

Recommendations for the Media

A survey conducted by the *Times of India* and reported on October 25, 2022, revealed that Indian public opinion on the war in Ukraine is deeply divided. Regarding the West's threats against Russia, 46% of respondents believed the claims to be true, while 27% held that Russia invaded Ukraine, and 28% thought Western countries provoked the war. Furthermore, 42% of respondents believed that ethnic Russians were being tortured and harassed by the Ukrainian government, while 46% believed that Ukraine's government had succumbed to extremist military factions subscribing to Nazi ideology.

To address these challenges and improve media practices, we present the following recommendations for the Indian media:

1. Encourage Fact-Based Reporting

Reporting should rely on robust research, with facts verified through triangulation—cross-referencing Russian, Ukrainian, Indian government, and other reliable sources. Ensuring accuracy and impartiality is essential to maintain journalistic integrity.

2. Promote Diverse Perspectives

Media outlets must offer a broad spectrum of perspectives, focusing on the content rather than the identity or position of the speaker. Credibility and authenticity should take precedence. As W.B. Yeats observed in *The Second Coming*: "The best lack all conviction, while the worst are full of passionate intensity," reminding us that expertise and wisdom are not always the loudest voices in the room.

3. Counter Misinformation

Misinformation must be actively debunked to prevent it from becoming what Joseph Goebbels infamously called "truth" through repetition. Journalists must be equipped with the skills to identify and combat false narratives, ensuring the dissemination of accurate information.

4. Foster Media Literacy

Media literacy campaigns should aim to enhance critical thinking skills among Indian audiences, particularly those interested in international affairs. Initiatives could target students of political science and youth groups to help them navigate the complexities of modern media landscapes.

5. Support Independent and Ethical Journalism

While media freedom is enshrined in India's Constitution, journalists often face challenges in maintaining independence and adhering to ethical standards. Factors such as insufficient training or external pressures from vested interests need to be thoroughly examined and addressed.

6. Avoid Assumptions and Adhere to Protocols

Journalists must receive training on their rights, ethical standards, and professional protocols. Assumptions about editorial preferences or political retaliation should not influence reporting. The history of press censorship during India's Emergency period in the mid-1970s serves as a cautionary tale of how fear-psychosis can erode journalistic integrity.

7. Invest in Training for Young Journalists

Young journalists should be trained in the fundamentals of international politics, research methodologies, and India's foreign policy dynamics. Journalism schools could introduce a dedicated course on "India and the World." In the short term, crash courses on reporting international affairs, along with specialized training in war journalism, could be implemented within media projects.

By implementing these recommendations, the Indian media can enhance its credibility, foster informed public discourse, and play a pivotal role in addressing complex global issues with accuracy and nuance.