concerning public life came to halt. At that time social media platforms emerged as a means of socializing as well as the only means of seeking and sharing information about the disease. Social media platforms allowed the public to write and publish anything and everything on the web without keeping a check on the authenticity of the information or news. News pertaining to COVID-19 led to a widespread increase in the extent to which people seek out information about the epidemic where search for “coronavirus” increased to 36% on the day immediately after the announcement in US. (Bento et al., 2020).

The demand for more information pertaining to the pandemic led to an explosion of unchecked information and spread of misinformation. The nationwide lockdown from 24 March to 8th June saw an upsurge in the number of Facebook users, as many people turned to social media to pass time, interact and share their opinions with their family and friends. The gravity of the situation can be understood by the fact when WHO Director General said that *‘We are not just fighting the pandemic, we are also fighting ‘infodemic’*. The information surrounding the pandemic contained lots of conspiracy theories, pseudoscientific therapies, unverified diagnosis and treatment, prevention, assumptions on the origin and spread of the virus and natural remedies and cure. (Naeem & Bhatti 2020) The amount of misinformation surrounding health misinformation related to the pandemic led public health being at risk. The massiveness of fake news and its spread required health professionals, scientists, journalists, health information professionals to identify and combat fake news stories. With every claim that busted, a new claim would emerge and the lack of resources and professionals to combat were few.

Examples of such stories include the view that of 5G technology has caused the pandemic; that mosquito bites can transmit the virus. Alleged cures included the ingestion of chloroquine, drinking cow urine or hot water. There has been a rumor spreading through social media accounts that neat alcohol can cure COVID-19 which has resulted in hundreds of Iranians dying from poisoning (Trew, 2020). There is urgent need to for cross disciplinary approach to develop theory at multiple levels of analysis and tries to engage disciplines like computer science, psychology and data science to assess these problems. The future research needs to focus on health related misinformation and ways to combat it through intervention and regulation using various tools and technology available in other disciplines. Media Literacy and awareness campaigns is indeed necessary to act as outside factors to control the spread of health misinformation.

References

1. Nic Newman with Richard Fletcher, Anne Schulz, Simge Andi, Craig T. Robertson, and Rasmus Kleis Nielsen, Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2021 10TH EDITION

2. Jaggi, R., & Majumdar, P. (2009). Popularity vs. credibility: An analysis of public perception of sensationalism in Indian television news. *IMS Manthan*, 4(2).
3. ICRIER and LIRNI asisa survey report 2020.
4. Knopf, J. W. (2006). Doing a literature review. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 39(1), 127-132.
5. KANTAR, Internet Adoption in India ICUBE 2020 https://images.assettype.com/afaqs/2021-06/b9a3220f-ae2f-43db-a0b4-36a372b243c4/KANTAR_ICUBE_2020_Report_C1.pdf
6. Benkler, Y. (2006). *The wealth of networks: How social production transforms markets and freedom*. Yale University Press.
7. Pariser, E. (2011). *The filter bubble: What the Internet is hiding from you*. Penguin UK.
8. Sunstein, C. (2001). *Republic.com*. Princeton University Press.
9. Pentina, I., & Tarafdar, M. (2014). From “information” to “knowing”: Exploring the role of social media in contemporary news consumption. *Computers in human behavior*, 35, 211-223.
10. S, Kube TV, July 2018, Dr N Bhaskara Rao, Chairman CMS (Centre For Media Studies) Interview Part-1, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qU8flzL1t_c
11. Fernandes, B., Biswas, N.U., Roseann, T.M., Vallejo, A., Cecilia, A.E. (2020) The impact of COVID-19 lockdown on internet use and escapism in adolescents, *Revista de Psicología Clínica con Niños y Adolescentes*, Vol. 7 no. 3, pp 59-65
12. Pew research Centre. (2022, Jan 5). Trust in America <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLZ9z-Af5ISaswq9yoHM32olz4-AITb1Dl>
13. Pew research centre 2021, News Consumption Across social media 2021, <https://www.pewresearch.org/journalism/2021/09/20/news-consumption-across-social-media-in-2021/>
14. Casero-Ripollés, A. (2020). Impact of Covid-19 on the media system. Communicative and democratic consequences of news consumption during the outbreak. Casero-Ripollés, Andreu (2020). “Impact of Covid-19 on the media system. Communicative and democratic consequences of news consumption during the outbreak”. *El profesional de la información*, 29(2), e290223.
15. Verma, N., Fleischmann, K. R., & Koltai, K. S. (2017). Human values and trust in scientific journals, the mainstream media and fake news. *Proceedings of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, 54(1), 426-435.
16. Fleischmann, K. R. (2014). *Information and human values*. San Rafael, CA: Morgan & Claypool.
17. Tandoc, E. C., Lim, Z. W., & Ling, R. (2017). Defining “Fake News.” *Digital Journalism*, 6(2), 137–153. doi:10.1080/21670811.2017.1360143
18. Albright, Jonathan. 2016. “The #Election 2016 Micro-Propaganda Machine.” *Medium*. <https://medium.com/@dlgi/the-election2016-micro-propaganda-machine-383449cc1fba>.
19. Bennett, W. Lance; Livingston, Steven (2018). “The disinformation order: Disruptive communication and the decline of democratic institutions”.

- European journal of communication, v. 33, n. 2, pp. 122-139.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0267323118760317>
20. Jones, D. A. (2004). Why Americans don't trust the media: A preliminary analysis. *Harvard international journal of press/politics*, 9(2), 60-75.
 21. Hart, Roderick. 1994. *Seducing America*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
 22. Wardle, C., & Derakhshan, H. (2017). Information disorder: Toward an interdisciplinary framework for research and policymaking.
 23. <https://dl.acm.org/doi/pdf/10.1145/966712.966731>
 24. Hansson, S., Orru, K., Torpan, S., Bäck, A., Kazemekaityte, A., Meyer, S. F., ... & Pigrée, A. (2021). COVID-19 information disorder: six types of harmful information during the pandemic in Europe. *Journal of Risk Research*, 24(3-4), 380-393.
 25. Sellnow, T. L., Parrish, A., & Semenas, L. (2019). From hoax as crisis to crisis as hoax: Fake news and information disorder as disruptions to the discourse of renewal. *Journal of international crisis and risk communication research*, 2(1), 121-142.
 26. Shu, K., Wang, S., Lee, D., & Liu, H. (2020). Mining disinformation and fake news: Concepts, methods, and recent advancements. In *Disinformation, Misinformation, and Fake News in Social Media* (pp. 1-19). Springer, Cham.
 27. Williams, A. E. (2012). Trust or bust?: Questioning the relationship between media trust and news attention. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 56(1), 116-131.
 28. Cappella, J. N. (2002). Cynicism and social trust in the new media environment. *Journal of Communication*, 52(1), 229-241.
 29. De Tocqueville, A. (2016). 8. Democracy in America. In *Democracy* (pp. 67-76). Columbia University Press
 30. Paakkari, L., & Okan, O. (2020). COVID-19: health literacy is an underestimated problem. *The Lancet. Public Health*, 5(5), e249.
 31. Naeem, S. B., & Bhatti, R. (2020). The Covid-19 'infodemic': a new front for information professionals. *Health Information & Libraries Journal*, 37(3), 233-239.
 32. Trew, B. (2020). Hundreds dead in Iran from drinking methanol amid fake reports it cures coronavirus. *The Independent*; 2020 [acceso: 23/04/2020].
 33. Banaji, S., Bhat, R., Agarwal, A., Passanha, N., & Sadhana Pravin, M. (2019). WhatsApp vigilantes: An exploration of citizen reception and circulation of WhatsApp misinformation linked to mob violence in India.
 34. Al-Zaman, M. S. (2021). Social Media Fake News in India. *Asian Journal for Public Opinion Research*, 9(1), 25-47.
 35. Farooq, G. (2018). Politics of Fake News: how WhatsApp became a potent propaganda tool in India. *Media Watch*, 9(1), 106-117.
 36. Silver, L., Huang, C., & Taylor, K. (2019). In emerging economies, smartphone and social media users have broader social networks. Pew Research Center.
 37. Raj, A., & Goswami, M. P. (2020). Is fake news spreading more rapidly than COVID-19 in India. *Journal of Content, Community and Communication*, 11(10), 208-220.
 38. Kadam, A. B., & Atre, S. R. (2020). Negative impact of social media panic during the COVID-19 outbreak in India. *Journal of Travel Medicine*, 27(3), taaa057.

39. Hellweg, A. (2011). Social media sites of politicians influence their perception by constituents. *The Elon Journal of Undergraduate Research in Communications*, 2(1), 22-36
40. FA: Hersh F. Mahmood, Hooshang Dabbagh, Azad A. Mohammed, Comparative study on using chemical and natural admixtures (grape and mulberry extracts) for concrete, *Case Studies in Construction Materials*, Volume 15, 2021,
41. Kumar, S. (2022). A quest for sustainium (sustainability Premium): review of sustainable bonds. *Academy of Accounting and Financial Studies Journal*, Vol. 26, no.2, pp. 1-18
42. Allugunti, V.R. (2019). Diabetes Kaggle Dataset Adequacy Scrutiny using Factor Exploration and Correlation. *International Journal of Recent Technology and Engineering*, Volume-8, Issue-1S4, pp 1105-1110.
43. Lovitts*, B. E. (2005). Being a good course-taker is not enough: a theoretical perspective on the transition to independent research. *Studies in higher education*, 30(2), 137-154
44. Wimmer, R. D., & Dominick, J. R. (2013). *Mass media research*. Cengage learning.
45. Schramm, W. (1949). The effects of mass communications: A review. *Journalism Quarterly*, 26(4), 397-409.
46. Dozier, D., & Rice, R. (1984). *The new media: Communication, research, and technology*. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.
47. Papacharissi, Z., & Mendelson, A. (2010). 12 Toward a new (er) sociability: uses, gratifications and social capital on Facebook. *Media perspectives for the 21st century*, 212.
48. Shoemaker, P. J., Eichholz, M., Kim, E., & Wrigley, B. (2001). Individual and routine forces in gatekeeping. *Journalism & mass communication quarterly*, 78(2), 233-246.
49. Uslaner, E. M. (1998). Social capital, television, and the "mean world": Trust, optimism, and civic participation. *Political psychology*, 19(3), 441-467.
50. Apuke, O. D., & Omar, B. (2020). User motivation in fake news sharing during the COVID-19 pandemic: an application of the uses and gratification theory. *Online Information Review*.