

# Fake News on Social Media - Who Consume It and Why: Bangladesh Perspective

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## ABSTRACT

Today, 'fake news' is much more than a label for false and misleading information disguised and disseminated as news. It has become a weaponized term used to undermine and discredit journalism. Recently, social networks especially Facebook has become more popular and more comfortable platform for spreading fake news in Bangladesh. According to BTRC's report of November 2017, there are 30 million Facebook users in Bangladesh. So, Facebook has become an easy tool to spread any information with extreme good or bad opinions within a short time. Now a click is both an opportunity and a threat. Fueled by ICT, in recent years, fake news has become a significant concern in Bangladesh. This study aimed to explore the weaponization of information on an unprecedented scale and the power of new technologies provided for the manipulation and fabrication of content peddled by Facebook users. The acts of harassment peddled by fake news spread on Facebook have been increased exponentially from 2012. And by the year 2017, Bangladesh has experienced and combated the bad situation fueled by fake news posts on Facebook. The incidents which took place during these years have drawn the attention to continue this study to find out the consumers of fake news and determine its impact on our mainstream media. Furthermore, this study attempted to identify whether the audience depends on the mainstream media to collect authentic information after the dispersion of fake news. This study used a mixed-method, both quantitative and qualitative approaches, for conducting the research. The quantitative approach was designed with a cross-sectional survey among Facebook users and content analysis. Besides, case study under the qualitative approach provided more profound elucidation.

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## Introduction

Bangladesh, a country of South Asia, has passed four decades after its independence from Pakistani ruling in 1971. Through her journey as an independent nation, she has faced many hazards, both human-made and natural. In spite of such significant crises, she is hopefully going to achieve Middle Income Country (MIC) status by 2024. During these years after the liberation, the media

industry has reached a peak. With the launching of the internet in 1997 and the introduction of the government's digitalization process in all sectors, the media industry has flourished multi-dimensionally. The number of media in Bangladesh has increased significantly in the last 15 years, embarking on the liberal media policy. With the launching of bdnews24.com, the 1st online news

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portal followed by CSB, the first news and current affairs channels, other media organizations like Somoy TV, Independent TV, Channel 24, Jamuna TV, etc. have entered into the internet era. Now, the country has 100 licensed private TV channels, 3025 registered newspapers, and more than 2000 local and nation-wide online news portals (Alam, 2018). Besides these, social networks, especially Facebook, have become a parallel source for collecting and sharing news.

Interestingly, the mainstream media are also putting the news without justification. Now fake news is a fact that needs to be addressed and encountered in Bangladesh. To combat the bubbling consequences of fake news Bangladesh Government has compelled to pass the Digital Security Act and Broadcast policy recently. From 2012 to 2017, Bangladesh experienced some unexpected and unusual incidents that were mechanized by spreading fake news through Facebook. Of them, Ramu Tragedy at Cox's Bazaar vibrated our whole concern for the first time. These incidents made me interested in finding the causes behind the events and the future threat that may come. I found that fake news got comprehensive coverage in the mainstream media, which is eventually bound to become a clean threat to the credibility of mainstream media. Moreover, fake news has been spread through some clone-sites of some renowned newspapers. In November 2018, clones of several popular news websites in Bangladesh appeared disseminating outright false political news. The Bangla Tribune, The Prothom-Alo, and BBC Bangla were all duplicated with no noteworthy difference. Meanwhile, the state news agency, Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS), appeared to have been hacked (Nahar & Minar, 2018; Ovi, 2018).

Every fake news leads to unpredictable violence. If the news is like water, fake news will be the poison. So, I made up my mind to do this research to find out some inner background of these incidents to address them before they can bring multi-folded destructions in an epidemic manner.

## Rationale of the Study

In Bangladesh's perspective, we experienced a number of incidents mechanized by Facebook caused by the lack of media literacy, easy access to social media and absence of monitoring authority. Firstly, the importance of the present study lies in filling the research gap in this regard as no major research has yet been done on fake news on social media. Secondly, findings may also inform the concerned authority about the existing patterns of spreading fake news on social media. This study's findings may highlight the importance of initiating awareness-raising programs related to

social media education to combat against fake news and fake issues on social media. This study will also help policymakers identify and implement the policies to deal with the fake news. Finally, it can help media users and journalists in designing apposite interventions to address the fake issues on media.

## Objectives of the Study

1. To find out the users' profile regarding different aspects of social media use
2. To reveal the intentions behind spreading fake news
3. To explore the treatment of main stream media in dealing with the fake news being viral on social media

## Literature Review

Nahar and Minar (2018) conducted a study to assess social media posts' impact in real-life violence in Bangladesh's perspective. They examined five of the cases where Facebook posts or comments or images were used to provoke the general people into violence and mob attack. One common thing from these cases is that all started from fake posts or comments or sharing image in Facebook, which triggered arson and violence (Nahar & Minar, 2018).

Wilbowo et al. (2018) investigated mitigating the distribution of hoaxes in West Java. They found that around 30% of their respondents in West Java of Indonesia have a high tendency to share fake news. They also found that people's age, education levels, and gender do not determine their likelihood of sharing fake news. They presented their research at Asian Network for Public opinion Research (ANPOR) annual conference in November 2018. They reveal that the majority of people from west Java can identify fake news (Wilbowo et al., 2018).

The Pew Research Center in the USA surveyed in 2018, showing that social media was a more popular news platform among US adults. Facebook and Snapchat were the top two platforms for news among the age group.

Talwar et al. (2019) suggest that online trust, self-disclosure, fear of missing out (FoMO), and social media fatigue are positively associated with sharing of fake news (intentionally). In another study, Talwar et al. (2020) argue that instantaneous sharing of news for creating awareness positively affects sharing fake news due to lack of time and religiosity. However, authenticating news before sharing did not affect sharing fake news due to lack of time and religiosity. The study results also suggest that social media users who engage in active corrective action are unlikely to share fake news due to lack of time.

Klaehn et al. (2018) found that both Google searches and Facebook news feed are very important news sources today. Regarding the 2016 US presidential election, the group of 18–29-year-olds considered social media the most important news source.

Christian Fuchs, a renowned scholar of new media, suggested a number of feasible measures that can be taken in order to challenge false news culture (Fuchs, 2019). He argues that it makes sense that large social media companies are by law required to either, depending on their number of active monthly users, directly hire a specific number of fact-checkers or to cooperate with and pay for the services of a specific number of employees of independent, non-profit fact-checking organizations. If social media platforms are by law required to introduce a false news alert button that triggers a fact-check when a specified number of users click the button in respect to a specific content item, then progress could be achieved.

Despite the copious scholarly attempts to understand and elucidate the different aspects of the fake news genre, fake news sharing tendency, and fake news consumers, this study attempts to add the literature from Bangladesh's perspective. In addition to this, reviewing the studies shows that there is a dearth of scholarly works that addressed spreading fake news on social media. This study is an attempt to mitigate the research gap.

## Theoretical Framework

Rumor theory and conspiracy theory provide a theoretical basis for conducting this study. The two concepts are little bit different. Conspiracism is, in fact, not new at all, notwithstanding that curiosity about it among social scientists has grown significantly only during the last decade. In Karl Popper's terms, the most influential nineteenth and twentieth-century ideological narratives – Marxism and Nazism – were based on or incorporated a 'conspiracy theory of society' (Caytas, 2013). In light of this theory, I have conducted my research to fulfill the study's objectives. These theories ascribe to particular agents (usually defined as conspirators) an extraordinary capacity to influence personal and collective decisions, to forecast the consequences of their actions, to maintain secrecy about their strategies, and to coordinate themselves in a way that goes well beyond what is realistic in an open society (Bratich, 2008; Sunstein, 2014).

Compared to fake news, a rumor is also similarly misinformation. One group spread this kind of incorrect information through social media make anarchy. The dubious nature of the rumor claim is often signaled with the preface "I don't know if this is true, but I heard that..." or the teller

may pass it along as fact. Rumor claims are often smaller stories that are part of larger narratives. This research tries to show how fake news spread.

Why do people accept conspiracy theories that turn out to be false and for which the evidence is weak or even nonexistent? It is tempting to answer in terms of individual pathology. Perhaps conspiracy theories are a product of mental illness, such as paranoia or narcissism. And indeed, there can be no doubt that some people who accept conspiracy theories are mentally ill and subject to delusions (Sunstein, 2014). This study reveals the practicality of the theories stated above in the case of fake news consumers and the reasons for consuming.

## Methodology

### Study Design

It is exploratory research based on primary data. This study used a mixed method—both qualitative and quantitative methods to achieve the study purposes. The quantitative approach was designed with a cross-sectional survey among Facebook users and content analysis of mainstream media. Besides, case studies under the qualitative approach provided more profound elucidation.

### Data Collection

The quantitative data were collected through a questionnaire survey and content analysis. Before finalizing the questionnaire, a pilot study was conducted to test the understandability and ensure its wholeness and consistency in providing the study's information. It was given to seven teachers and five students of the University of Chittagong for pre-testing the questionnaire. They were not included in the final study. After pre-testing and revising the questionnaire, copies of the final draft of the survey were produced and made ready for data collection. The survey was conducted in January 2019. Besides, a content analysis of four large circulated newspapers was done to find out how much coverage and importance or follow up of fake news got in mainstream media. Electronic archives were used to do content analysis. For this purpose, five cases regarding fake news have been taken which were spread in social media and got much coverage in mainstream media as well. Besides, qualitative data were collected through case studies.

### Sampling Method and Sample Size

For conducting the questionnaire survey, random sampling, stratified, and quota sampling methods were used to select the study area and study participants. Primarily, five wards (large area) from 41 wards under Chittagong City Corporation were selected as the survey area

through random sampling. The areas were Ward-4 (Chandgaon), Ward-11 (South Kattoli), Ward-25 (Rampura), Ward-31 (Alkoron), and Ward-41 (South Patenga). A total of 200 respondents were taken as the study participants. Of those, 20 questionnaires were discarded for being incomplete (dropouts) or improperly completed. Finally, data from 180 respondents was taken to carry on this study. The data was collected from 40 respondents from each area by a group of trained data collectors. The data collectors were instructed to collect data from both the male and female Facebook users whose age is more than 21 years. To ensure the representatives of the different classes of the society, the respondents were categorized into three sections based on their living places: namely residential, non-residential and underdeveloped areas. On the other hand, four most circulated newspapers: namely *The Bangladesh-Pratidin*, *The Prothom-Alo*, *The Daily Star* and *The Kalerkontha* were selected to carry out the content analysis. The next seven days were observed after the spread of fake news on social media.

### Definition of Key Words

**Fake News:** Cognitive approaches to “fake news” often focus on the intent of the creator. Such approaches define “fake news” as news articles with “intentionally false information,” or news that “intentionally persuades consumers to accept biased or false beliefs,” or is “intentionally written to mislead readers,” Verstraete et al. (2017) propose a “fake news” typology of five different types; they make the case that three of these types – hoaxes, propaganda, and trolling – are intended to deceive, while and two – satire and humor – are instead intended as cultural commentary (Verstraete et al., 2017).

**Weaponization:** Weaponization is meant the adaptation (something existent or developed by other purposes) in such a way that can be used as a weapon (platform/system) to achieve the military effect. In the context of Bangladesh, social media has become a mine like a weapon to spread fake news. Such weaponization of the term fake news has become a part of political instrumentalization strategies to undermine public trust in institutional news media as central parts of democratic political systems. As a political

instrument, the fake news label thus portrays news media as institutions that purposely spread disinformation intending to deceive (Albright, 2017).

Twenty-first century has seen the weaponization of information on an unprecedented scale. Powerful new technology makes the manipulation and fabrication of content simple. Social networks dramatically amplify falsehoods peddled by States, populist politicians, and dishonest corporate entities, as they are shared by uncritical publics (Ireton & Posetti, 2018).

**Mainstream media:** The mainstream media refers to conventional newspapers, television, and other news sources that most people know about and regard as reliable.

**Clone site:** A clone is a website that is the exact duplicate or replica of another website with the same characteristics and properties.

### Data Analysis

The data, which are gathered using a structured questionnaire, is coded and entered into IBM SPSS version 24.0. The study findings are explained by using tables, graphs, and summary statistics. Descriptive statistics using the frequency distribution table was used to summarize the demographic and other related background variables.

## Results

### Respondents' Education, Age and Family Income

It was my interest to draw out the respondents' level of education, age, and family income. According to the data, Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the study participants. It is seen that 27.8% of the respondents had graduation, followed by higher secondary (25%), secondary (19.4%), and primary (11%). Most of the users belong to the age group of 18 to 34 years. The respondents whose age is in between 38 to 57 years hold almost the same percentage. Regarding the estimated average monthly income of the respondents, 36% of respondents reported their monthly income to be more than BDT (Bangladesh Taka) 40000-50000, whereas 19.4% reported it to be BDT >30000-40000 as well as BDT > 50000.

**Table 1 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents**

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Education	Illiterate	5	2.8
	Primary	20	11.1
	Secondary	35	19.4
	Higher Secondary	45	25.0
	Graduate	50	27.8
	Post-Graduate	25	13.9
Age (years)	18-27	45	25.0
	28-37	65	36.1
	38-47	28	15.6
	48-57	30	16.7
	58-67	12	6.7
Family Income (BDT)	Up to 10000	12	6.7
	> 10000-20000	18	10.0
	> 20000-30000	15	8.3
	> 30000-40000	35	19.4
	> 40000-50000	65	36.1
	> 50000 BDT	35	19.4

### Type of News Shared by the Users

Table 2 reports that sports news is being shared most by both male and female users, followed by health news and education news. It can be noticed that female users share health news or posts more than males. The percentage corresponding to politics and crime holds the lowest position. It means that users are less interested in politics and crime. It is seen that female users also show very little interest in politics and crime as the respective percentage holds the lowest position.

### Reasons behind Sharing News

The data in Table 2 illustrates the reasons that work behind sharing news. The percentage of both male and female users shows that most of them share news, thinking that it would be beneficial to others. 16.7 % female and 16.9% male users share news, considering that sharing a post would be proof of protesting against the objectives of an issue. Studying table 2, we can comprehend the

main two reasons for sharing news. First, one is making others benefitted and the second one is expressing protest against the objectives of the posts to others. A little portion of the user shares to prove their activeness in the virtual world.

### Reasons behind not Sharing News

Table 2 reports the reasons behind the unwillingness of sharing news by the respondents. 35% of female users do not share news thinking that it is not reliable rather it may bring hazards, while 25% of female finds sharing as an unimportant action. On the contrary, when it comes to male users, 50% think of sharing as a less important activity and 30% think it as unreliable whereas only 15% of users have become afraid while sharing it. We can also see those female users are more fearful about sharing news than males. It is noticed that 30% to 33%, both male and female users do not share news as they become suspicious about news credibility.

**Table 2 Distribution of Different Variable Regarding Facebook Use by the Respondents' Gender**

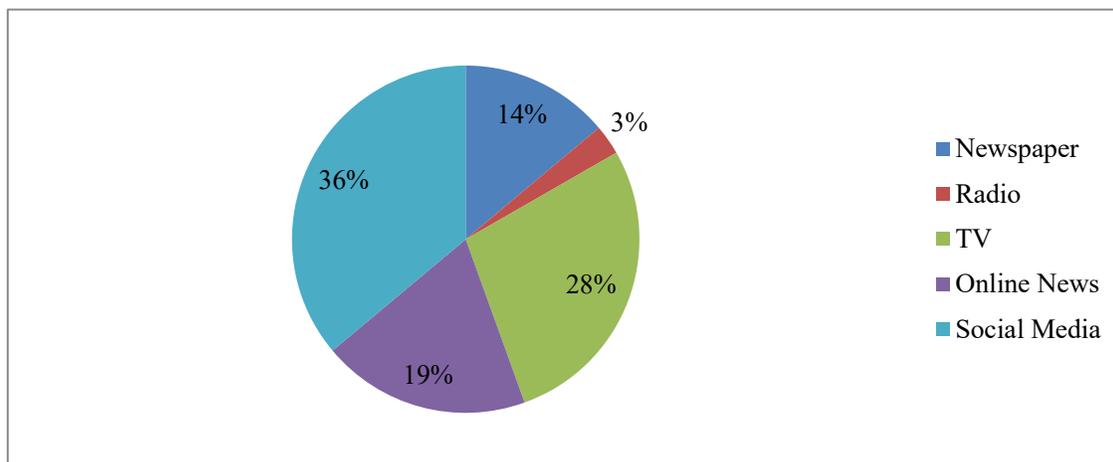
Variables	Categories	Number (%)	Male	Female
			Number (%)	Number (%)
Time passed in social media	Less than 01 hour	9 (5.0)	5 (56.0)	4 (4.5)
	01-02 hours	40 (22.2)	21 (23.3)	19 (21.0)
	03-04 hours	35 (19.5)	17 (18.9)	18 (20.0)
	05-06 hours	76 (42.2)	36 (40.0)	40 (44.5)
	More than 07 hours	20 (11.1)	11 (12.2)	9 (10.0)
The primary type of news shared by the users	Politics	9 (5.6)	7 (9.0)	2 (2.4)
	Education	35 (21.9)	15 (19.5)	20 (24)
	Sports	45 (28.1)	25 (32.5)	20 (24)
	Crime	15 (9.4)	12 (15.6)	3 (3.6)
	Religion	18 (11.2)	10 (13.0)	8 (9.6)
	Health	38 (23.8)	8 (10.4)	30 (36.1)
The prime reason for sharing news	Beneficial	80 (66.7)	49 (75.4)	31 (56.3)
	Protective	20 (16.7)	11 (16.9)	9 (16.3)
	Being active	18 (15.0)	5 (7.7)	13 (23.6)
	Others	2 (1.7)	0 (0.0)	2 (3.6)
The main reason for not sharing news	Fear about sharing	10 (25)	3 (15.0)	7 (35)
	Less important	15 (37.5)	10 (50.0)	5 (25)
	Not reliable	13 (32.5)	6 (30.0)	7 (35)
	others	2 (5.0)	1 (5.0)	1 (5.0)

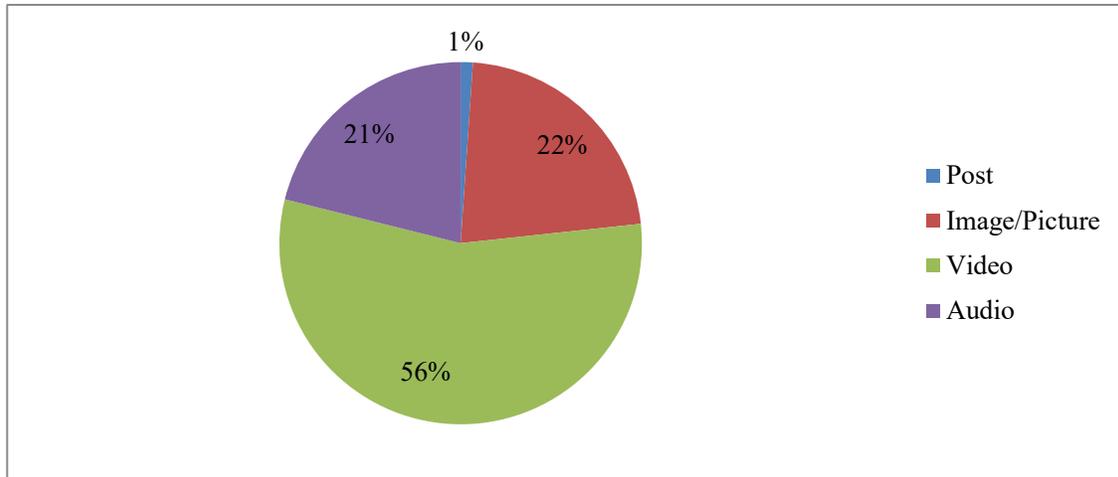
#### Most Trusted Media for Collecting News and Primary Type of Posts on Social Media

Nowadays, people are more and more interested in learning about the current world. With the expansion of traditional and new media, it has become easier to get news or information with a click. Figure 1 demonstrates that social media holds the highest position as a trusted source for collecting news, followed by TV and online news portal. It is assumed that the traditional

newspaper is being replaced by the online news portal, whereas social media are replacing TV. According to Figure 2, it is evident that a video post is most believable to the users. Almost the same portion of users trusts image or audio post. Posts containing text is deemed as almost unreliable to the users. Only 1.1% of users keep trust in it.

**Figure 1 Distribution of the respondents' most trusted media for collecting news**

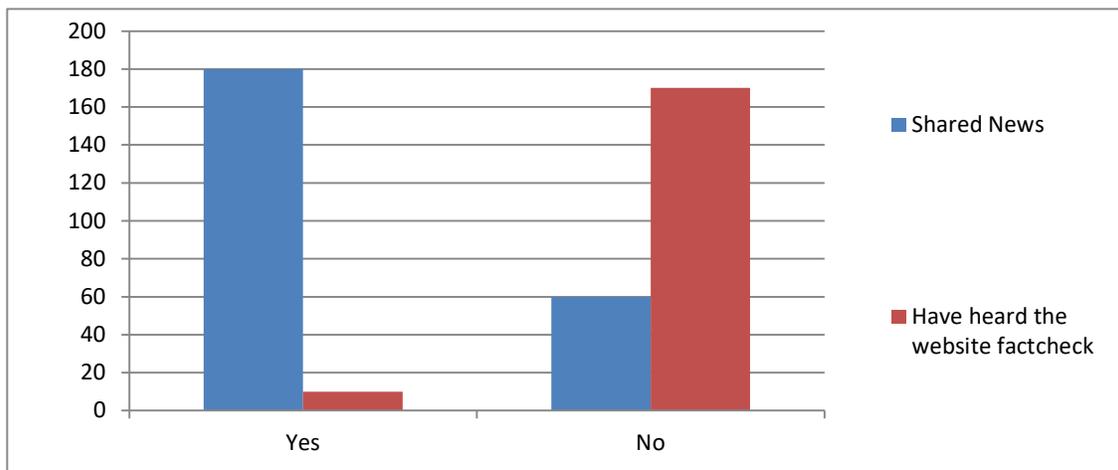


**Figure 2 Frequency Distribution of the Respondents' Primary Trusted Types of Post**

### Ever Shared News and Heard about the Fact-checking Websites

Figure 3 illustrates that 120 respondents tend to share news frequently and 60 respondents do not share anything at all. They are only viewers. Though most of the users tend to share, they do not want to bear the responsibility of their actions. As a result, they share the post without justification

and do not tend to justify them. We can see that only 15 respondents heard about the fact-checking websites, and most of the respondents (165 respondents) have no idea about using fact-checking websites to justify the credibility or reality of news or post. In general, we can say that most social media users in Bangladesh do not tend to justify the news. It is a matter of great thinking for future threats that may come our way

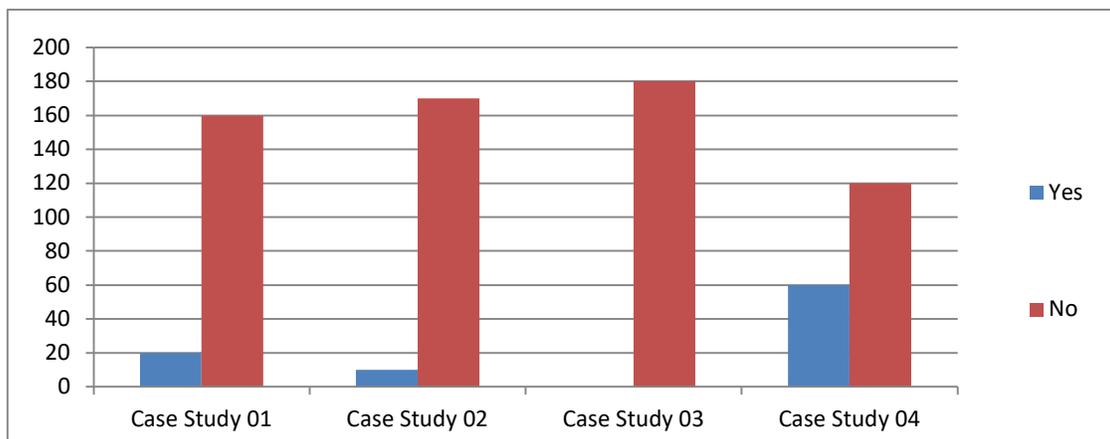
**Figure 3 Distribution of the Respondents' News Sharing and Having an Idea about the Fact Checking Websites**

### Had Ever Seen or Heard about the Incidents of Case Studies

The data shown in Figure 4 is quite notable and deserving of thinking and rethinking. The events taken as a case study for this research are almost unheard and unseen to the respondents. It is seen that most of them have not seen fake posts after being viral. An essential part of them has seen the video post of the incident described in case

study 4. It is quite surprising that none of the 180 respondents has seen the post related to case study 3. It is clear that the general users completely ignored the incidents but helped it become viral in social media. It can also be assumed that most of the users are unaware of or have less investigative mind to explore the incidents happening around. They are attentive to the posts related to their test or interest. Only a few users are aware of the incidents happening around them.

**Figure 4 Distribution of Whether Respondents Reading the News or not**



**Case Studies and Content Analysis of Mainstream Media**

**Case 1: Clone Site**



On October 14, 2017, fake news titled “CJ exposes the Govt.” was posted on Facebook using the reference and picture of the most leading English daily in Bangladesh named The Daily Star. Investigation revealed that this fake news was posted on a Facebook profile named after “Wahiduzzaman” (a nonresident Bangladeshi who was fired from his job for debasing prime minister’s reputation). He maintains a good number of followers up to 67,218. The post was shared over 1000 times from a Facebook page named after the opponent leader “Begum Khaleda Zia,” 40 times from the

account of Wahiduzzaman and five times from shomoyershakhi.com. In the post, it is evident that the clone site of the Daily Star has been used to make fake news more trusted and believable. They intentionally spread this fake news to manipulate mass people towards the anti-government sentiment. The Daily Star published an article titled “It’s Fake.” Not only that, the Daily Star showed the original and the fake article side by side to make the readers concerned about the new threat of using clone sites through social media.

**Case 2: Demeaning the Religion ‘Islam’**



Violence triggered by a Facebook post of Titu Chandra Roy, in turn, created anarchy in Rangpur on 10 November 2017. For demeaning Islam by this post, the Muslim community put the houses of the Hindu community on fire and eventually engaged in violence with the law force unit. The most leading Bengali newspaper, the Daily

Prothom-Alo, published a 3-column article on the front page about the demeaning of the religious sentiment using fake news spreading post on Facebook. But they did not use any picture while the other newspapers gave a clear picture. The above picture was published in the Daily.

### Case 3: Quota Reform Movement



During the quota reform movement, on 8 April 2018, some attackers attacked the residence of Vice-chancellor of Dhaka University. His house was also put on fire following a massacre. On April 09, 2018, the above picture became viral on social media. Interesting to note that the image is originally a picture of the activists of a political

party titled 'Trinomul' of East-Bengal in Calcutta. One of the activists of BNP (the main opposition political party of Bangladesh) name Kazi Masud Rana posted this picture on his Facebook wall to fuel in the rage of movement from the political perspective.

### Case 4: Movement for the Safe Roads



“We want Justice”- with this slogan, a movement for the safe road had started at Shahbag in Dhaka. But on the sixth day of the movement on 4th August 2018 in the afternoon, during safe road movement in Bangladesh, a popular television icon name Nowsaba appeared in the Facebook live and called the people to save the children from the attack. She claimed that some student protestors were killed. She also claimed that the attackers rooted out a student's eye. After her coming live on her Facebook account, a negative message spread around. It made people of all stages much worried and concerned. The administration wings took immediate steps to

reveal the truth, and finally, it was proved fake. She was arrested and released after revealing the truth. According to her statement, she confessed that she was informed and inspired to do so by a trusted source.

Fake news came to discussion for the first time in Bangladesh after the incidents of Ramu Tragedy in Cox's Bazar in 2012. A group of people attacked The Buddhist temple at Ramu. They made a massacre and created a frightening atmosphere there. They broke houses around the temple and caught them fire also. All these are done by the agitated group in charge of defaming

Hazrat Muhammad (Sm) by a young boy on his Facebook wall. Consequently, fake posts demeaning Islam brought hazards in Pabna, Cumilla, and B. Baria back in 2013, 2014, and 2016 respectively, like Ramu. The hazards reached its peak, circling the religious sentiments through the real-news that had not yet published.

**Table 3 Media Coverage Regarding Fake News**

Case Study	Newspaper Name	Treatment	No. of Picture	Description
Case Study 1: Clone Side	The Bangladesh Pratidin	Lead news	1	Not mentioned as fake news
	The Prothom-Alo	Frontpage	1	Not mentioned as fake news
	The Daily Star	Frontpage (S/C)	1	Depth news with details
	The Kalerkontha	Back page	1	Not mentioned as fake news
Case Study 2: Demeaning Islam	The Bangladesh Pratidin	Frontpage	2	Details about fake news
	The Prothom-Alo	Frontpage (3/C)	No	A general overview of fake news
	The Daily Star	First lead (8/C)	4	Depth news with details.
	The Kalerkontha	On-page 17, D/C	No	Brief description
Case Study 3: Quota Reform Movement	The Bangladesh Pratidin	Frontpage	No	No clear description
	The Prothom-Alo	2nd page	1	Given a clear description
	The Daily Star	Frontpage	1	Given a clear description
	The Kalerkontha	Page 19, D/C	No	No clear description of the news
Case Study 4: Movement for the Safe Roads	The Bangladesh Pratidin	Back Page	1	Given a clear description
	The Prothom-Alo	Page 5, S/C	No	Given a clear description
	The Daily Star	Page 16, D/C	1	Given a clear description
	The Kalerkontha	Page 20, D/C	1	Given a clear description

## Discussion

This study reveals that social media users in Bangladesh are quite indifferent about the system or way of justification. The data we got shows that the users of social media in Bangladesh have no idea about fact-checker websites. It means that they are not responsible and matured enough to deal with the issues in social media, which is a clear threat to the future hazards created by netizens.

This research pictures that income-wise middle to higher class people of age between 21 to 57 years mostly use social media. We found that the respondents of the survey are not well aware of the incidents discussed in case studies. So, we can say the incidents that took place were manipulated by organized groups targeting to establish their interest.

But the content analysis reveals that Political machinations for fulfilling political interests and Religious misinterpretations are the two reasons behind spreading fake news.

A former TV reporter and anchor Christina Nicholson said in her TEDx talk, "Use care before you share because you are the media." According to Christina, we can take every social media user as media. It is observed that most of the users of social media share news or posts without much thinking and, in some cases, wantonly without justifying or measuring the consequences. My research has found that 80% of users share news or posts, thinking that it would benefit others.

The above-discussed case studies were done to meet my first objective to find out the users' profile of fake news consumers. It is seen that the consumers are the general Facebook users who are

political followers, majorities and a large portion who have no media literacy. Political followers consume fake news being motivated by their group leader. The majorities consume it as a part of their religious emotion. A large portion of social media users consume it thinking that they should share it and bring well the other users. They also did this to prove that they are active users. As per case study-1, it is clear that the mentioned political leader used Facebook as a weapon to materialize his target. He tried to use his 64,000 followers as an active role player of his weaponization process of spreading fake news.

Based on the survey's data interpretations, we can see that our mainstream media are still immature while dealing with fake news. As people start the day with newspapers and expect investigative reports related to hot issues, the print media should be more concerned about providing authentic information so that the false information cannot deepen its root. MIT researchers Vosoughi et al. (2018) published their work in *Science* – it was praised as the “largest-ever study on fake news” confirming what we all probably empirically suspected: misinformation, lies, falsehood and fabricated stories on Twitter are penetrating deeper, farther and faster than truth and accurate information. In the light of the study done by MIT researchers, we can categorize case-1 as Fabricated, case-2 as Misinformation, case-3, and case-4 as Falsehood. Every kind of fake news is not only political intrigue but also a personal conspiracy (Vosoughi et al., 2018).

The news industries should bear the scholarly saying of Edward R. Murrow “A lie can go around the world while the truth is still getting his pants on” I found that the Daily Star, the most circulated English daily of Bangladesh, is more concerned about dealing with the fake issues than other newspapers.

It is high time Bangladesh came forward to combat fake issues. As per suggestions got from the respondents through an open-ended question, the government should come forward to deal with the fake issues. Already Govt. has passed the digital Security act and set up cyber forces to deal with and research the ICT issues. We found that the netizens of Bangladesh lack ICT literacy. Mass users can be made ICT literate to stop or combat the exponential rippling effect of fake issues.

## Conclusion

“Fake news” has become a focus of scholarly research since the U.S. election in 2016 when the whole population has experienced how it can be used as a powerful weapon to establish a political, national, international, or grouped agenda. Now it has taken a whole new meaning, with different angles and renewed emphasis. This study explores

the growing literature of this new type of fake news in Bangladesh and factors may influence how the public can tell fake from real news. Namely, this study looked into the amount of information, demographics and personal preferences, and news research behavior. As we found that the hazards of counterfeit issues experienced in Bangladesh were not caused by the general social media users but by concerned groups. It can be taken as the weaponization of news having no visual appearance but may destroy many excellent achievements creating drastic and massive mishaps. So, it is essential to be prepared to address and combat the fake issues before spreading in an epidemic form. This study suggests introducing the concept of media literacy to the textbook to effectively help the younger generations maintain responsible behavior on social media.

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