

Media Bias Effect on Public Opinion

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Abstract

In today's world, media bias has spread like wildfire, influencing people's views on a wide range of social, political, and economic issues. The focus of this research paper is to examine the nature of media bias, its causes, and its significant impact on public perception and the decision-making process. An important part of the study investigates how media bias appears through selective reporting, framing, and agenda setting, perpetuating ideological divides and reinforcing pre-existing beliefs among audiences. Additionally, it looks into the social and political effects of media biases, including its impact on democracy, polarization, and trust in media institutions. In order to rebuild confidence transparency is essential between the media and the public they serve. This abstract also explores how new media platforms and technology can either exacerbate or lessen media bias, providing insights into potential solutions and tactics for fostering media literacy and critical thinking abilities among the general public. In order to promote more informed and engaged citizens in the digital era, this abstract aims to clarify the nuances of media bias and its consequences, thereby influencing both public and scholarly conversations.

The Uses and Gratification hypothesis examines how the media impact people. It talks about how people utilize the media to further their own desires and feel satisfied when those requirements are

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satisfied. In other words, the idea is more concerned with what people do with media than with what media does to them. Every respondent in every interview done for the study agreed that media bias in news reporting is increasing quickly and has an impact on people's thoughts and opinions.

Introduction

Meaning of Research: The term "research" generally refers to an attempt to find knowledge; but it can also mean a methodical, scientific search for relevant data on a given subject. In technical sciences, the term "research" should be used since it is an academic activity. People's perceptions of current affairs and their opinions on political figures and social issues are shaped by news reports, editorials, and political commentary.

Research comprises defining and reading problems, formulating hypotheses or suggesting solutions, collecting, organising, and evaluating data, making detections, reaching conclusions, and at last, carefully testing the conclusions to determine whether the formulating hypothesis of social sciences is different from the one in the encyclopaedia of social sciences. The media is an essential component of contemporary society, playing a pivotal role in shaping public opinion, disseminating information, and fostering democratic participation.

The media environment has experienced tremendous changes since the introduction of new technologies, bringing in a new era of communication and connectivity. This introduction explores the multifaceted nature of media, its historical evolution, and its current influence on various aspects of human life. Media encompasses a wide array of communication channels, including print media, broadcast media, digital platforms, and social media. Print media, including newspapers and magazines, have been the main channels for disseminating information since they offer comprehensive analysis and thorough reporting. The way that people consume information has changed dramatically as a result of broadcast media, which includes radio and television, which delivers news and entertainment straight to the homes.

Media consumption was completely transformed by the emergence of the internet and digital technology, which provided

immediate access to a huge variety of global information. Social networking platforms, blogs, and online news portals have made information sharing more accessible. Giving people the ability to produce and consume content. Echo chambers, false information, and the quick dissemination of inaccurate or biased information are some of the problems that this digital age has brought about, though. Media influence on public opinion and political processes cannot be understated. People's perceptions of current affairs and their opinions on political figures and social issues are shaped by news reports, editorials, and political commentary.

Media coverage has the power to affect voters' views and decisions, and this effect extends to election processes. Media also plays the role of a watchdog on the system of power, making companies, governments, and other institutions answerable for their activities. Investigative journalism plays a crucial role in exposing corruption, human rights abuses, and environmental concerns, fostering transparency and accountability in society. Beyond news and politics, media influences culture, entertainment, and social interactions. Films, television shows, music, and literature contribute to the collective consciousness, reflecting societal norms, values, and aspirations. People may interact, exchange experiences, and participate in social and political movements thanks to social media platforms, which promote worldwide connectivity. But there are drawbacks to the mass media landscape as well.

It might be difficult to separate false information from credible news due to information overload, which is another effect of the massive inflow of data. It is impossible to overestimate the importance of media in modern society. It is an effective instrument for disseminating information, influencing public opinion, and encouraging democratic engagement. It is impossible to overestimate the importance of media in modern society. It is an effective instrument for disseminating information, influencing public opinion, and encouraging democratic engagement. The media landscape is always changing, which brings with it both opportunities and difficulties. To effectively navigate the intricacies of the current media environment, it is necessary to have a sophisticated awareness of its effects and to be committed to encouraging media literacy, critical thinking, and ethical journalism.

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Media bias

The tendency of journalists or media outlets to present news stories in a way that favours specific ideologies, political parties, or interest groups distorts the impartiality of the reporting. This is known as media bias data on display. Selecting a biased story, framing it, distorting language, and leaving out important details are some examples of bias.

Types of media bias

- A. **Partisan bias:** This type of bias results in unequal coverage of political events and problems because media outlets favour one political party or ideology over another.
- B. Confirmation bias is the tendency for people to search for and consume news that supports their pre-existing opinions, which serves to reinforce such opinions and create information echo chambers.
- C. **Sensationalism:** Emphasizing contentious or dramatic stories to draw in more readers or viewers, sometimes exaggerating the significance of particular concerns.
- D. **Bias by omission:** Deciding not to cover a story or underreporting an incident that goes against the narrative of a media organization

Effect of political polarization in media bias:

- a. **Echo Chamber Reinforcement:** By appealing to particular audiences, supporting their opinions, and creating echo chambers where different points of view are seldom heard, media bias can exacerbate political polarization.
- b. **Erosion of Trust:** Scepticism regarding the objectivity and veracity of news sources arises from biased reporting, which weakens public confidence in media organizations.
- c. **Heightening Divisions:** Political divisions already present are exacerbated by media polarization, which obstructs productive communication and compromise.
- d. **Ignoring Nuance:** Prejudicial reporting oversimplifies complicated subjects, ignoring nuanced viewpoints and impeding educated public discussions.

Factors affecting media bias

- a. **Ownership and Funding:** Owners or financial supporters may have an impact on media outlets, which can result in editorial meddling and bias.
- b. **Audience Preferences:** In an effort to retain readers or viewers, media companies give in to the preferences of their target audience, which may result in biased material.
- c. **Journalists' Ideologies:** Personal prejudices of journalists may affect their reporting, inadvertently expressing their opinions in their writing.

Spread of misinformation

Misinformation can also proliferate due to media bias.

Unchecked dissemination of biased information has the potential to reinforce false narratives and deepen societal divisions. Misinformation can erode trust in media and undermine democratic processes, leading to misguided policy decisions.

Need for research

There is a need for more research on interaction between media and political institutions in authoritarian regimes. While much of the existing literature has focused on democracies, there is a growing need to understand media bias. This research aims to explore the impact of media on politics and identify research gaps in the existing literature.

Objectives

1. To investigate how the media influences public opinion regarding political matters.
2. To evaluate how the media influences the political process, including the behaviour of political actors, the policy-making process, and the outcome of elections.
3. To investigate the impact of media ownership on political coverage and the role of media bias in shaping public opinion.

Literature review

In addition to having 29 states and seven Union Territories, the Indian Republic is home to nearly a billion people, has 22 official

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languages and hundreds of dialects. The country has about 100,000 registered publications, 1000 television channels, a few hundred FM radio stations, and 500 million internet users, and the numbers are growing.

Without an effective system of media regulation, there is still a risk that the vast amount of content produced by so many media sources may become "babble" in a free democratic country like India. The media has the power to influence public opinion and can impact political decision-making. In recent years, the media landscape has undergone a transformation with the advent of social media and the proliferation of digital platforms. This has led to a proliferation of information sources, and the impact of media on politics has become more complex. The impact of media on Indian politics has been a topic of much debate and discussion in the academic and political spheres.

A review of the literature on this topic reveals a complex relationship between media and politics in India, with both positive and negative effects on the political system.

1. Druckman, J. N., & Parkin, M. (2005, November 1). The Impact of Media Bias: How Editorial Slant Affects Voters. *The E-Journal of Politics*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2508.2005.00349.x>

This study looks at how news recommender systems are impacted by media bias, which can lead to filter bubbles and erroneously interpret users' viewpoints. The impact of bias on news distribution channels is also covered. Extremist organizations have been observed to employ a variety of media outlets, including radio, television, and broadcasting. These days, new media are essential to new dissemination.

2. Gabay, N. (2022, October 14). The effect of news media political bias on pre-election poll results: evidence from the 2019-20 Israeli elections. *Israel Affairs*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13537121.2022.2134396>

It argues that media bias influenced pre-election polls in the 2019-20 Israeli elections, with anti-Netanyahu media consistently underestimating pro-Netanyahu bloc seats, showcasing a correlation between news biases and polling outcomes. This paper explains

how media influences public opinion and perspectives. Media organizations broadcast pre-elections polls to shape public opinion according to their favoured political party.

3. Ali, A., & Rahman, S. I. U. (2019, December 30). Media Bias Effects on Voters in Pakistan. *Global Regional Review*. [https://doi.org/10.31703/grr.2019\(iv-iv\).50](https://doi.org/10.31703/grr.2019(iv-iv).50)

This study examines how subjective reporting by media bias, particularly in Pakistani television news channels, shapes political beliefs and party preferences, which in turn influences voter behaviour and election outcomes. We have seen how Pakistani television news stations have distorted the public's view and perception. It, in some way, had a significant impact on the elections.

4. Dasgupta, B. (2022, June 25). Indian media: How bias and fake news originate from the country's politics. *International Journal of Politics and Media*. <https://doi.org/10.26524/ijpm.1.7>

This essay examines the ways that corporate ownership, political sway, and digital manipulation fuel media bias in India, fostering division and spreading misleading information that erodes public confidence in the country's media. Because of their preference for certain political parties, media outlets try to influence public opinion in an effort to maintain their credibility with the broader public.

5. Analysing Political Bias in Social Media. (2020, February 19). IEEE Conference Publication IEEE Explore. <https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/abstract/document/9392153>

This study examines India's media bias, especially with regard to political news outlets. We have seen first-hand how the media has evolved every day for the entire year. The public perception of political leaders is greatly influenced by social media, which can have positive or negative effects on the community. The public's perception is shaped by social media in a way that makes it difficult for them to discern between positive and negative news.

6. Are Biased Media Bad for Democracy? On JSTOR. (n.d.) www.jstor.org, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/45132496>

Voters can obtain more knowledge from unbiased media sources, but biased media can also benefit voter welfare. Different partisan news outlets influence elections differently and produce different results. Media sources have the power to distort voters'

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beliefs to the point that it is difficult for them to tell the difference between what they feel and what they see about an issue.

Conceptual framework

What is Investigative Journalism?

Investigative journalism is a style of journalism that brings readers and viewers never-before-seen stories by delving deeply into the data to find the truth, track down controversies, and expose conspiracies. According to its historical account, investigative journalism got its start in late 1700s when a few daring US and UK newspapers started to scrutinize government actions and look for information from other sources

Investigative journalism gained popularity and credibility as a trustworthy source of news information over time owing to the bravery of journalists and the belief that readers had in it. Investigative journalists began delving deeply into intricate subjects; they revealed corruption, unearthed secrets, and held the powerful people responsible. Investigative journalism has a long history of exposing injustice and exposing scandals, and it continues to have an impact on civilizations all over the world.

As readers began to trust investigative journalism, it gained popularity and credibility as a trustworthy source of news information throughout time, thanks to the fearlessness exhibited by journalists. Investigative journalists began delving deeply into intricate subjects; they unearthed secrets, revealed wrongdoing, and brought the powerful to justice. Investigative journalism continues to have a significant impact on cultures around the globe because of its long history of exposing injustice and unearthing scandals. In a world frequently shrouded in false information, propaganda, fake news, and deceit, it still shines brightly today.

Future of investigative journalism

One of those media specialties that calls for endurance, persistence, and a keen eye for the impossibly difficult to get information is investigative journalism. Because journalists must shield their sources, this method necessitates significant time and financial investments.

Research methodology

The study adopts Applied Research to explore how youth perceive the influence of media organizations on their development whether positively or negatively. Data will be gathered from both public and private organizations concerned with childhood development and mass media communication.

Tools and techniques of data collection

Method: Quantitative research using a structured survey.

A questionnaire containing both open and close ended questions. Respondents provide written responses based on their understanding. The questionnaire will be pre-tested to ensure clarity and reliability. To collect unbiased viewpoints from youth with minimal researcher interference.

Sample size: 100 respondents.

Rationale: Suitable for a limited time frame and resources, while providing adequate data reliability and manageable analysis at the undergraduate level.

Sampling Procedure

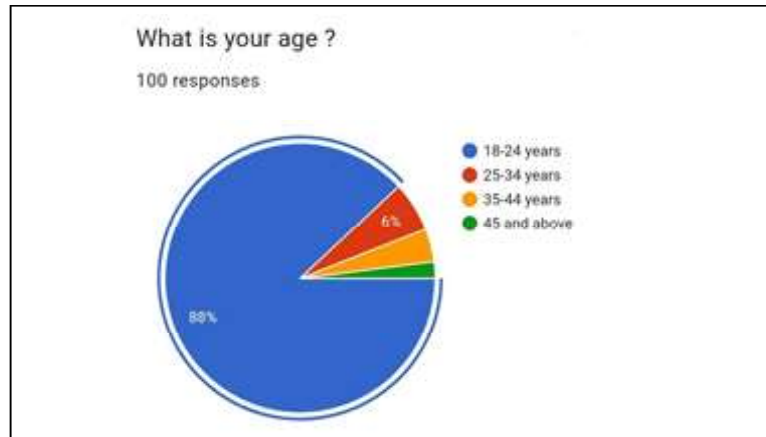
Random sampling: Ensures every individual in the population has an equal chance of selection, minimizing bias and improving representation of diverse perspectives on media influence.

Data interpretation

1. What is your age?

S.N	Age	Response	Percentage
1	18-24	88	88%
2	25-34	06	06%
3	35-44	04	04%
4	45+	02	02%

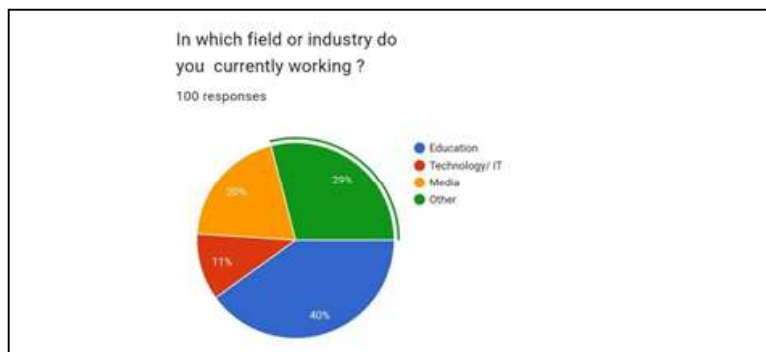
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Interpretation: Out of the total response generated in the survey, 88% people belong to the age category of 18-24 years, 4% to the age category of 35-44 years, and 2% were from 45+. The interpretation rules out that the major chunk of people in the research belong to the age category of 18-24.

2. In which field or industry are you currently working?

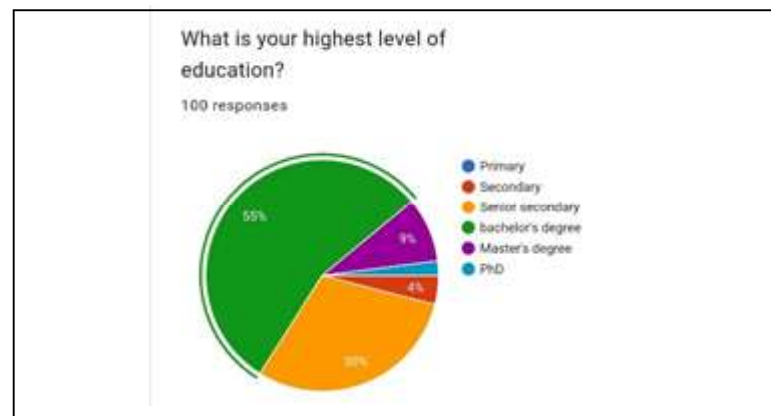
S.N.	Occupation	Percentage
1	Education	40%
2	Technology	11%
3	Media	20%
4	Other	29%



Interpretation: As per the survey 40% of the respondents are related to education, 29 % of the respondent are from different sectors , 20% are from the media sector, while 11% respondents have technology background.

3. What is your highest level of educational qualification?

S.N	Qualification	Response	Percentage
1	Primary	0	0%
2	Secondary	4	04%
3	Senior Secondary	30	30%
4	Bachelor's degree	55	55%
5	Master's degree	9	9%
6	PhD	2	2%

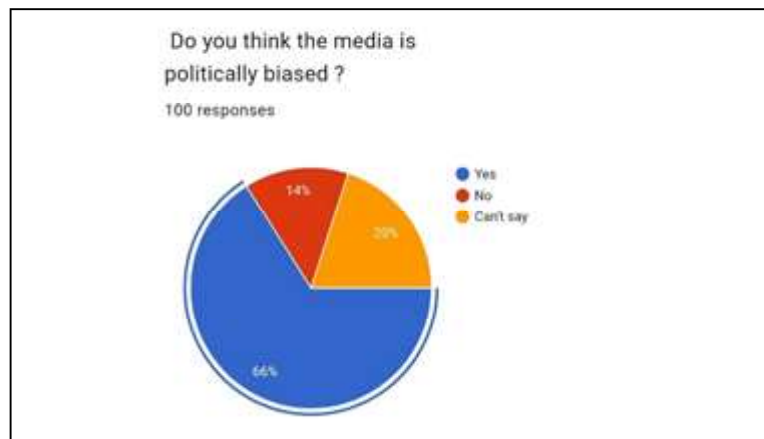


Interpretation: Out of the total response generated in the survey 30% people are senior secondary graduates, 50% have bachelor's and 3% people have master's degrees and 3.3% are PhD scholars.

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4. Do you think the media is politically biased?

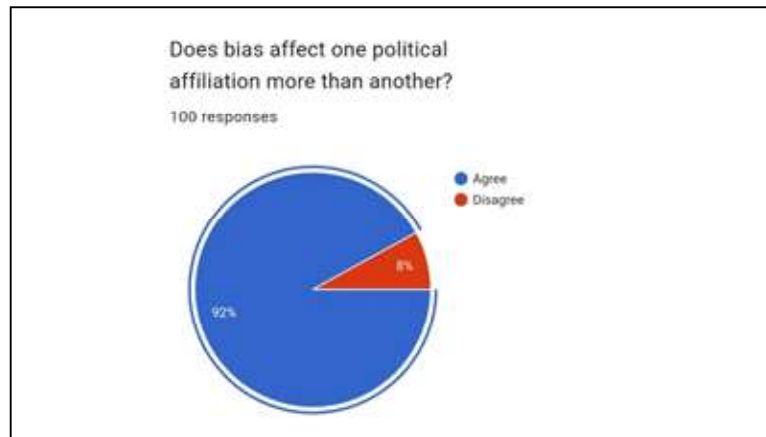
S.N.	Response	Percentage
1	Yes	66%
2	No	14%
3	Cant 'say	20%



Interpretation: 66% respondents believe that media is politically biased, 14% of them believe that media is not politically biased while 20 % replied can't say.

5. Does bias affect one political affiliation more than another?

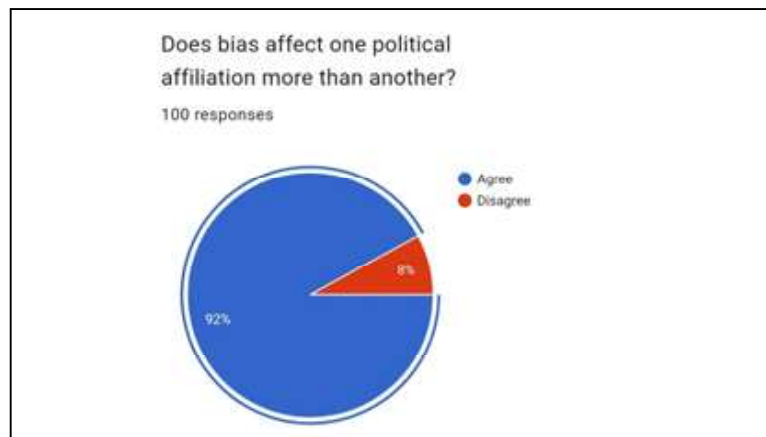
S.N.	Responses	Percentage
1	Agree	92%
2	Disagree	08%



Interpretation: Majority of the response (92%) in agreement.

6. Does bias affect public perception and trust in the media?

S.N.	Responses	Percentage
1	Agree	92%
2	Disagree	08%

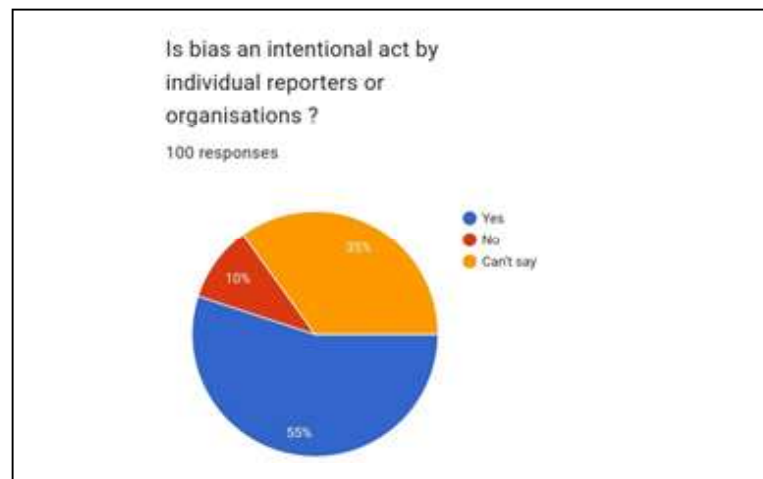


Interpretation: 92% respondents believe that bias affects perception and trust while 08% disagrees.

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7. Is bias an intentional act by individual reporters or organisations?

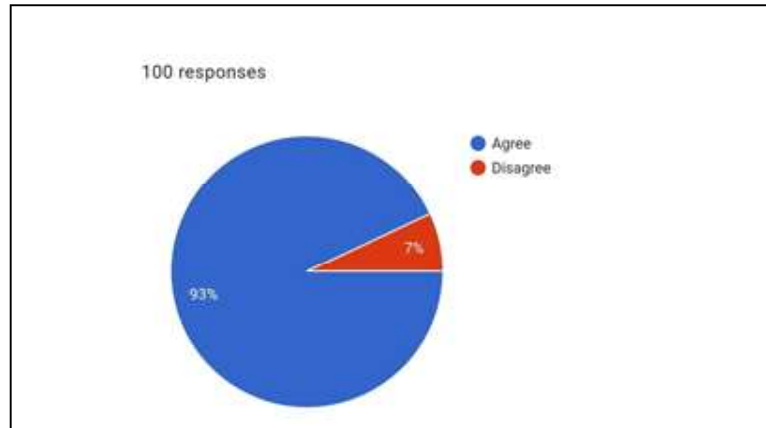
S.N.	Response	Percentage
1	Yes	55%
2	No	35%
3	Cant 'say	10%



Interpretation: In response to this question, majority of respondents (55%) answered Yes, 35% said No and 10% said can't say.

8. If an organisation is intentionally biased and uses bias for better ratings or profit, do their actions affect the media as a whole?

S.N.	Response	Percentage
1	Yes	100%
2	No	0%



Interpretation: Majority of respondent 93% believe that organisation is intentionally biased and uses bias for better ratings or profit

9. What steps should the media take to regain the general trust of the public?

S.N.	Response	Percentage
1	Maintain transparency	20%
2	Effective management	09%
3	Editorial strategies	03%
4	All of above	72%

Interpretation: 72% of the respondents believe that to regain trust of general public media should work on all these factor.

Conclusion

1. Media bias heavily shapes public opinion through selective reporting, framing, and emotional language.
2. It contributes to political polarization, misinformation, and declining trust in journalism.
3. The study based on 100 respondents shows that media significantly influences people's thoughts and attitudes.

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4. Media bias can manipulate perceptions, impacting how individuals view social and political issues.
5. Extremist groups exploit various media platforms like Twitter, Instagram, radio, and television to spread propaganda and influence audiences.
6. Government intervention is needed to regulate or restrict media organizations that facilitate extremist propaganda.
7. Encouraging media literacy and critical evaluation among the public is essential to counter the negative effects of biased reporting.

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