

## Fighting against fake news: a survey of Central University Libraries in India

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### Abstract:

*Academic libraries play a key role in information diffusion. Because of the information boom, libraries and librarianship must give the correct information to the right destination. The study attempted to determine the efforts of LIS Professionals in battling fake information in libraries and investigated the use of measures for managing fake news. The research emphasises the use of methodologies that determine the realisation of news.*

**Keywords:** fake news, library, LIS professionals, university, information

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### Introduction

Currently, we are living in information era. The exponential growth of information and changing dissemination phenomenon, make it essential to determining the authenticity of information. The LIS Professionals are those who work to support the teaching and learning despite of any self- motive except to serve their user. Therefore, their role becomes important to make their user aware regarding authentic news or information. The IFLA is also taking unique initiative towards the same.

### Review of Literature

Bangani (2021) Studied The contribution of university libraries in combating false news in South Africa was to use qualitative research approaches such as literature reviews and website content evaluation. In July and August 2020, the author examined 26 websites of South African university libraries. According to the survey, university libraries in South Africa have utilised a range of approaches to fight COVID-19 false news, such as offering quality and reliable content, teaching Information and Media Literacy (IL), and increasing awareness of fake news. This research also showed that libraries are accumulating materials that might be useful in the

battle against fake news. South African libraries utilise information and media literacy to combat fake news.

Batchelor (2017) examined in order to educate library practitioners on the challenges, effects, and strategies for dealing with fake news. The genesis, scope, and impact of fake news along with the methods for combating misinformation has been discussed. The research makes no new discoveries, but it does present a number of useful tools for librarians to use to foster critical thinking.

Paora and Heravib (2020) looked at how librarianship may help in the fight against false news and misinformation by examining the existing literature on false information, information literacy, and librarianship to identify current issues, patterns, correlations, and gaps. The paper explains effective measures taken by library professionals and provides recommendations for how librarians can keep going to continue improving their responsibility in the social media age and end up making significant efforts to this line of work. It also outlines the efforts and activities undertaken by libraries to counter the dissemination of fake news.

Revez and Corujo (2021) did a systematic review of the research literature to find the most updated library techniques in the battle against fake news. Libraries are viewed as an important ally in the battle against fake news. This role, however, is typically contained in a positive self-perception of librarianship. A last batch of 27 papers was analysed, generating a new categorization based on the literature and capable of providing new insights into the problem.

Skarpa and Garoufallou (2022) conducted research to investigate the function of libraries in fighting the spread of fake news. An online poll was conducted to learn about the perspectives of library science students and professionals on the role of libraries in the battle against misinformation. According to the report, the false news epidemic gives a chance to showcase the value of libraries in society. The study suggested a need for training in combating false news, analysing information sources, and identifying predatory publications.

Sullivan (2019) investigates the reaction of library and information science (LIS) to the challenges of false news and disinformation, concentrating on how librarians and other information workers in the United States explain problems and devise solutions to counteract them. It is concluded from the study that in recent years, the LIS community has responded enormously to the difficulties posed by false news and our seemingly post-truth culture. Librarians and other information professionals view the situation as a protracted information war in which they are on the front lines.

## **Objectives of the Study**

For the study, the following objectives have been formulated. These are as following-

1. To determine role of LIS professionals for fighting against fake information in libraries.
2. To identify the various strategies employed for controlling to the fake news.
3. To explore the approaches adopted to differentiate among real and fake news.

## **Research Methodology of the Study**

The survey approach was utilised to carry out the research. A systematic questionnaire was created to collect primary data and contains both closed and open-ended questions. Because the globe is suffering from the development of the Covid-19 epidemic, which is causing the partial closure of university libraries, the surveys were distributed to responders over the internet. Following that, the acquired data was examined using SPSS as a data analysis tool.

## Scope and Limitation of the Study

The present study covers the Central University Libraries in India. All the central university libraries are existence in India has been taken for the study. Thus, the scope of the study covers the central university libraries and it is limited to Librarians of respective libraries.

## Data Analysis and Interpretation

### Questionnaire Distributed

Questionnaire Distributed	Questionnaire Received
54	30

Table 1

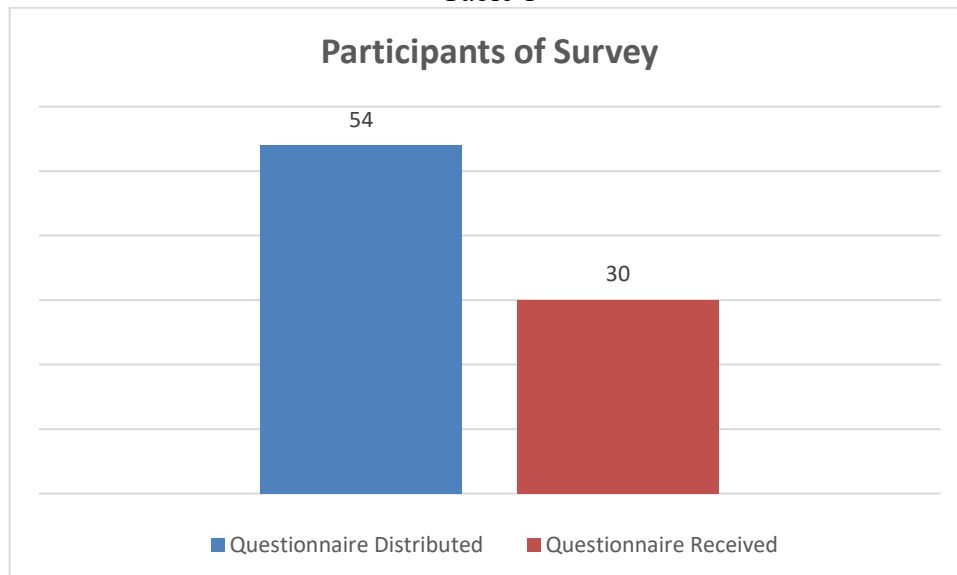


Figure 1

Table.1 and fig.1 indicated the response rate of respondents under the scope of the study. The result reveals that 30 questionnaires have received out of 54 questionnaires i. e 55.55% filled questionnaire were returned.

### Gender-wise Response

Gender	Response (%)
Male	91
Female	9
Other	0

Table 2

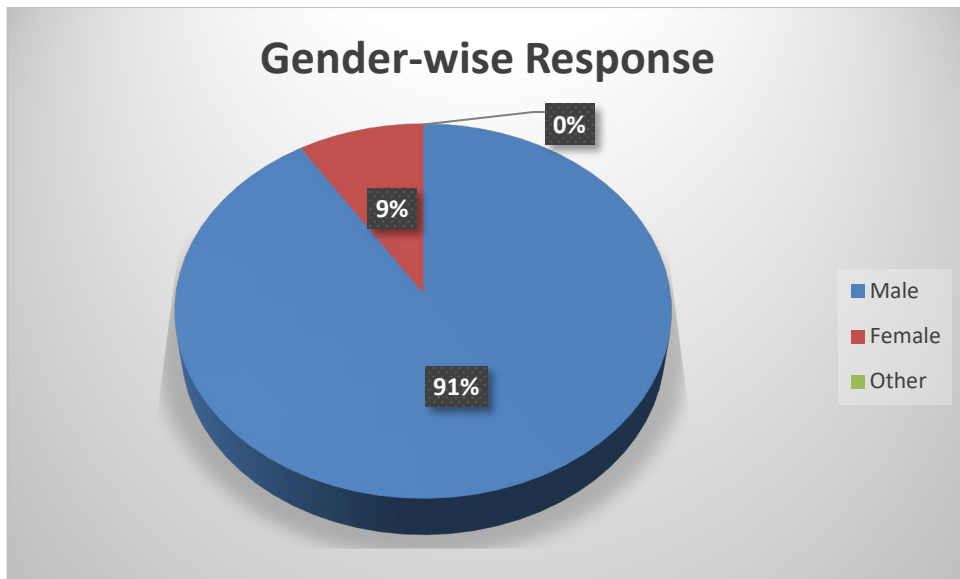


Figure 2

The above table.2 and fig. 2 show the gender-wise response of respondents. The table clearly presented that 91 % male professionals have given their response whereas 9% female have given their response. The table and figure reveals that majority of the male professionals have been doing working at the librarian position.

#### Age- Group-wise Response

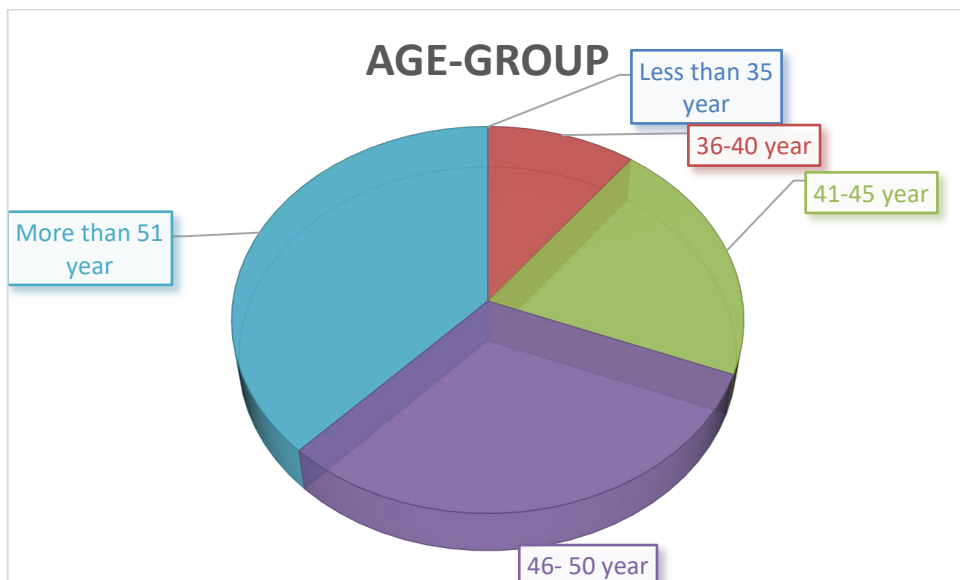


Figure 3

The above figure shows the age group wise response rate of respondents. The above table and figure clearly presented that 10% librarians i. e. 36-40 years old librarians have given their response followed by 21% librarians i.e. 41-45 years old; 31% librarians i. e 46-50 years old; 38% librarians i.e more than 51 years old librarian have given their response for the study.

## Awareness Regarding Fake-News

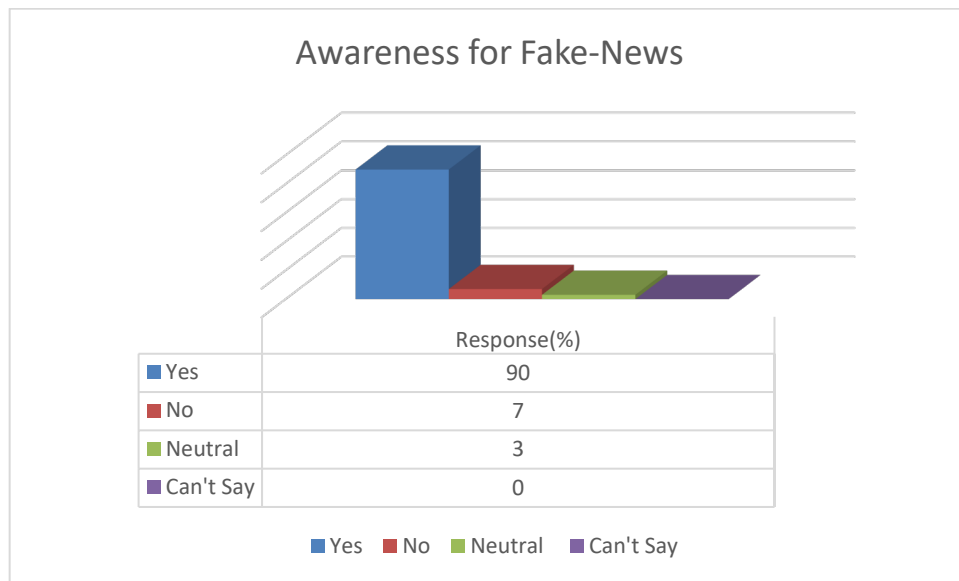


Figure 4

The study has explored the awareness about to the fake news. The primary data indicated that 90% respondents have been aware regarding fake news followed by 7% respondents have not aware and 3% respondents have given their opinion to neutral about the fake news.

## Possible ways to combat misinformation or fake news

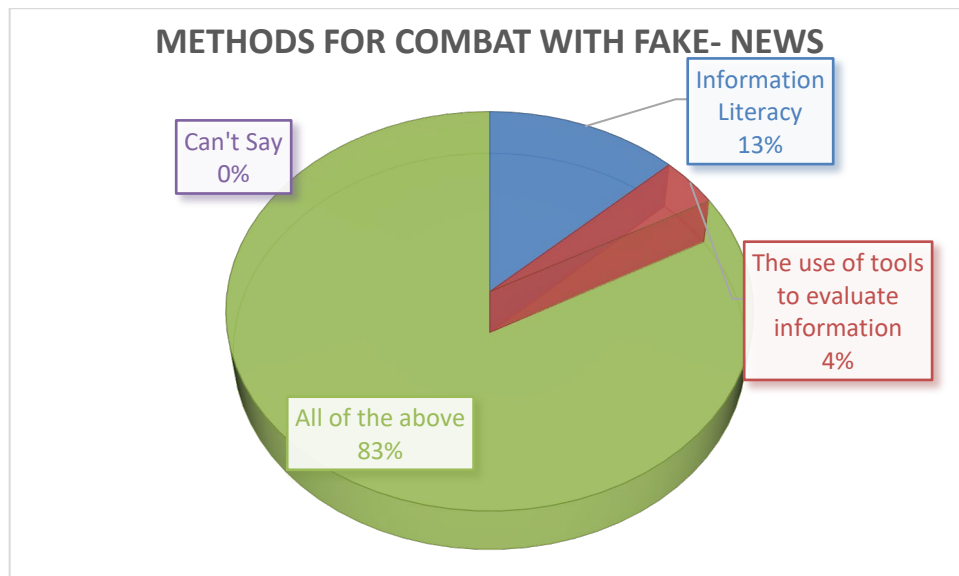


Figure. 5

The fig. 5 presented the possible ways to combat misinformation or fake news in library. The above table and figure reveal that 13 % respondents were used to information literacy for identifying the fake news followed by 4% were used to tools evaluating information whereas 83% respondents were using all of the above statements.

## Role of LIS Professionals in determining fake-news



Figure. 6

The fig.6 shows the role of LIS professionals in determining whether the news is fake or real. The analysed data clearly presented how a librarian can support in deterring and authenticating about news. The highest ranking was given to the statement that the LIS Professionals can help by verifying the authenticity of source with 91 votes, followed by 83 votes to identify the source of news; then to check the authenticity of news followed. Some respondents also said that the avoiding the blind forwarding the news and doing fact check are the important function of LIS Professionals.

## Ways to prevent fake-news by LIS Professionals

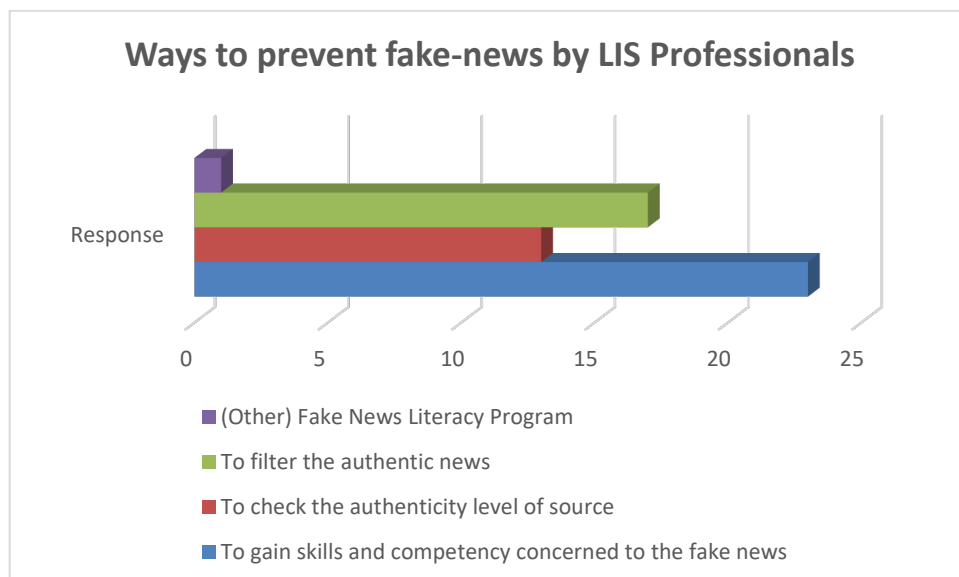


Figure 7

Figure.7 indicated the way for preventive fake news by library professionals. The result reveals that 23 out of 30 respondents were in favour to gained skills and competency concerned to the fake news followed by 13 out of 30 respondents were to checked the authenticity level of

source; 17 out of 30 respondents has supporting to filtered the authentic news and 1 out of 30 respondents suggested to developed skill through Fake News Literacy Program.

### Technologies for spotting fake-news

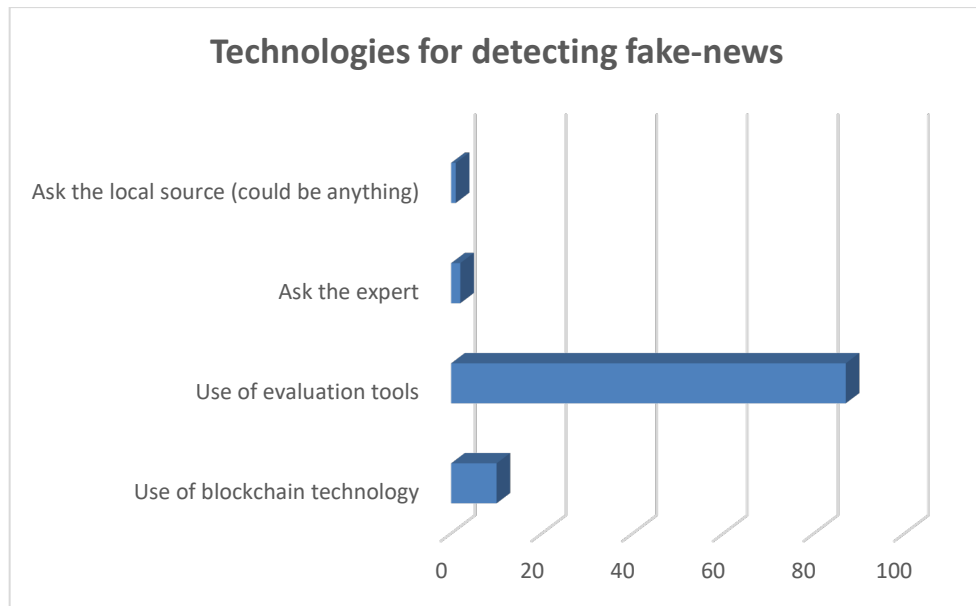


Figure 8

The fig.8 explored the usage of technologies for the detection of fake news in libraries. The study clearly analyzed that 10 % of respondents have used blockchain technology for detecting fake news followed by 87% of respondents has adopted evaluation tools, 2% of respondents has adopted approaches to asking the expert and 1% of the respondent has asked the local source for detecting fake news.

### Tools used for detection of fake-news

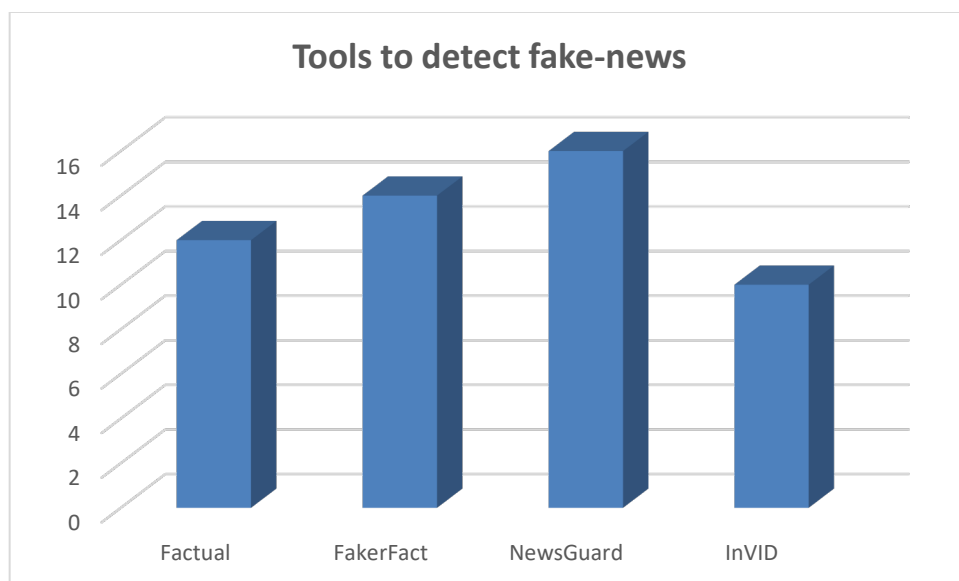


Figure 9

Some of the fake- detection tools were listed in the questionnaire and the opinion of librarians were demanded of their use. News Guard was the highest used tool followed by Faker Fact, Factual, and InVID respectively.

### Harmfulness of fake-news to the society

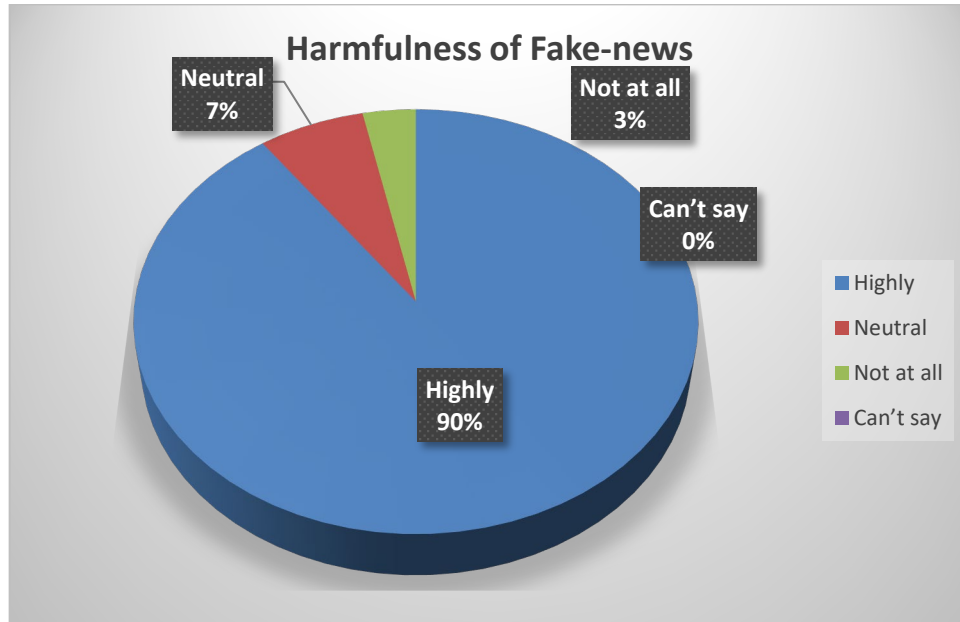


Figure 10

The figure 10 reveals the harmfulness of fake news and found that 90% of the respondents are saying that the fake news is harmful 7% of the respondents have shown their consent in neutral while 2% said that the fake news is not harmful.

### Cause of generation of fake-news

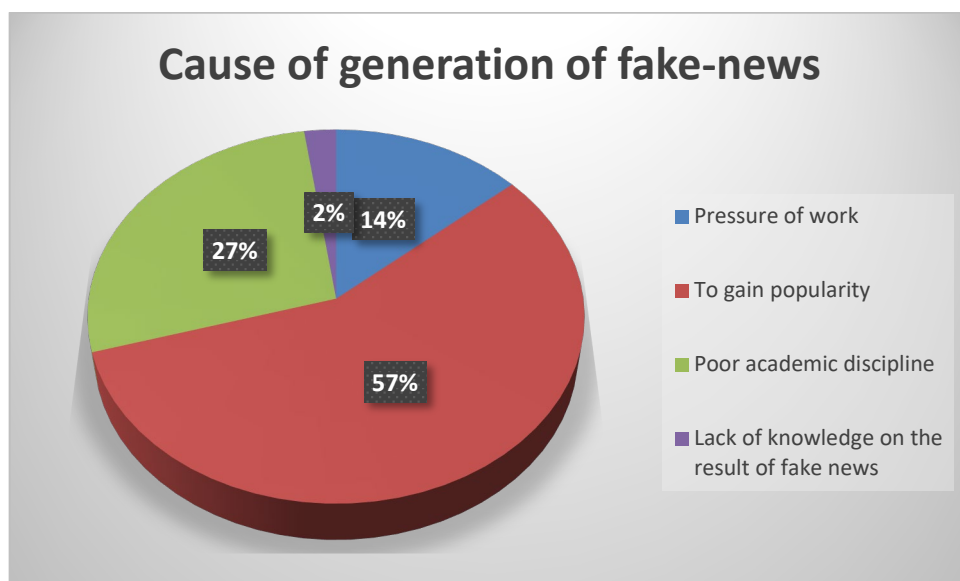


Figure 11



Fig. 11 denotes the cause of the generation of fake news. The table indicates that 14% of the respondents said that fake news is generated when the work pressure is high, 57% of the people said that people resort to fake news to get popularity, while 27% believe that the reason for fake news is a poor academic discipline. It was also told to happen that 2% of the respondents said lack of information about the result of fake news.

**Possible Reasons for fall of users towards fake-news**

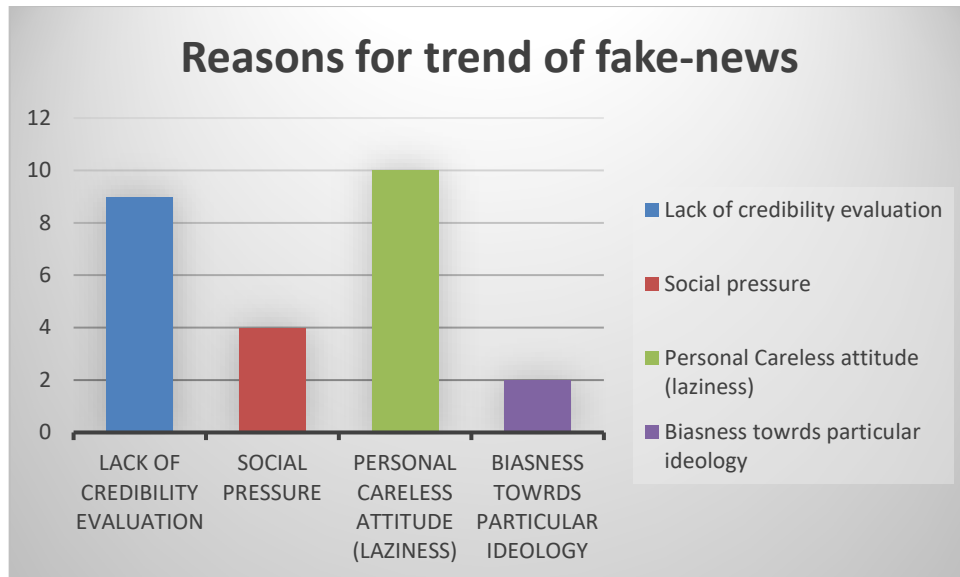


Figure. 12

Figure. 12 represent the Possible Reasons for the fall of users toward fake news. It indicates that 36% of respondents fall for it because of lacking credibility assessment, 16% were because of social pressure followed by 40% for personal careless attitude and 8% were because of biases toward a particular ideology.

## Role of Librarians for detecting fake- news

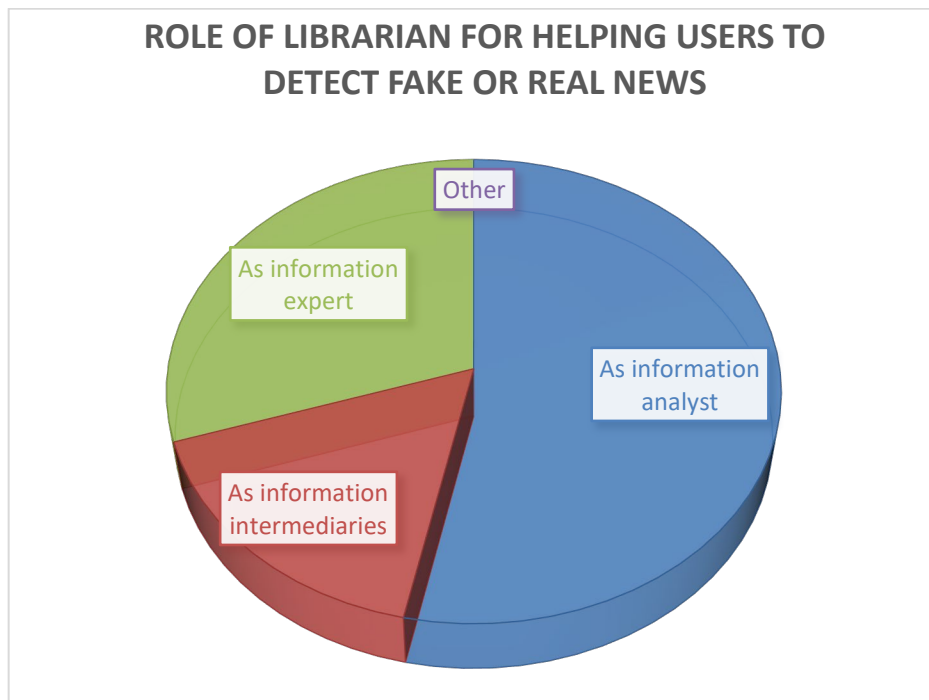


Figure 13

The above figure reveals the Role of Librarians in detecting fake- news. It is found from the study that 56% of the respondents said that they can contribute to fake news detection as information analysts, while 16% can contribute by becoming information intermediaries, while 28% can contribute as information experts.

## Approaches of library to detect fake and real news

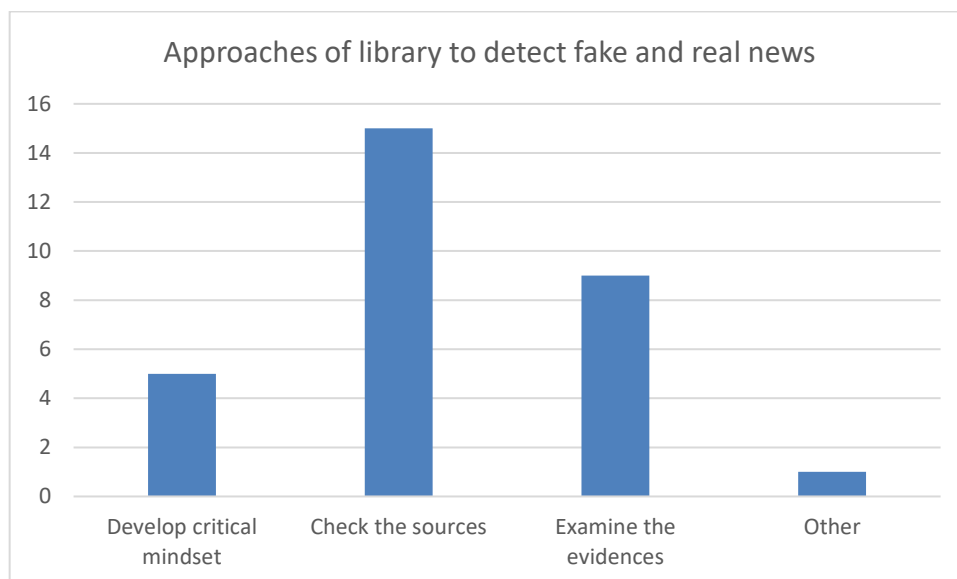


Figure 14

Figure14 display the approaches of the library to detect fake and real news. It was found that 5% of respondents said that they work with the users to develop a critical mindset, 15% said users Check sources from which they are taking information whether it is authentic or not, 9% said users should check the evidence while 1% was talking about other sources.

**Methods used by libraries for promoting users to use authentic source**

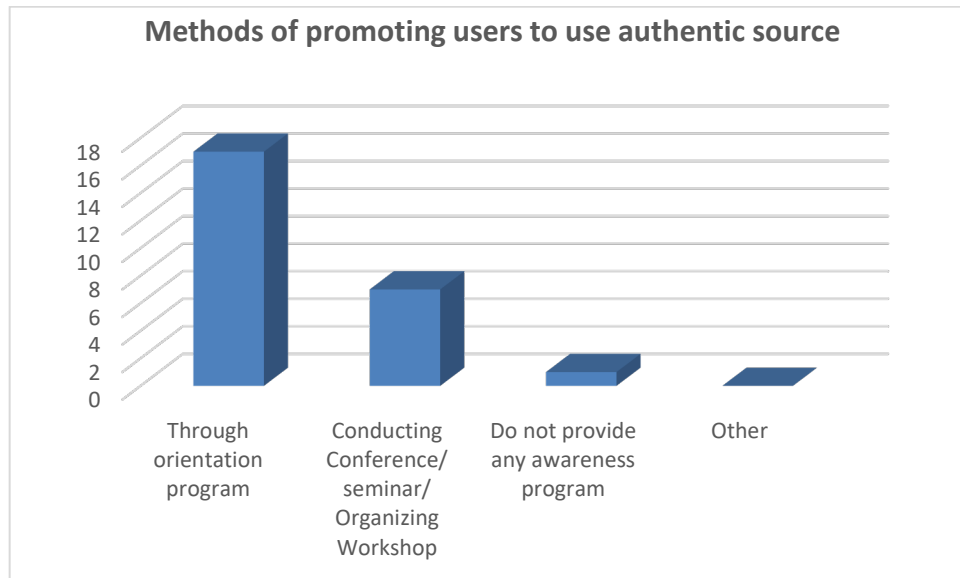


Figure 15

Figure. 15 explore the methods used by libraries for promoting users to use authentic sources. It is found that 68% of respondents go through the orientation program, 28% Conducting Conference/ Seminar/Organize workshops, and 4 % do not provide any awareness program for the users.

**Problem faced by libraries during awareness program**

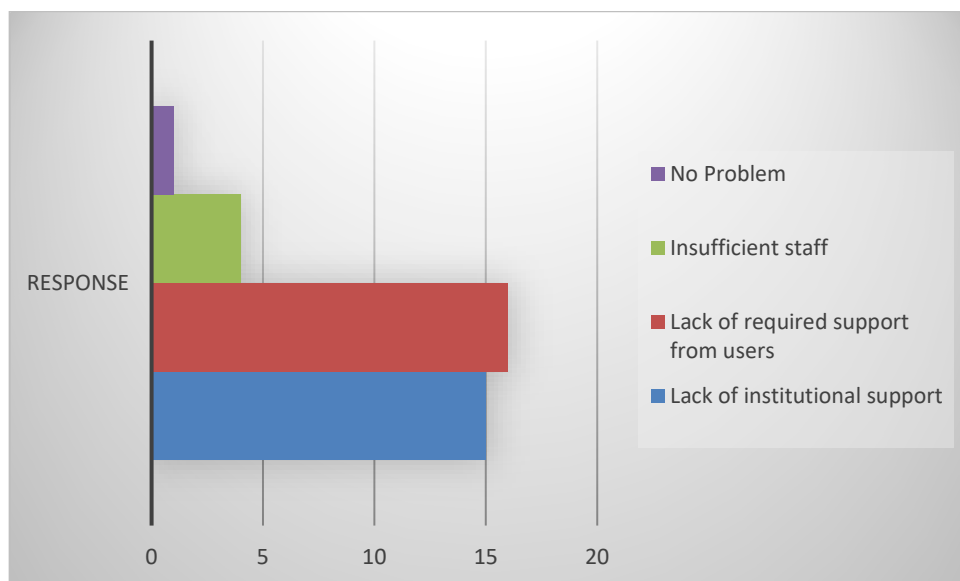


Figure.16

The above figure shows the problems faced by libraries during awareness programs and found that 42% of respondents said they faced a lack of institutional support to organize awareness programs, 44% lack of required support from users, 11% reported inadequate staff while 3% did not have any problem for organizing awareness programs.

### **Findings of the Study**

From the above study the major finding that can be concluded are as following-

- More than half of the university libraries have been participated in the study.
- Most of the Librarians are aware about the fake- news.
- More of the respondents said that the fake-news is harmful to the society.
- Information literacy and tools for the evaluation of information can help to combat against fake-news.
- The LIS Professionals can play role in detecting fake news by verifying the authenticity of source, news by conducting fact check. Also, they are working to prevent the dissemination of fake- news by various ways like developing skills and competencies, filtering authentic news and offering literacy program.
- The LIS Professionals are using various strategies to spot fake news like use of block-chain technology, ask to expert, use of evaluation tools like Factual, FakerFact etc.
- The major problem faced by the libraries is lack of support from staff and institute.

### **Suggestions for Fighting Against Fake-News**

From the study it has been derived that the following suggestions can help to fight against fake-news-

- There should be tools to identify the fabrications made in a particular source. Like if the image or the video is morphed or not.
- One has to questions any piece of information/news he/she come across. Think before concur, verify when in doubt, asked around and take help when required. Don't just believe blindly!
- Generate awareness among the users to filter the authentic news.
- Every user should use critical thinking
- The competent authority can take disciplinary action to know who is spreading the fake news.
- To safe the academic fraternity from the tap of any fake news, librarian may arrange Information Literacy, circulate a flyer on fake news detection and it's harmful impact on the society.
- Strict Government Policies and awareness is needed.

### **Conclusion**

The study has tried to identify the various initiatives and strategies adopted to determine fake or real news. Overall, this study will help to control fake information to the society. It will create awareness in institutions and society to avoid to spread fake information. This research will help to Indian universities library to fruitful conclusion to check authenticity before to circulation of information.

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