



## Representation and usage of media during Covid-19

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### Abstract

*Corona virus were not considered as highly pathogenic for humans until the serious acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) outbreak in the Guangdong state of China in 2002 and 2003. The WHO confirmed the outbreak on 11 March 2020 a pandemic. As of 13 July 2020, over 13 million cases have been confirmed in more than 215 countries and territories. More than 5,71,000 have died from the disease. More than seven months after the emergence of COVID-19, scientists and government agencies are still trying to understand how this disease spreads. The information related to spread of disease, availability of treatment, public health practices and guidelines keep changing very frequently, leading to increased fear of uncertainty among general population. Accurate, well-developed information will help people to handle the uncertainties and fear during crisis. The role of mass media in bringing out empathizing and reliable information in times of ongoing pandemic becomes very crucial. The researchers have tried in this study to decide whether the media educate or misinform the public about the Covid-19 pandemic, The speed at which information spreads through the media is inconceivable and the findings of this study will help to understand whether the media are disseminating information or misinformation to the public on the outbreak of Covid-19.*

**Key words:** Novel Covid-19, Fake news, Reliability of news, New Media, News consumption; Political communication; Credibility; Democracy;

### Introduction

The virus responsible for the current pandemic that originated in Wuhan, China has been classified as novel coronavirus. These viruses typically cause respiratory infections in humans. Certain members of this family are considered zoonotic, in other words, these diseases normally exist in animals but can be transmitted to humans. The name "coronavirus" derives from the Latin crown which refers to the characteristic appearance of the particles (viruses) of the virus that have large bulbous projections that produce an picture that recalls the solar corona or the halus..



Coronaviruses were not considered as highly pathogenic for humans until the serious acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) outbreak in the Guangdong state of China in 2002 and 2003. China's authorities on 7 January 2020 announced The isolation of the new form of coronavirus (nCoV) which was named as 2019-nCoV by WHO on 12 January and Covid-19 on 11 February 2020. WHO confirmed the outbreak on 11 March 2020 a pandemic. As of 13 July 2020, over 13 million cases have been confirmed in more than 215 countries and territories. More than 5,71,000 have died from the disease.

More than seven months after the emergence of COVID-19, scientists and government agencies are still trying to understand how this disease spreads. Until recently, it was considered that human to human transmission of COVID-19 occurs If an individual is in close contact (within 1 meter) with the person who is infected with respiratory symptoms such as cough, sneezing, speaking, or singing. Indirect It may also be possible to transmit touch (fomite transmission), involving a human touching a contaminated object or surface. On 06 July, 239 scientists from 32 countries wrote an open letter to WHO claiming that COVID-19 is also Airborne transmission means the propagation of infectious agents triggered by the diffusion, over long distances and time, of droplet nuclei (aerosols), which remain infectious while suspended in air. During medical operations generation aerosols ("aerosol generation procedures"), aerial transmission of SARS-CoV-2 can occur. together with the scientific community, has been actively discussing and evaluating whether SARS-CoV-2 may also spread through aerosols in the absence of aerosol generating procedures, particularly in indoor settings with poor ventilation? WHO has acknowledged airborne spread of COVID-19 and issued new guidelines on the transmission of the novel coronavirus. However, it also said that more research is urgently required to elucidate the importance of different transmission routes of the virus.

The information related to spread of disease, availability of treatment, public health practices and guidelines keep changing very frequently, leading to increased fear of uncertainty among general population. Accurate, well-developed information will help people to handle the uncertainties and fear during crisis. The role of mass media in bringing out empathizing and reliable information in times of ongoing pandemic becomes very crucial. In this context, we undertook a survey to understand how people see the COVID-19 reporting by mass media and how it is impacting their day to day life.

### **Literature Review**

The life has changed, Millions of people have lost their jobs and many died, and remaining isolated. Prime Minister, Narendra Modi appealed Indians to clap or ring bells to applaud frontline worrier combating corona. The most popular application, WhatsApp, has introduced the MyGov Corona Helpdesk Chatbot along with the Indian government, where users must submit text at +91-9013151515 to obtain checked Covid-19 information Tool.

India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, vigorously favoured for a scientific temper or mind-set as a way of life. Article 51 A (h) says that it shall be the duty of every citizen to develop the scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform. In India, after 2014 almost all mainstream media channels are controlled by large corporates and political parties in the absence of curtailment on cross-media ownership. They hide the truth from form masses. Those who want authentic information and scientific knowledge, have to reach for it. The Indian media roots has flattered a battle front of ideologies. Small media

organization platform and social media in country play an important role but woefully, these small media platforms don't have the illimitable ingress that big corporate media platforms are obscure to. The Indian television news channel have selective audience, the government notwithstanding is not ready to listen any cogent criticism. On 31 March, the Supreme Court directed not to print, post, or television an electronic/print/website or social media platform without first having a genuine factual view from the independent centrally-government system (Livelaw News Network 2020). Television sets the ugliest agenda and coverage are politically motivated.

Mainstream media is spreading fake news against particular community, and after that official and other news platform shatter fake news, In year of 2020 India is now at a ranking of 142 out of 180 countries, two positions below the World Press Freedom Index.

There should be an argumentative Indians and not bigoted. The media must be an observer and the bridge between leaders and masses and vice versa, the level of public discourse in India has deteriorated in the media in recent years and sphere. Media extension has led to diminish of the public sphere, resulting in the spread of elitist principles that are socially conservatory, Over the past few year media have become mouthpiece of ruling political party.

### Objective of Study

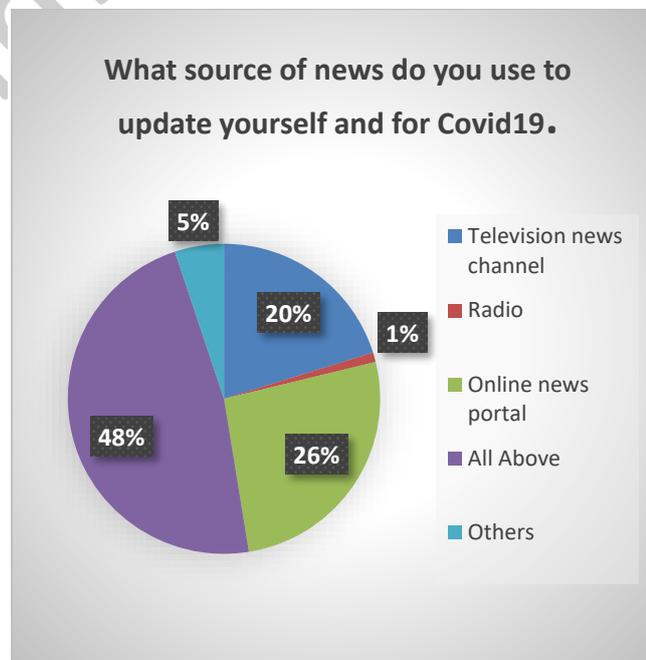
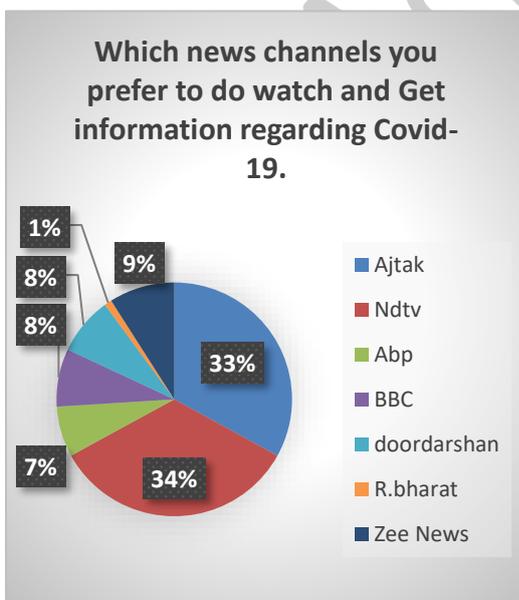
The objective of study is to identify the Reliability use of media during Covid-19 Outbreak.

Q- What source of news do you use to update yourself and for Covid19?

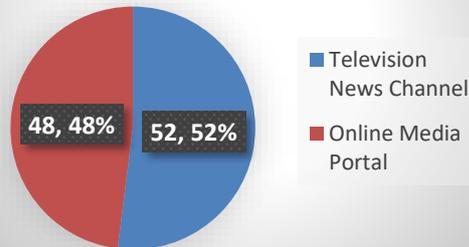
Q- Which news channels you prefer to do watch and Get information regarding Covid-19?

Q- Which Platforms you prefer to do watch and Get information regarding Covid-19?

Q-Do you check fake news?

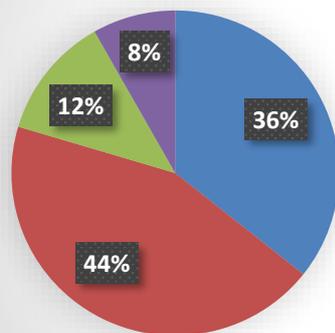


Which Platforms you prefer to do watch and Get information regarding Covid-19.



“**The rise of fake news indicates the crumple of the Real news order and the turmoil of future and public communication**”

Do you check fake news.



- Yes, I cross check two to three news channels to get confirm
- Yes, I see the source of Information
- I don't check. If its suits to my ideology, I accept and circulate

## Methodology

A cross section analysis was performed undertaken to assess the credibility of media reports and how they impact general population. Data was collected using online platform to avoid face to face and physical interactions. Responders were invited through text messages which redirected them to a Google sheet. Data was collected anonymously, without collecting information that could identify the respondents. The period of data collection was between 20th and 29th April 2020.

## Study questionnaire

The landing page of the survey contained information about the nature and purpose of the survey. Once the responders consented to participate, they were taken to the first part of the study questionnaire which had questions related to the socio-demographic information such as gender, age, education, profession etc.

The second part of the survey contained four questions which were focused on reliability of media sources, preferred platform of news, preferred news channel, and preferred platform for getting covid19 information.

## Results



A total of 148 responses were obtained from the survey. Out of these 48 responders did not answer at least one questions. These were excluded from analysis and final analysis was done on 100 respondents. The mean age of the respondents were 23.5 years.

#### Preferred news channel:

33% respondents watched AajTak, 34% watched NDTV, 8% watched BBC, 8% watched Doordarshan, 7% watched ABP, 9% watched Zee News, and 1% watched R.Bharat.

#### Preferred News Source:

For 22.2% respondents television new channels were the preferred source to keep them updated, followed by New media (26.3%) and Radio (1%). 47.5% respondent used multiple sources to keep themselves updated.

#### Preferred source for COVID-19 related information:

Fifty two percent respondents relied on television news channel for COVID-19 related information, followed by New media (48%).

Forty-four present respondents cross checked the news to confirm its validity. Eight percent of the respondents think media has divided Indians into Traitor vs. Nationalist by promoting news charged with nationalism and campaigned nationalism as patriotism.

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

We have found that peoples depend on various sources and platform of news and coronavirus related updates, and access them through various platforms. Now days, majority of people try to understands about the true facts behind the news. It seems, that the masses still engage with mainstream media. Meanwhile parallel media also produce authentic information; however, masses are not engaging with it to the extent of mainstream media. India is witnessing a change of preference from mainstream media to new online media, and very few people are depending on old sources such as radio.

When it comes to reporting of the ongoing pandemic, mainstream media outlets are not trustworthy and they all are driven by some agenda. They are playing strategically with facts and misleading the masses and creating an environment of fear. Debates have no agenda, and are loaded with anger and ugliness, which is both unethical and unacceptable. Now it's time to come up with guidance related to accountability, credibly and reliability of media houses. We don't have a cure for the virus yet, but no less than we know that access to proper, relevant, reliable, trusted informative news and the other source can help fight with "infodemic" and thus help peoples themselves and their societies and Nation.

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