



# Impacts of Misleading Media Coverage about Police Personnel: A Survey Study among College Students in this Pandemic

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**Abstract:** Media including television, press and other online platforms plays an important role in the construction of public belief and its relationship to social change. As media outlets occupy people with reports of events, there is evidence of increasing criminal behavior, lack of personal responsibilities, and tolerance towards others. These false reports are triggering more individuals and groups to commit criminal behavior targeting law enforcement and there is less possibility of people understanding the real struggle and the pressure that the police personnel are having even during the pandemic like Covid-19. The present survey - study aims at finding the impacts of misleading media coverage about police personnel during the pandemic. It was found that, most of the people do have knowledge about the duty of police officers and they could rate the work of police personnel as excellent during the pandemic and they have also opinioned that media did have an effect on their views about police personnel during the pandemic in a very positive way.

**Index Terms – COVID19; Pandemic; Media; Police personnel**

## I. INTRODUCTION

Media plays an important role in the construction of public belief and its relationship to social change. Including Television, the Press, and other online platforms it mainly helps the public to know what is happening in the world (C Happer, 2013). People not only obtain real information about public matters from the news media but also pick up how much prominence to assign to a subject based on the highlights or priority given to it. News media highlights the personality (including politicians, people involved in the film industry, and other celebrities) and issues, which results in a common man to believe in it and to form an opinion about them according to the news. As media plays a crucial role in generating public opinion, the media need to report in a fair and unbiased manner and issues impartially and dispassionately (mirchandani, 2018). In media, anybody can share anything including something that is not accurate but real harm is done on sharing some inflammatory, false information that will harm society as a whole. It's ultimately up to social media users to believe in it or not (force, 2016). The social and news media's fake news threatens law enforcement officers. Society's perceptions are influenced by false statements by social and news media outlets. Individuals believing the fake news use threats of violence, assault, or murder police officers. In return, law enforcement becomes more dangerous causing de-policing (marrow, 2019). People need to understand that role of mass media in shaping public opinion can be both negative and positive. Sometimes the controversies created by media can help to give momentum for a good cause whereas sometimes it can prove to be detrimental. Every citizen should consider behaving like an informed citizen despite receiving fake news as their duty (yadav, n.d.). When considering the individuals of society, the media usually delivers news about high-status people like celebrities, politicians and police officials, etc. in which Police personals are the most negatively affected one. Which directly affects the views of the public on police in a wrong way **Invalid source specified..** As a result of negative publicity on police officials who work hard to maintain law and order in the society, they tend to get less motivation towards the work and less willingness to solve their problems **Invalid source specified..** The purpose of the study is to take into consideration the negative effect of misleading information shared in the media on police and opinion about the same from youth. The main objectives of the study are, preparing a questionnaire in the google form and sending it to each individual separately, selecting respondents from Kerala who are aged between 18 to 25, based on the responses finding out whether media plays a role in sharing misleading information on police and to know if media affected people's view about police officials negatively during the pandemic.

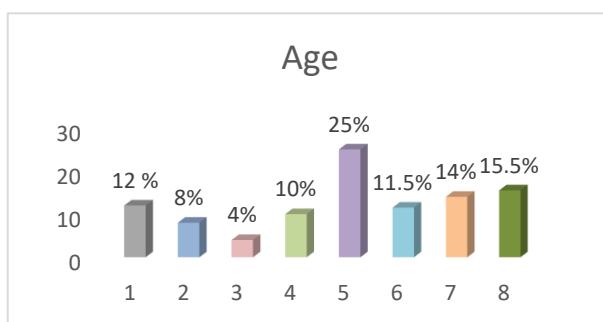
**II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The samples for the study were the college students in Kerala. Due to this pandemic situation, the samples were not able to collect in the community-based. The self-made questionnaire was prepared by the investigator using the Google form and there were 15 questions excluding general information and covered the awareness about the police work, about media coverage, and media portrays the police. In this study “Snow Ball Sampling Method” techniques of the non-probability method were used. The research design was a descriptive design structure within the study is undertaken. There were 200 respondents of college students were collected in Kerala and the age group has been selected between 18-25 years. First, the questionnaire was shared by using social media to the nearby college students and requested them to share the Google form to their friends of friends. In the description of the questionnaire, the investigator has explained the purpose of conducting this research. After receiving all the information the investigator cross-checked the responses and export the Google form into an Excel sheet. The exported questionnaire was later downloaded and the analysis was made by using Microsoft Excel 2010. Then frequency was calculated according to the responses and the calculated frequency table was made converted into bar graphs and pie charts.

**III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**3.1 Age of the respondents**

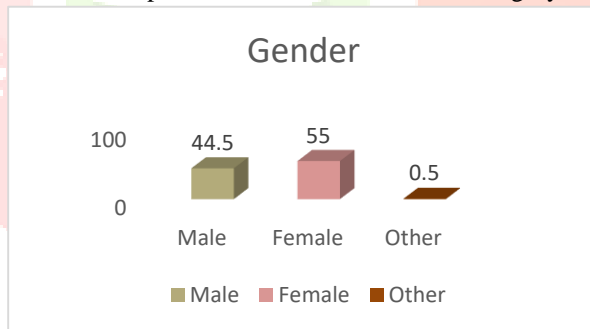
The below figure represents the number of respondents in each age category. 25% of the respondents are found under age 22 and 15.5% of the respondents are found under age 25.



**Figure 1.** Age of the respondents

**3.2 GENDER**

The below figure represents the number of respondents in each gender i.e Male, Female, and Others. 55% of the respondents come under the Female category and 0.5% of the respondents come under another category.



**Figure 2.** Gender of respondents

**3.3 DUTY OF POLICE OFFICER**

The below figure represents the number of people responding to what is the duty of a police officer. The majority of people i.e 92% of individual says a police officer must prevent crime, to protect people, and to maintain law and order. 0.0% of people said that a police officer must only prevent crime.

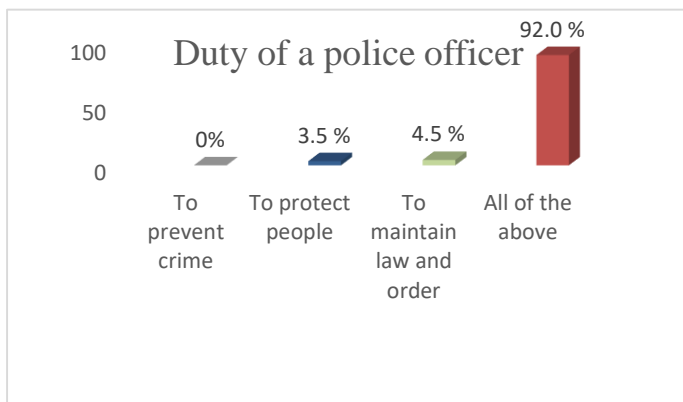


Figure 3. Duty of police officer

### 3.4 WORK OF POLICE OFFICER DURING THE PANDEMIC

The figure represents the number of people rating the work of police personnel during the pandemic. 48% of the individuals have rated the work as “Excellent”. 0% of the people have rated it as “very bad”.

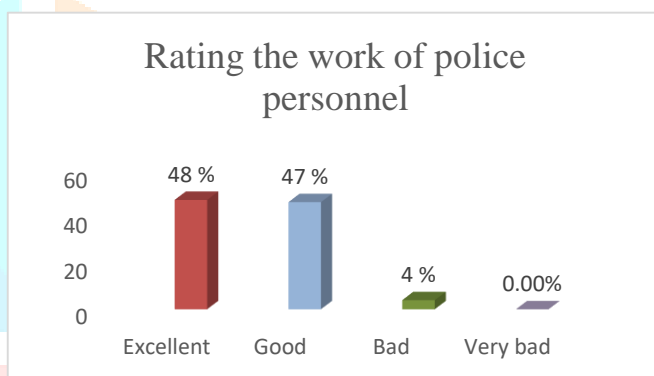


Figure 4. Rate for work of the police officer

### 3.5 CAREER IN LAW ENFORCEMENT

The below figure represents the number of people who prefer their careers in law enforcement. 51% of the individuals prefer their career in it and 49% of the people have not preferred the same.

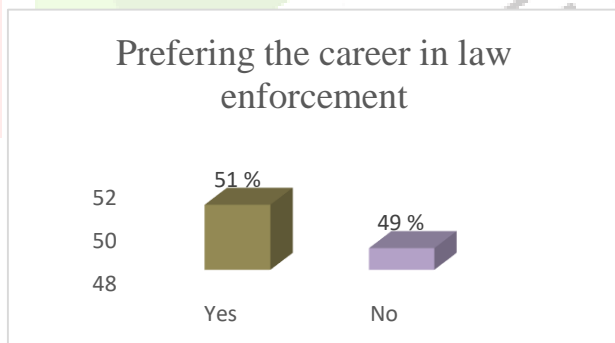
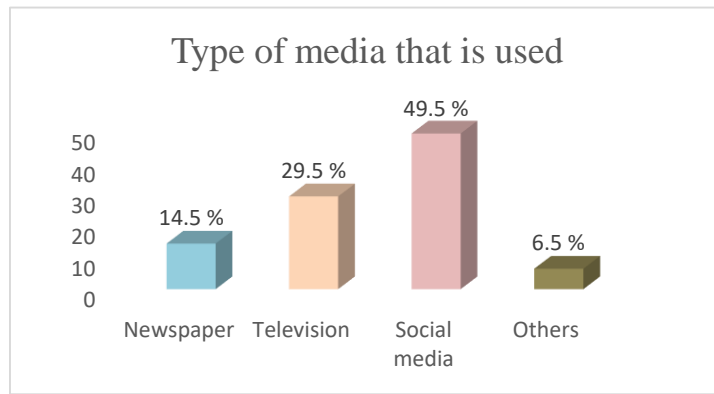


Figure 5. Career in law enforcement

### 3.6 DIFFERENT TYPES OF MEDIA

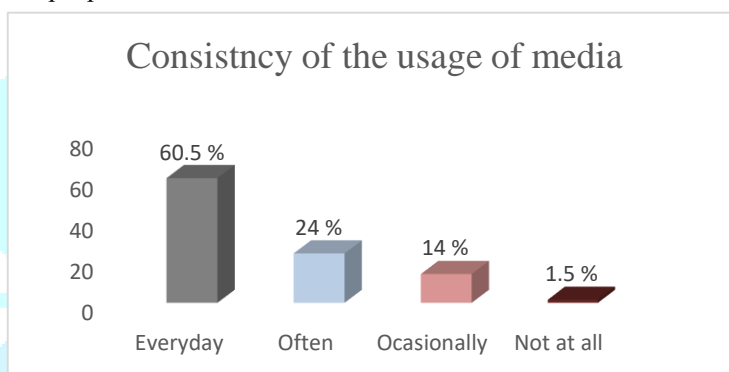
The below figure represents the number of people using different kinds of media to get updated with the news. 49.5% of the individual uses “Social media” and only 6.5% of the people use “Other” type of media to get updated with the news.



**Figure 6.** Types of media

**3.7 CONSISTENCY OF THE USAGE**

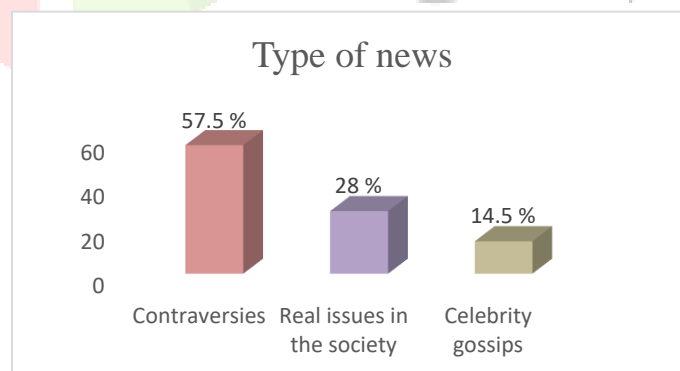
The below figure represents the number of people on how consistently they do watch the news. 60.5% of individuals do watch the news “Everyday” and 1.5% of the people do not watch the news at all.



**Figure 7.** Consistency of the usage of media

**3.8 DIFFERENT TYPES OF NEWS**

The below figure represents the number of people saying what type of news most of the time media delivers to the public. 57.5% of individuals say that media usually delivers “Controversies” and 14.5% of people say media represents only about “Celebrity gossips” most of the time.



**Figure 8.** Different types of news

**3.9 METHOD OF DELIVERING THE NEWS**

The below figure represents the number of people giving an opinion on how does media usually delivers the news. 57.5% of the people say media delivers “Exaggerated news” and 11.5% of the individuals say media delivers “Exact news”.

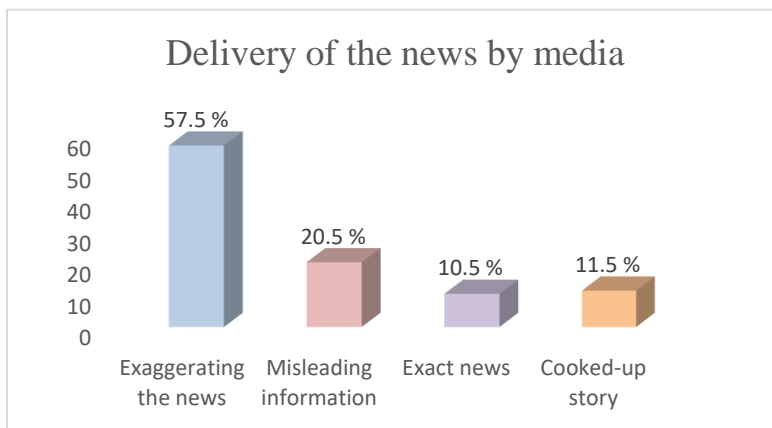


Figure 9. Delivery of the news by media

### 3.10 GENUINITY OF THE NEWS

The below figure represents the number of people who have tried to understand the genuinity of the news on social media before sharing it. 51.5% of the individual finds it “Sometimes” and 6% of the people “Never” finds out the genuinity of the news.

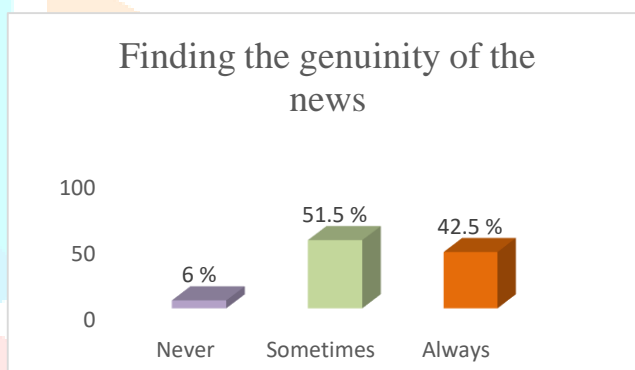


Figure 10. Genuinity of the news

### 3.11 AGGRESSIVENESS OF POLICE OFFICER

The below figure represents the number of people who give an opinion on the aggressiveness of police during the pandemic. 43.5% of individuals say that police were aggressive, out of these people, 82.7% of them say it because of “media portrayal about police” and 17.2% of them say it because of “Self-experience”.

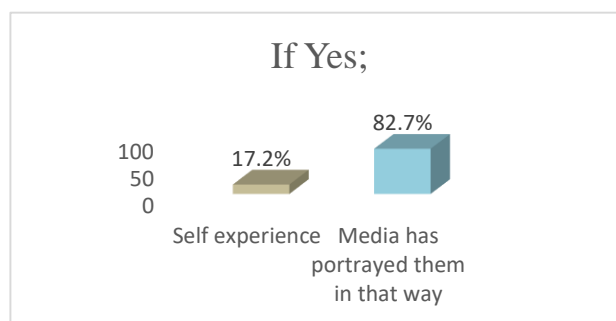
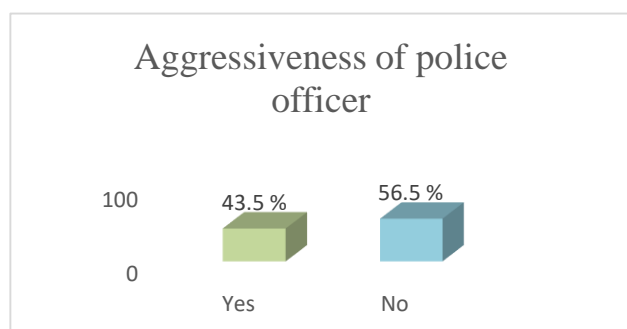


Figure 11. The aggressiveness of the police officer

### 3.12 MISLEADING INFORMATION ABOUT POLICE

The below figure represents the number of people who have found misleading information about police personnel during the pandemic. 46% of the individual have found many and out on those people, 56.5% of the people have found it on Social media and 0% of them have found it on other types of media.

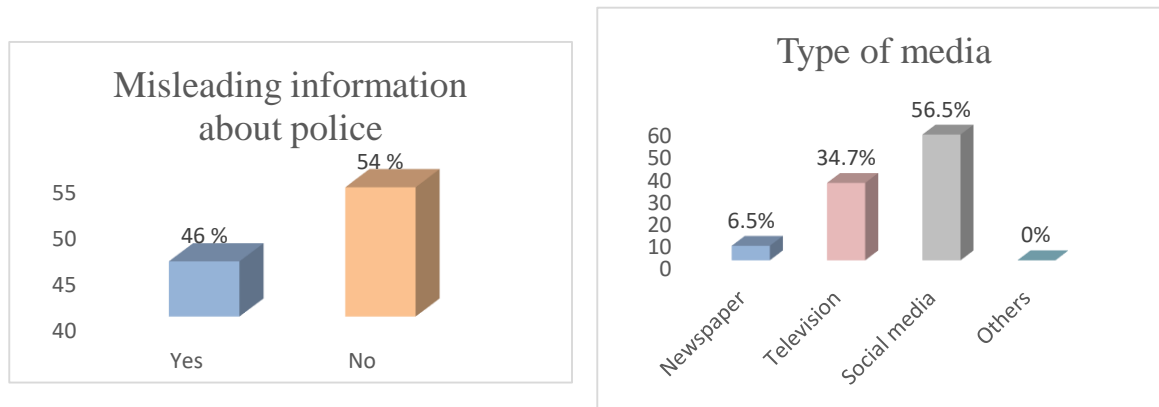


Figure 12. Misleading information about police

### 3.13 EFFECT OF MEDIA ON VIEWS ABOUT POLICE OFFICERS

The below figure represents the number of people on whom media affected their views on police personal. 58% of them had an effect on them and out of that, 73.2% of the people have affected positively.

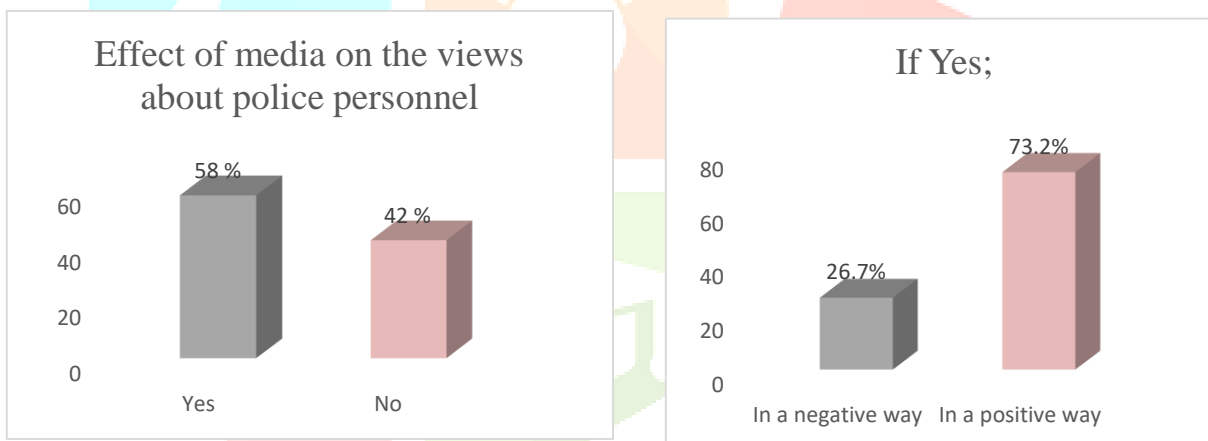


Figure 13. Effect of media on the views about police

### 3.14 RECEIVING FAKE NEWS ABOUT POLICE

The below figure represents the number of people who have found fake news about the police and later found out it to be false. 57% of the people have not received any of such kinds and 43% of the people do have found fake news on police.

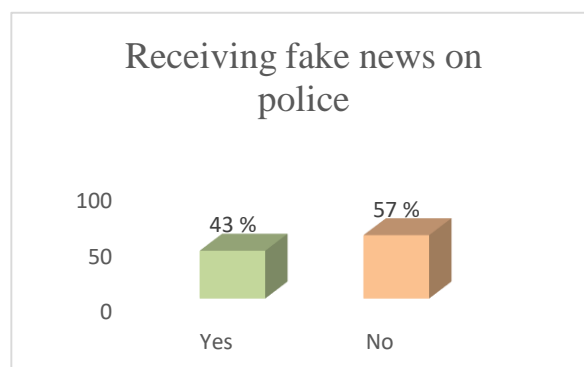


Figure 14. Receiving fake news

### 3.15 SENDING FAKE NEWS

The below figure represents the number of people who have been a part of the act of sending fake news to the police. 10% of the people have said “Yes”. Out of which 55% of them have done it just by forwarding the message.

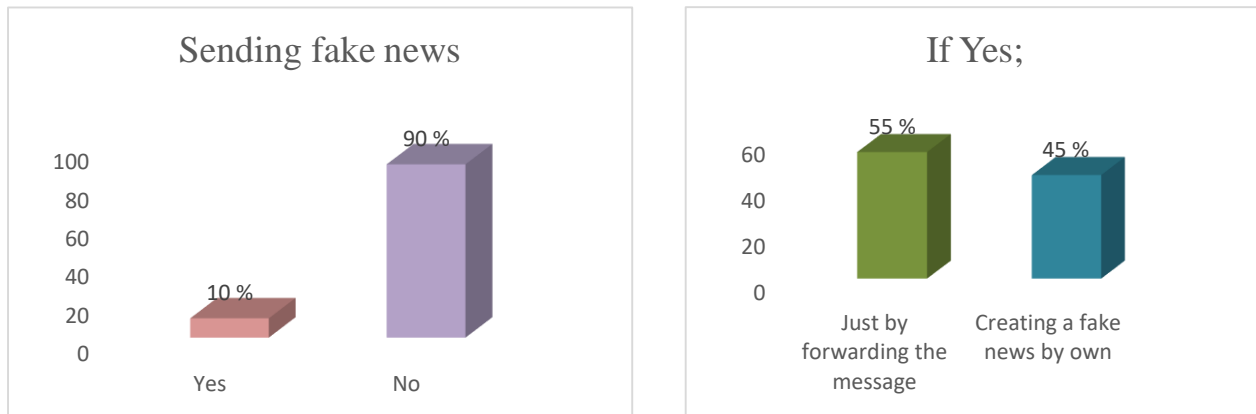


Figure 15. Sending fake news

### 3.16 DIFFICULTIES FACED BY THE POLICE OFFICERS

The above figure represents the number of people who have come across any news on the difficulties faced by the police. 70.5% of them said “Yes”. Out of these 67% of the people said that police have been facing all types of mentioned difficulties and only 0.7% of people say it’s only the pressure from higher officials.

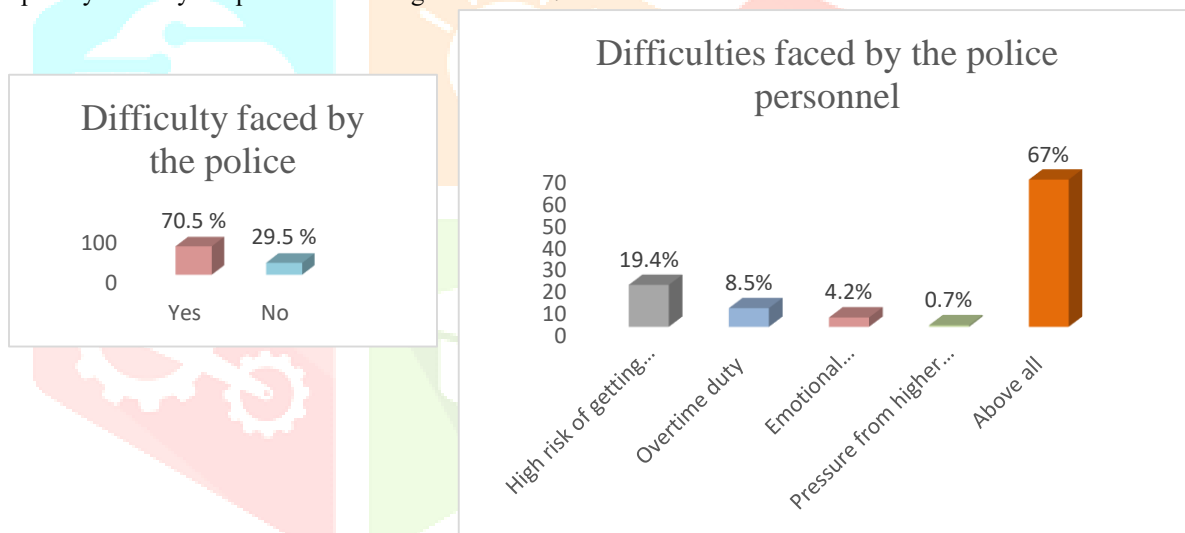
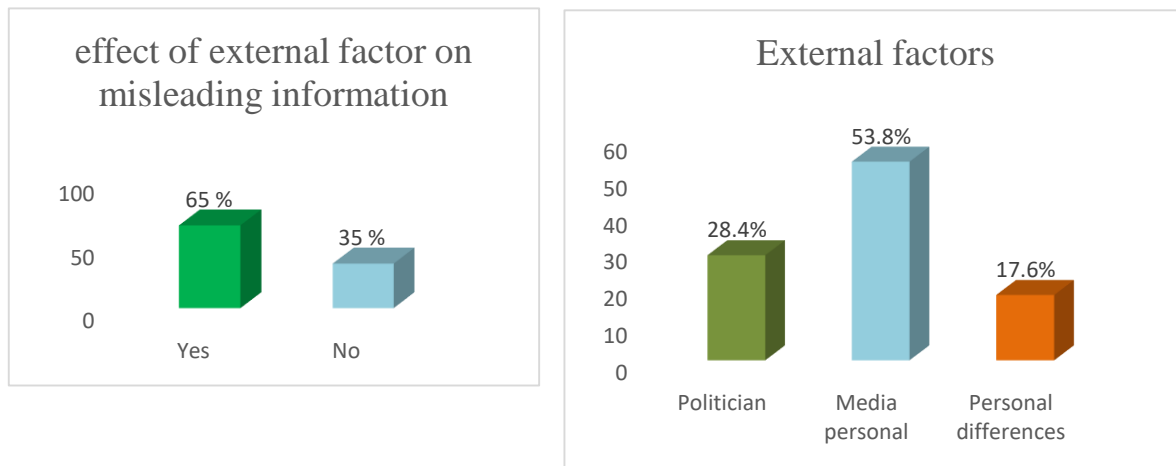


Figure 16. Difficulties faced by police

### 3.17 EFFECT OF EXTERNAL FACTOR

The above figure represents the number of people who think there is an external factor involved in creating misleading information. 65% have them said “Yes”. Out of which 53.8% of them said, it’s because of “Media personnel”.



**Figure 17.** Effect of external factor

## IV.RESULTS

Out of 200 people, 92% of individuals have responded saying that, the duty of a police officer includes preventing the crime, protecting the people, and maintaining law and order. 48% of them have rated their work during the pandemic as “Excellent”. 51% of the individuals prefer their career in law enforcement. 49.5% of the people use Social media to get updated with news and considering all the individuals 60.5% of them use the media for the sake of news every day. 57.5% of the individuals have told media usually delivers controversies and exaggerated news to the public. Only sometimes 51.5% of the individuals check the genuinity of the news before sharing it with others. Based on the media portrayal of police personnel, 43.5% of the people have told police officers were more aggressive during the pandemic. 46% of the individuals have found misleading information about police most often in social media during the pandemic. Media had an effect on 58% of the people about their views on police personnel during the pandemic in which 73.2% of people were affected positively. 90% of the people did not take part in the act of sending fake news. 70.5% of the people have told that they have come across the news about the difficulties faced by the police officers which includes, high risk of getting infected, overtime duty, emotional detachment from family, and pressure from higher officials. 65% of the people have told that there is an effect of an external factor in misleading information about police, where 53.8% of the individuals have responded saying it is because of Media personnel.

## V.CONCLUSION

Media can have both positive and negative effects on a person’s opinion about law enforcement agencies. During the pandemic, all different types of media have portrayed police in their own way. The researcher has found that most of the people do have knowledge about the duty of police officers and they could rate the work of police personnel as excellent during the pandemic. As social media plays an important role in exchanging the news between each other, only sometimes people do check the genuinity of the news before sharing it with others. Most people have opined that media did have an effect on their views about police personnel during the pandemic in a very positive way mentioning the difficulties faced by them like overtime duty, high risk of getting infected by the virus, and pressure from higher officials, etc. It was also found that there is an effect of external factors i.e Media personnel in spreading misleading information about police.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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## Declaration statement

I declare that the manuscript entitled “Impacts of Misleading Media Coverage about Police Personnel: A Survey Study among College Students in this Pandemic” shall not submit to any other journal or magazine

## Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict interest to report



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