Mass Media, Propaganda & Ethics: An Overview of a New Upsurge of Fascism in India

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Abstract:

Mass Media, especially print media since its inception, if we look back, during Industrial Revolution and its concomitant Mass Production, has always been dwindled in between two binary epithets: Political Allegiance and Media Democracy. The duality lies in the fact that when the media has to work at the behest of political parties, ruling parties at the helm of body politique of the state, for its survival and sustenance, of course the other epithet which is 'Media democracy' or democratic rights of the media is questionable. However, the compulsion to show political allegiance to the ruling party at the governance is never accepted by the media without resistance and therefore any attempt of imposing censorship on media has been vehemently protested. Examples can be multiplied by drawing instances from history. Political censorship in Indian Media has never been such a recurrent phenomenon as it has become in the recent past. Also, 'political allegiance' when turned to propaganda tactics is more vulnerable than that of securing unflinching faith in the government. The number of defamation cases clamped against media houses, reporters and photo journalists have gone up from 13 to 167 as per a recent survey made by an independent journalist.

This research study explores the fact that digital propaganda and political allegiance has been used by the ruling government to ensure a mass consensus over a number of socio-political issues, starting from Farmers' Bill to Abrogation of Article 370 of Indian Constitution or for that matter Warfare Propaganda. The methodology that is used for this study is content analysis of media representation of information and speech analysis of PM Narendra Modi using a unique coding method. The samples are chosen on the basis of how media has represented announcement of different developmental schemes by the Modi Government and what they represent in reality. Most of the news reports that are analysed in this study between 2016-2022 are sourced from different newspapers and internet sources.

Key words: political allegiance, political propaganda, political censorship, media representation, defamation cases.

Research Hypothesis: 1. Most of the news reports on Modi Government's development packages are exaggerated and prejudiced

Hypothesis 2: The reports on development schemes are passed in the parliament through ordinance without having consensus of the majority.

RQ 1: RQ1. Has 'polarization of media' – Left- Right-Centre- led to a situation in India when media-autonomy is completely negated.

RQ2: Has suppression of facts become 'rules of the game' in democratic governance in India.

RQ3: Why is media's autonomy jeopardized?

RQ 4: What's new in the development schemes announced by the Modi Government during Covid 19

RQ 5: How far digitization has ensured development or social change or used as a ploy for propaganda.

Introduction: Print media played the most crucial role of 'Fourth Estate' as compared to other mediated platforms of communication. Communication researches have revealed that in the pre-Industrial era when British missionaries landed in India with an avowed purpose of preaching Christianity and the established first printing press in Goa, the propaganda intent of the British missionaries were not taken so passively by the Indian puritans as it was expected. It was a remarkable day for Indians, 6th September, 1556, as it was on this day the first printing press had arrived in India. It is interesting as well as significant to state that initially the establishment of printing presses in different parts of India was looked down with contempt and suspicion by the Indians as their sole aim was the propagation of the Christian faith. That is why we have instances of vehement protest when Henry Derozio formed Young Bengal Society with the intention to launch a crusade against all prejudiced social practices and rituals, advocating the necessity of European education. However, with the onslaught of technological advances at different phases and standing at the crux of 21st century when digitization of communication channels is the order of the day giving rise to an array of persuasive or interactive tools, especially social media influencers, social media campaign and social media networking sites, we have seen how the idea of propagation or expansion of ideas has been degenerated into a forced or 'manufactured consent' as explained by Noam Chomsky. And in extreme cases, we have seen the state machineries are being used to impose an undeclared 'state of emergency' on media leading to a spiralling of defamation cases who dare going against the dominant narratives that are being fed by a group of state patronized media planners, both paid or hired and independent and thus media's role as Observer, Watchdog, Public Sphere – all these all-pervading narratives with regard to media's ethical responsibility and performative responsibility are at stake.

History and Growth of Journalism in India: Judging from the historical facts, propaganda or propagation of ideas was the main trust in the growth of journalism in India and so was in the West also. The newspaper, therefore, came to India as an outlandish product, which was in fact forced upon us. Even our great nationalist leaders in the 18th and 19th centuries did not entertain the idea of learning English (called Mlechhas' language). The English were contemptuously referred to as Mlecchas—the depraved/degraded people whose moral standards were considered abysmally low and despised. The East India Company, which was ruling the country, was not favourably disposed to the press; the officials of the Company were suspicious of journalists and newspapers from the very beginning and they were intolerant of any kind of criticism. William Bolts, an ex-employee of the British East India Company when initiated his own newspaper called 'The Calcutta Chronicle' and James Silk Buckingham was the editor, Bolts had to retreat under the disapproving gaze of the Court of Directors of the Company. It was James Augustus Hickey who earned the distinction of introducing the first newspaper in India named Bengal Gazette alias Calcutta General Advertiser. The paper had two sheets with three columns on each page and it was published weekly. The paper declared it as a "weekly political and commercial paper open to all parties but influenced by none." The

contents of the paper included items taken from English newspapers in England, letters from local and rural readers, items of gossip and scandal of interest to the European community. Hickey had reserved to himself a column to talk to his readers directly. There was also a poet's column in his paper. The paper was called scurrilous and witty. Hickey and his paper came under extraordinary surveillance by the administration. The paper earned the enmity of Warren Hastings, the Governor-General and other high ups, most notable being Chief Justice, Elizah Impey. The administration was very annoyed because of the undesirable reporting—about the private lives of the persons in high positions and even others like soldiers. Hickey lampooned Hastings and called him, "Sir F. Wronghead", "the Great Moghul" and the "Dictator." Hickey reported an imaginary concert programme and linked the name of Sir Elijah Impey with a contract for a bridge that had gone to his cousin. All the important or notable personalities of Kolkata appeared in Hickey's Gazette with nicknames. If we look at the history of the Indian Press form 1780 to the present day, the journey was fraught with lots of struggle not just for freedom from the colonial repression of the British Empire but also technological inadequacies, economic destitution, discriminatory policies of the Colonial Raj, different repressive Acts and the need to use newspaper as a tool to raise nationalist sentience: all these factors combined to interplay with the growth of print media, newspaper in particular. In ancient India when the feudalistic system or king's dynasty system was prevalent, mostly the king's achievements, his laws and actions for the benefit of the citizens and generally his achievements formed the staple diet of news. News was given in inscriptions on walls of temples and on copper plates and through victory coins and writings on rocks. There were government officials who by the beat of drum gathered the populace and announced the policies and decisions of the king or government. The king who met his ministers and commander- in -chief daily at a durbar gathered news of what was happening in his kingdom and abroad from his counsellors who were expected to be fully informed of events and public opinion. The wandering minstrels acting as 'correspondents' moved from one royal court to another, picking up news of battles won or lost. They gathered useful information for courtiers and merchants. They also embroidered their news to make a good story as the reporters of today do.

Revolutionary changes in the 19th century both in India and the West: Newspapers in all major countries became much more important in the 19th century because of a series of technical, business, political, and cultural changes. High-speed presses and cheap wood-based newsprint made large circulations possible. The rapid expansion of elementary education meant a vast increase in the number of potential readers. Political parties sponsored newspapers at the local and national level. Toward the end of the century, advertising became well-established and became the main source of revenue for newspaper owners. This led to a race to obtain the largest possible circulation, often followed by downplaying partisanship so that members of all parties would buy a paper. The number of newspapers in Europe in the 1860s and 1870s was steady at about 6,000; then it doubled to 12,000 in 1900. In the 1860s and 1870s, most newspapers were four pages of editorials, reprinted speeches, excerpts from novels and poetry and a few small local ads. They were expensive, and most readers went to a café to look over the latest issue. There were major national papers in each capital city, such as the London Times, the London Post, the Paris Temps and so on. They were expensive and directed to the National political elite. Every decade the presses became faster, and the invention of automatic typesetting in the 1880s made the overnight printing of a large morning newspaper feasible. Cheap wood pulp replaced the much more expensive rag paper. A major cultural

innovation was the professionalization of news gathering, handled by specialist reporters. Liberalism led to freedom of the press, and ended newspaper taxes, along with a sharp reduction to government censorship.

Propaganda & Politics: In the latter half of the 19th century when the reach, availability and accessibility of mass media communication got more consolidated and when researches on communication studies were taking centre stage, the theory of Propaganda was first proposed by Harold Laswell. He established the fact while analysing the effects of propagandist media messages, propaganda has an indelible impact on the gullible audiences especially at times of socio-political or economic crisis and when people wished to have an alternate route to overcome threats that they are facing in their personal lives and thus seeks reassurance in propaganda. Instances can be drawn from Nazi regime when propaganda mechanism was used to its fullest extent and the great dictator Adolf Hitler was able to continue his reign over a decade. The historical origins of Nazi propaganda can be traced back to Adolf Hitler's Mein Kampf, where he devoted two chapters analysing the importance of propaganda and its practice. While Mein Kampf itself was a work of propaganda, Hitler talked about the aims of a propagandist in indoctrinating a population and the importance of ensuring the continued propagation of the propaganda: "The first duty of the propagandist is to win over people who can subsequently be taken into the organization. And the first duty of the organization is to select and train men who will be capable of carrying on the propaganda. The second duty of the organization is to disrupt the existing order of things and thus make room for the penetration of the new teaching which it represents, while the duty of the organizer must be to fight for the purpose of securing power, so that the doctrine may finally triumph' If we go deep into the propagandist strategies as employed by the Nazi regime, the formation of Reich Ministry for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, known by its German initials as the RMVP, was not just an initiative to disseminate messages with a priming effect through a centralized state machinery but also to bring all platforms of mass media and culture under control. And the Nazi propaganda strategy was based on three different archetypal myth: 1. Deification of Hitler 2. Defining the Common Enemy, 3. Rallying the masses. In a nutshell, deification or the attributes of heavenly aura of a messiah that were churned out both by his propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels and Reich Press Chief Otto Dietrich, was primarily targeted towards creating a 'willing suspension of disbelief' in the minds of the people. Thus, the 'common enemy' as posited by their propaganda mechanism was framed; the Jews, the Bolsheviks, and other undesirables meaning dissident voices. Thus, by means of portraying selective bias against those three common enemies in an unpleasant manner, Nazis succeeded in perpetuating torture and annihilation process and created a clustering illusion where people were forced to believe such untruths.

In the neo-colonial era, when such direct aggression or military power was replaced by globalization and cultural imperialism, the same propaganda tricks have been renamed and reinvented as 'political public relation'. "*Political public relation is the management process by which an organisation or individual actor for political purposes, through purposeful communication and action, seeks to influence and to establish, build and maintain beneficial relationships and reputations with its key publics to help support its mission and achieve its goals*" (*Political* Public Relations. Principles and Applications, *Routledge; 2011.* Neo-colonialism itself embodies a series of manoeuvring tactics or strategic manipulation of

resources, ie, economics, globalization, cultural imperialism and conditional aid, are used to exert control over other nations. The dominance of extreme right-wing ideologies in late 2000 speaks of this overwhelming scenario when covert political public relations and propaganda became two strong pillars in Indian democracy. The scholarships or research that surrounds the discourses on propaganda, misinformation or disinformation, are primarily focussed on how such propaganda tools are used as instrumental to repress, distort public opinion and thus misinform or dis-inform people or the public. This research study has conducted a case study on PM Narendra Modi's political public relations strategy and found that Narendra Modi's PR team, with the help of his 360 campaign were able to win the hearts of millions of Indians, to help achieve victory in the 2014 and 2019 elections. His famous slogan 'Ab ki baar Modi Sakhar', along with his various campaigns were designed and used to change the mindset of the people regarding their preconceived notions about the party and Modi as perpetrator of Godhra riots. A 360-campaign method, through advertising, PR, Articles, Marketing was used to promote these campaigns and himself.

However, it has often been claimed that Narendra Modi's victory in two consecutive elections is the fallout of a series of disinformation (deliberate misinformation) generated and perpetuated by social media. And to convince the voters that he is the only messiah who is solely dedicated to the cause of 'development' which has been halted so long due to the fact that the previous government had no vision for 'change', the focus of the election campaign in 2014 was shifted from ultra-Hindutva to 'Sab ka saath sab ka vikas'. After winning the election, the same notion of 'development through nation-building' was brought into limelight through all such various campaigns like SWACH BHARAT (CLEAN INDIA) MADE IN INDIA, DIGITAL INDIA, BETI BACCHAO BETI PADAO. When we look closely at those flamboyant chants, the shallowness of such jingoism becomes apparent. We need to reflect upon whose development we're talking about, whose benefit we're talking about in all such so-called developmental schemes, whether all those schemes have actually been able to bring about gender equity or whether the 'shackles of unfreedom' as explained by economist Amarta Sen (the factors hindering the growth of human potential) have been minimized or not to usher a genuine social change or development.

On the one hand, we see him proclaiming development and on the other hand we see him presenting Bhagvat Gita to US President Barak Obama. The man who is so vocal in every small/ big public gathering keeps silence while attending rallies in favour of Ram Mandir, despite having heard anti-Muslim slogans by his fellow RSS cadres. The myth of change-over from Modi as RSS cadre to Modi as the progressive leader of the country, was constantly thrust upon not just in social media but other mass media platforms like newspaper, radio, television etc. so aggressively that the divisive hidden agenda of the Modi government becomes more conspicuous. Starting from Farm Bill to Abrogation of Article 370 to crackdown on social media sites, every time we have observed how aggressive persuasion of a 'dominant image pattern' has worked to divert public attention from immediate issues to certain utopian exaggeration of Atmanirbhar Bharat; by the word 'dominant image pattern' I mean the images of intolerance, angst, violence, complete suspension of freedom of speech and expression which is the most requite criteria for 'media democracy'. Here I would like to use Speech Analysis technique to gauge how public opinion is shaped and constructed for the purpose of gaining public acceptance. The speech that I quoted for analysis is that of PM Narendra Modi's series speeches during the election campaign of 2021. The parameters used to assess such speeches are as follows; (a) the dominating use of influential use of high electromagnetic sound waves, spectral codes; frequency or pitch, amplitude or intensity or loudness and temporal codes, (b) frequency mapping (c) amplitude mapping (d) mode of simulation. Thus, it showed

how the strategic diversion of masses and manufacturing consent have been used as the most convenient technique towards that end.

Political Censorship and Mass Media: Political censorship by definition implies the fact that state-machineries will be used as a tool for subjugation and sublimation. Since ages, autocrats or autocratic rulers have used these weapons as a means of extracting unflinching loyalty of the subjects towards their demi-God, the Ruler. However, in the Constitution of India, the most debated Article 19 (1)A guarantees freedom of speech and expression for all citizens of India. The clauses under this Article states that all citizens shall have the right: (a) to freedom of speech and expression; (b) to assemble peaceably and without arms; (c)to form associations or unions; (d) to move freely throughout the territory of India; (e) to reside and settle in any part of the territory of India; and (f) to practise any profession, or to carry on any occupation, trade or business. 'Political or News censorship' has taken a quantum of extreme fascism in the recent past under BJP ruled government when we see hundreds of journalists, reporters were forced to be pushed behind bars. As per a recent survey conducted by an independent journalist, Geeta Seshu of Free Speech Collective: 'A sharp rise in criminal cases lodged against journalists in India for their work, with a majority of cases in BJP-ruled states, has contributed to the deterioration in the climate for free speech in India. In the last decade, 154 journalists in India were arrested, detained, interrogated or served show cause notices for their professional work and a little over 40 per cent of these instances were in 2020. Nine foreign journalists faced deportation, arrest, interrogations or were denied entry into India. Apart from cases under various sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), 'terror' related charges and sedition have also been increasingly applied against journalists. Three journalists are in custody under various sections of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 (UAPA), one of them being convicted with life imprisonment. In 2020, given the lockdown due to the pandemic, sections of the Disaster Management Act and Epidemic Diseases Act, along with prohibitory orders under Sec 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) have also been increasingly applied against journalists. Along with the already prevailing impunity for crimes against journalists, these instances clamp down on the flow of information and have a chilling effect on the freedom of the media in India'. H. G. Wells once sensed the vast potentialities of these inventions when he wrote in the New York Times: "Modern means of communication—the power afforded by print, telephone, wireless and so forth, of rapidly putting through directive strategic or technical conceptions to a great number of co-operation centres, of getting quick replies and effective discussion—have opened up a new world of political processes. Ideas and phrases can now be given an effectiveness greater than the effectiveness of any personality and stronger than any sectional interest. The common design can be documented and sustained against perversion and betrayal. It can be elaborated and developed steadily and widely without personal, local and sectional misunderstanding." Now, what Edward Barnys meant by the word 'new world of political process' in his book 'PROPAGANDA' is 'to explain the structure of the mechanism which controls the public mind, and to tell how it is manipulated by the special pleader who seeks to create public acceptance for a particular idea or commodity. It will attempt at the same time to find the due place in the modern democratic scheme for this new propaganda and to suggest its gradually evolving code of ethics and practice'. So, if we look at the number and nature of cases the journalists have been implicated in, 'including the horrific hounding and assault on Caravan journalists Shahid Tantray, Prabhjit Singh and a woman journalist in the national capital in Delhi on Aug 11, continue unabated. In this instance, despite lodging

official complaints, police failed to register an FIR. Other cases, shrouded in impunity, are poorly investigated. The nexus between law-enforcing agencies, the local administration and local business and political interests have ensured that justice remains elusive' (source: Behind Bars: Arrest & Detention of Journalists in India 2010-20).

The independent media reportage was never so strongly disregarded and dismantled except during 'internal state of emergency' proclaimed by Indira Gandhi regime, however withdrawn within a year in the wake of public protest and she had to apologize publicly for her mistake' as it has been carried out by the state mechanism in the recent past. And to continue with this process of media censorship, the state had charted out certain narratives around 'common enemy'; the journalists are constantly posed as 'common enemy' and they are disparaged, labelled as either anti-national or traitors, another common enemy is the antagonism towards Muslim community. The criminalizing of journalists for their reports has become a regular affair during the months of the lockdown announced by the Union government in March 2020. The Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeiTY) on March 20, 2020, had issued a directive saying that all social media platforms must conform to the directives and any attempt of non-compliance will be taken to task, 'inform users not to host, display, upload, modify, publish, transmit, update or share any information that may affect public order and unlawful in any way.' In the next few days, on March 24, 2020, Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a meeting with select media owners to ensure positive articles about the pandemic. Taking their cue, different State governments issued notifications regulating the media and thus all media channels were kind of pushed under black-out. The Supreme Court, in a petition on the plight of migrant labour after the announcement of a countrywide lockdown with barely four hours of notice, accepted a status report of the Union Government that said the 'exodus of migrant labourers was triggered due to panic created by some fake/misleading news. Two journalists –Aasif Sultan of the Kashmir Narrator and Siddique Kappan of Azhimukham - are still in custody on charges under the UAPA while a third, Prashant Rahi, has been convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment. On June 25, 2019, Ghulam Jeelani Qadri, journalist and publisher of the Urdu-language newspaper Daily Afaaq from Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir, was arrested on charges under the now lapsed Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act, 1985! Instances can be multiplied.

Content Analysis & Speech Analysis.

In this content analysis method, the probabilities that are examined how consistently media had been forced to portray a benevolent image of the government during and after pandemic aftermath continued, especially during lock-down period and then counterposed against those speeches disseminated on different news media, both print, television and web portals, by different political leaders, especially from the ruling party.

The methodology that is used for this study is content analysis of media representation of information using Sentimental Analysis Technique (Dictionary Method & Corpus Method)and speech analysis of PM Narendra Modi using a unique coding method. (Nvivo) The samples are randomly chosen on the basis of how media has represented developmental schemes by the Central Government and what effect those representations have in reality. (strong effect/limited effect /nil effect). Most of the news reports that are analysed in this study between 2016-2022 are sourced from different newspapers/ news channels / web portals/.

Sentimental Analysis through Lexicon-based Methods and Cognitive Dissonance: Lexicon-based, also known as knowledge-based approaches, comprises two methods for analysis: Dictionary Method whereby the researcher will create a dictionary of words by including all possible synonyms and antonyms whereas Corpus Method comprises consideration of semantic and syntactic (i.e., patterns in grammatical syntax) patterns of a given text or documents and **Semantic Order Calculator** is used to identify the positive, negative and neutral score of the text.

- each token TEXT will be given a separate score based on the emotional tone
- Calculate the overall polarity (positive-negative-neutral) of the sentence
- Aggregate overall polarity scores of all sentences in the texts.

In media and communication studies, diverse theories had been postulated at different points of time in the evolution of the scholarly discourses on media messages from the perspective of media source, media effect, encoding and decoding of messages used in the communication process. **Cognitive Dissonance theory** is also focused on psychological impact of media messages on the audience first introduced by **Leon Festinger**, however the ultimate thrust of this theory was condensed on the level of discomfort that are anticipated and actually occurred in the minds of the viewers or the audience or the readers when they feel a sort of disjuncture between the perception or belief and the action that they are proposed to take up after viewing certain texts or messages in media.

Semantic Analysis: All parts of speech used in a given text creating different connotations are grouped into three: Positive – Negative - Neutral. Every cluster of words will be given a score based on the meaning intended in the text, if positive +1, if negative -1 and if neutral -.1

Seed words are a small set of words with strong negative or positive associations, such as excellent or abysmal. In principle, a positive adjective should occur more frequently alongside the positive seed words, and thus will obtain a positive score, whereas negative adjectives will occur most often in the vicinity of negative seed words, thus obtaining a negative score.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was keen on the progress and development of the state of Jammu & Kashmir

The veteran leaders of the valley expressed their opinion that every government in Delhi had talked about it and there was nothing new.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi – (N) - +1

Keen – (Adverb) - +1

Every- (A) government- (N) -

Progress & Development - (N)-+1

New - (Adverb) - -1

List of reports that were analysed:

1. COVID-19 has made life even more precarious for migrant workers. (International Labor Organization, Press
 release | 22 November 2021: 'Stranded in their destination countries or forced to leave, unemployed and with no access to social protection, migrant workers have suffered the worst of the pandemic. GENEVA (ILO News) – The COVID-19 crisis has had a devastating impact on migrant workers   all over the world, in particular those employed in precarious low-wage sectors, who were often the first to experience the economic shock of the pandemic, says a new report by the International Labour Organization (ILO). Migrant workers were also targets

of   discrimination and xenophobia, says the report. Many migrant workers had their employment summarily   suspended or terminated as the virus spread, leaving them without a source of income. Some employees were stood down without pay, while others had their hours or rates of pay reduced, or were required to go on   leave. Others were not paid for work they had done, in violation of the terms of their contracts

2. Modi govt announces a Rs 1.70 lakh crore welfare scheme for poor during Coronavirus lockdown: Here are the 12 announcements made. (source:PM Narendra Modi's personal website). The finance minister said that 'one side of the scheme would focus on cash transfers through DBT (Direct Benefit Transfer) and the other would focus on food security as the government does not want anyone to remain hungry'. PM Modi announces nationwide lockdown to fight coronavirus pandemic | Full speech.

3. Top moments when PM Modi's sense of humour cracked up the opposition | Times Now i-Explain

4.Abrogation of Article 370 was the end of 'Kashmiri exceptionalism'(Written by Ram Madhav, updated: August 6, 2021 8:32:33 am. Several years ago, when we were initiating dialogue with the PDP to explore the possibility of forming a coalition government in Jammu and Kashmir, I had the occasion to talk with a senior leader of that party. In response to my statement that Prime Minister Narendra Modi was keen on the progress and development of the state,   the leader told me that every government in Delhi had talked about it and there was nothing new.   Another leader argued that on all human development indices (HDI), J&K was doing better than   other Indian states.

5. Robust activity in services sector holds up 6.3% GDP growth in Q2: GDP grew 7.6 per cent in the September quarter of FY23 over the comparable period in FY20, which was before the pandemic. (source: Gross domestic product | India GDP growth | BS Web Reports - Asit Ranjan Mishra | New Delhi Last Updated at November 30, 2022 23:55 IST: The report as follows: India's economy grew 6.3 per cent in the September quarter of FY23, boosted by robust activity in services, even as manufacturing output contracted unexpectedly, signalling uneven post-pandemic recovery in Asia's third-largest economy. While the Reuters and Bloomberg polls had projected 6.2 per cent growth for the quarter, the Reserve Bank of India was spot on with its forecast of 6.3 per cent. In the June quarter of FY23, the economy had expanded 13.5 per cent due to a low base in the equivalent period of 2021-22, when economic activity was severely impacted by the Delta wave of the pandemic. The data released by the National Statistical Office on Wednesday showed manufacturing contracted 4.3 per cent in the September quarter as profit margins of companies came under pressure due to rising input cost.

        6. Operation Baby Lift: Why is Sangh Parivar not countering facts with facts asks Neha Dixit If   their brand of 'nationalism' does not believe in the law, they should openly state that instead of getting into   convenient rhetoric. Delhi-based journalist Neha Dixit's five-part investigation   'Operation #BabyLift" on the alleged trafficking of 31 young tribal girls by the Sangh Parivar   from Assam to other states in violation of the law has created a buzz. In its latest issue published   last week, Outlook carried a 11,350-word story by Neha along with several official relevant documents. Members of the Congress raised the issue in Parliament. While the story has been   widely read, RSS   supporters   has rubbished the piece calling it baseless. On August 1, Supreme   Court advocate Monika Arora who has often been associated with the RSS wrote a response to   Neha's   story   on her blog. The Vishwa Samvada Kendra, the official media centre of the RSS,   published the same post on its website. RSS supporters denied this allegation saying the report is baseless. Nehal replied 'Who are these supporters? Anonymous Twitter handles that indulge in trollery on a daily basis? Who have indulged in online misogynist abuse? Anyone who has bothered to

read the full report would attempt to counter me on the facts that are presented in the Outlook report. Not throw empty rhetoric and generic accusations calling it baseless without any specific objections. The report has a detailed outline of how the laws were flouted.
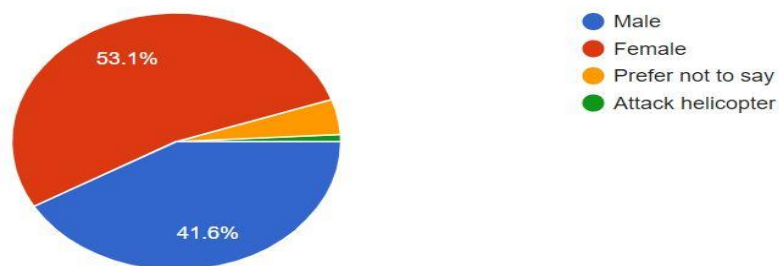
7. More dirt it throws on me, the more lotus will bloom, PM Modi replies to Congress 'abuses'

\: SACHIN SHARMA / TNN / Dec 1, 2022, 14:19: On a day Gujarat voted its first phase of assembly election, Prime Minister Narendra Modi called the insults meted out to him by the Congress as the insult of the people of the state

8. PM Modi: PM Modi: Media's role crucial in highlighting govt policies (source: By: PTI, Kozhikode | March 19, 2022 12:59:12 am. Hailing the role played by the media in popularising government initiatives as well as fitness activities such as yoga, the PM suggested that lesser-known events of freedom struggle and unsung freedom fighters could also be highlighted by the fourth estate. For any nation to develop, making good policies is one aspect. But, to enable the policies to succeed and ensure that large scale transformation takes place, active participation from all walks of society is needed. For that, the media plays a critical role. In these years gone by, I have seen the positive impact the media can play," the PM said, while inaugurating online the centenary celebrations of leading Malayalam daily athrubhumi.
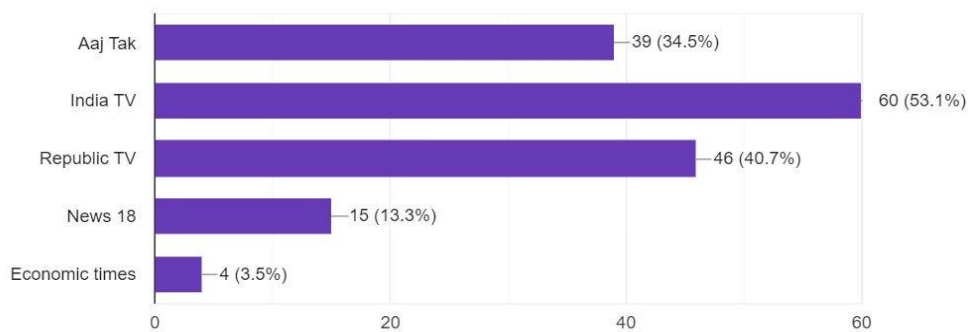
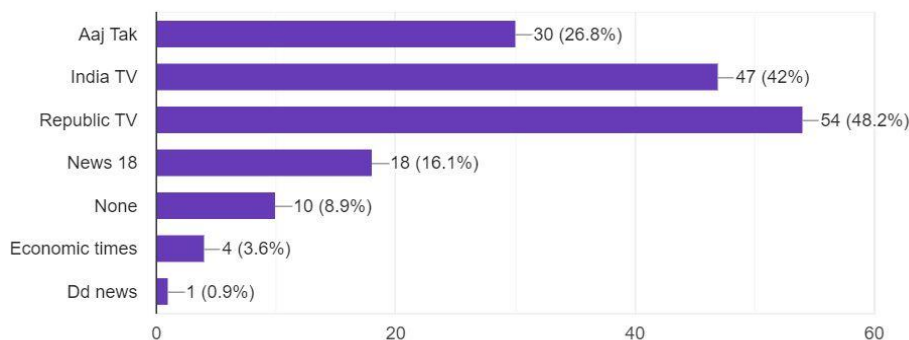**Data Analysis**

1. Please mention your gender.

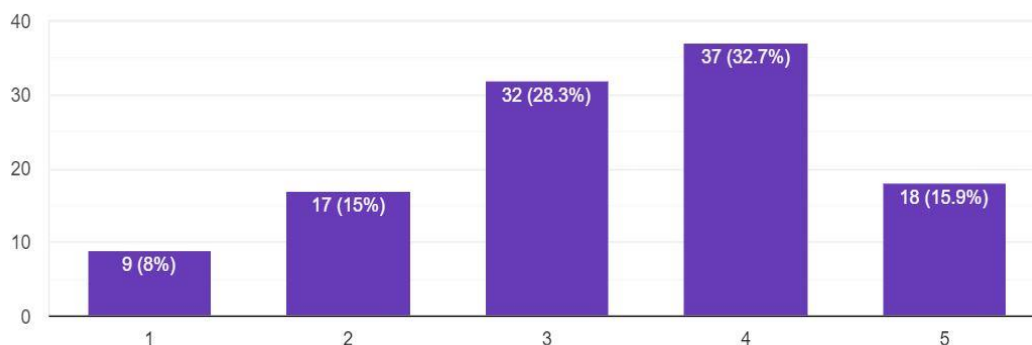2. Which age group do you belong to?

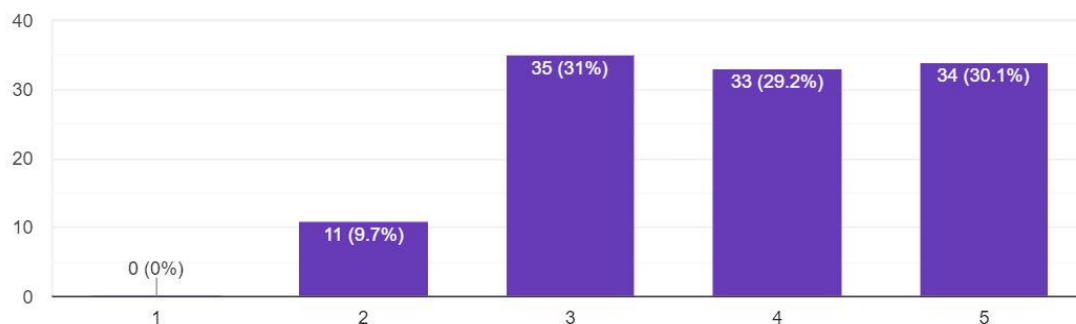3. Which news channels do you follow?

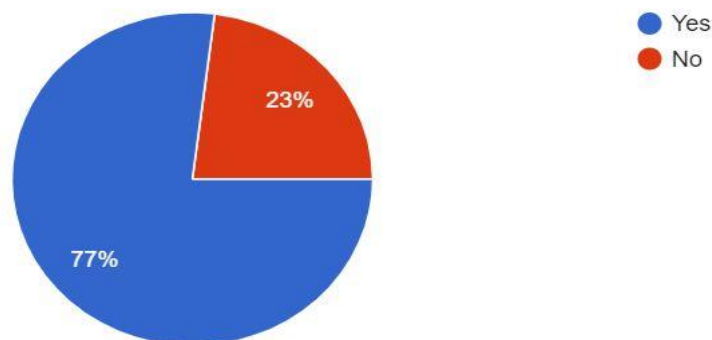4. Which news channels do you think report unbiased news?

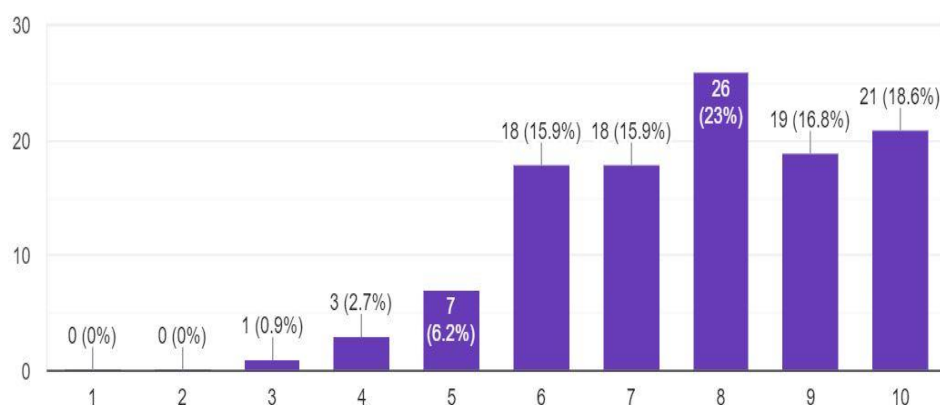5. How would you rate quality of news channels nowadays?

6. To what extent does news channels of today's era are being biased towards a particular political party, especially the ruling party?
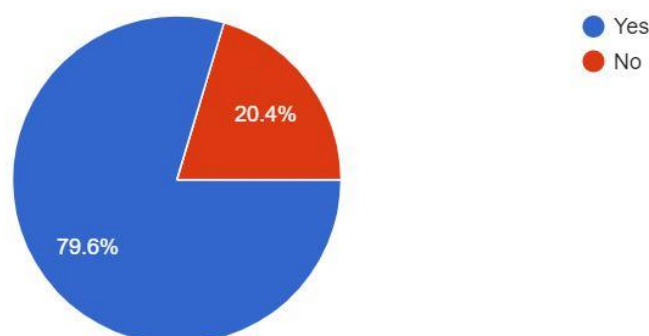

7.Do you really think political parties pay news media channels for biased debates?

8.How do you rate the impact of news channels on the elections campaigns or any such news programs?

9. Do you think biased media towards political parties is a much bigger problem in India than in   any other country?

To conclude, I must assert that this upsurge fascist techniques or seven symptoms of fascism deflecting 'public opinion' masquerading under fake narratives of development, growth and nation-building, is very much apparent in the public polity, the political functioning of the government. The empirical data collected by observation and analysis suggests that most of the messages as they appear on different mediated platforms do not have any resonance in the

democratic fabric of the country, rather it reflects the exaggerated truth or certain idealistic vision which the ruling powers want to propagate through selected media channels.

To opine further the research wishes to quote from Dissanayake (1981) defining 'development as the process of social change which has as its goal the improvement in the quality of life of all or the majority of the people without doing violence to the natural and cultural environment in which they exist and which seeks to involve the generality of the people as closely as possible in this enterprise, making them the masters of their own destiny'.

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