**INTRODUCTION:**

Humans have always interacted with their kind to survive, gain knowledge and pass on information about the happenings around them. So social networking existed right from the beginning of human history. With the advancement in technology and the ease of getting news and information handy and on the go, one may have to compromise with the authenticity of the information. A large section of society is using social networking sites such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, YouTube, etc. to obtain news rather than using authenticated news channels and sources [1]. At the same time, unauthenticated sources through these social media platforms, websites and Twitter handle distribute fabricated news to the audience. In such a scenario it becomes difficult to understand on which source one should rely on to obtain unfabricated and genuine news. The misinformation or rumors spread across especially during emergencies can have a devastating effect on individuals and society. Spurious news in such a scenario would not only give rise to panic among the individuals but in some cases, it may also target a particular community.

Important events that leave a mark on the society such as elections, war, stock prices, business deals, politics, the health status of celebrities, cryptocurrency, religious events etc. noticeably give birth to fake news. The 2016 general elections in the USA were driven by fake news. After demonetization in India, the new 2000-rupee notes were falsely advertised to have a chip installed in it. The current coronavirus pandemic has given vertical rise to a surge of fake news being named as “**infodemic**” by WHO officials [2]. The key reason behind this is that dependable news sources are recurrently swallowed up by unconfirmed online information. All these events prove that fake news is a huge threat to our society and a problem that should be given utmost attention.

The younger generation is thought to be more tech-savvy than their parents, but they too seem to lack the ability to tell whether a piece of particular news is fabricated or genuine. The research done by Common Sense Media puts forward the fact that 44% of them have confirmed that they cannot differentiate between fake and genuine news. While it was also found that at least one online news story is being shared every day by 31% of kids aged between 10 to 18 that they found out later was inaccurate or fake [3

The intention of sharing spurious news can vary. Few people share fake news to gain profit, while others share it to defame the opponent, some target a particular community and some try to mislead the readers and so on. During the election season, the primary motive is to mislead readers and to defame the opponents. But there are groups of people who might be sharing it to gain some monetary benefits. This was observed during the 2016 US presidential election that teenagers in the Macedonian town of Veles had gained at least $60,000 in 6 months by spreading fake news [4], [5]. So, the motive would largely vary from person to person. Researchers working in different fields are trying to provide a viable solution to this problem of misinformation and fake news that will eventually help in enhancing the reliability of online information. In this work, we tried to design an efficient framework using machine-learned classifiers to check the credibility status of online news articles. The main highlights of the work are as follows: