

SAKSHI BHALLA

Institute of Communications Research (ICR), University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

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EDUCATION	Ph.D. in Media & Communications University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign Honors: <i>Phi Kappa Phi</i>	2021 onwards Champaign, IL
	Master of Science in Statistics (Applied) University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign	Ongoing Champaign, IL
	Master of Arts in Linguistics Jawaharlal Nehru University JNU Entrance Test: <i>All India Rank 1</i> Thesis: <i>Sociolinguistic Profile of Ahirani</i> (a rare language spoken in Maharashtra, India)	2018-2020 New Delhi, India
	Bachelor of Arts, with Honours in Journalism Lady Shri Ram College for Women, University of Delhi	2012-2015 New Delhi, India
AWARDS/ FELLOWSHIPS	• <i>Illinois Distinguished Fellowship</i>	2021-25
	• <i>SPARK Award</i> , American Political Science Association (Political Communication Section)	2024
	• <i>Local Journalism Researchers Workshop Travel Grant</i> , Duke University	2024
	• <i>National Center for Supercomputing Applications</i> , 750,000 core hours	2023
	• <i>Institute of Communications Research Graduate Travel Grant</i>	2022-2024
	• <i>Prime Minister's Scholarship</i> , Government of India	2012
RESEARCH/ TEACHING EXPERIENCE	Pre-doctoral Fellow University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign	2021 - Present Champaign, IL
	• Teaching Assistant: Intro to popular TV and movies (MACS 100), Intro to Advertising (ADV 150)	
	• Research Assistant: Examined approaches to media literacy used by high-school teachers in the state of Illinois through semi-structured interviews with the IMEDIA research group.	
	Graduate Student Mentor Undergraduate Research Apprenticeship Program (URAP), University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign	2022-23
	• Introduced undergraduate students to research on media and communications, guiding them on projects. Included research mentorship training as well.	
	Student Researcher Open Markets Institute (Center for Liberty and Journalism)	Jun-Aug 2021
	• Worked with the Illinois Project team and collected data for multiple research projects.	
	Research Analyst Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR)	Jan 2021-Apr 2021

- Collection and analysis of online survey data to study online and on-ground protest networks in India. The findings have been published in *Communication, Culture & Critique*.

Research Assistant

2019-20

Indraprastha Institute of Information & Technology

- Studied media parallelism and framing of policy discourse across news publications during the General Election of 2019 in India..

PUBLICATIONS

1. **Bhalla, S.**, R. Ray H. Taneja. (forthcoming). When news is entertainment: Explaining the persistence of misinformation through the information environment. *Information, Communication Society*.
2. **Bhalla, S.**, M. Nelson M. Spikes. (forthcoming). Classroom Contexts: Teachers Talk Teaching Media Literacy. *Journal of Media Literacy Education*.
3. Khan, A., S. Natarajan, **S. Bhalla**. (2021). Climate Strikes in Millennial India: Social Capital and “On-Ground” Networks in Digital-First Movements. *Communication, Culture & Critique*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ccc/tcab035>

IN PROGRESS

Fact checkers fail to overcome partisan divides in two of the world’s largest democracies: An examination of how social media users consume fact checking information in the US and Indian contexts.
R&R; with Harsh Taneja & Rik Ray

Beyond Preferences: Contextual Influences on News Diets in High-Choice Environments

Under review; with Harsh Taneja

News(paper) Flows: A spatial examination of local newspaper circulation

In preparation

CONFERENCE TALKS

Bhalla, S. & Harsh Taneja (2024). Dissecting Selectivity in a fragmented media environment: A novel approach. *APSA Political Communication Preconference*.

Bhalla, S. & Harsh Taneja (2024). Entwined Realms: Media Contexts and Information Choice. *American Political Science Association*. [iPoster]

Bhalla, S., Rik Ray & Harsh Taneja (2024). When News is Entertainment. *International Communication Division: Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC)*, Philadelphia, PA. [Poster]

Bhalla, S. & Harsh Taneja (2024). Beyond Preferences: Contextual Influences on News Diets in High-Choice Environments. *Political Communication Division: Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC)*, Philadelphia, PA. [Poster]

Bhalla, S. & Harsh Taneja (2024). Entwined Realms: Examining Media Contexts and News Choice. *A Computational Turn in Journalism: Opportunities and Challenges in a Cross-Disciplinary Field: ICA 2024 Preconference*, Singapore/Virtual.

Bhalla, S., JungHwan Yang, Harsh Taneja, Pablo Barbera, Andy Guess & Simon Munzert (2023). Measuring the consumption of political news: Patterns of selectivity and avoidance. *News avoidance, resistance, and related audience practices: definitions,*

predictors, and consequences: ICA 2023 Preconference, Toronto, Canada.

Bhalla, S., Michelle Nelson & Michael Spikes (2023). Context Matters: Teachers Talk Media Literacy in the Classroom. *Mass Communication Division: International Communication Association*, Toronto, Canada. [Full paper]

Bhalla, S., Rik Ray & Harsh Taneja (2022). Foregrounding contexts in disinformation studies: A study on the failure of fact-checking in India. *What Comes After Disinformation Studies? International Communication Association Preconference*, Paris, France.

Ray, R., **Sakshi Bhalla** & Harsh Taneja (2022). Fact checkers fail to overcome partisan divides in two of the world's largest democracies. *Political Communication Division: International Communication Association*, Paris, France. [Full Paper]

Bhalla, S. (2021). Foregrounding Space and context: A discursive study of fact-checking in India. *South Asia Communication Association: Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC)*, Virtual.

Ray, R., **Sakshi Bhalla** & Harsh Taneja (2021). Do fact-checkers overcome partisan divides: An investigation of Indian Twitter users. *International Communication Association*, Virtual. [Full paper]

Bhalla, S. (2018). The Global in the Local: Inter-cultural Translation in the Backdrop of Global Advertising. *International Symposium on Linguistics Across Disciplines*, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh, India. [Full paper]

WORKSHOPS **Bhalla, S.** (2024). Diffused News Cultures: Explaining news cultures through spatial relationships. *Local Journalism Researchers Workshop*, Chapel-Hill, NC.

PRESENTATIONS **Bhalla, S.** (2024). Navigating Narratives: Selective Exposure to Indian Journalists. *Social Media and Society in India*, Ann Arbor, MI/Virtual.

Bhalla, S. (2022). How politics and platforms skew media literacy instruction. *Institute of Communications Research at University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign*.

Bhalla, S. (2021). Ahirani: A Sociolinguistic Profile. *Centre for South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies at University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign*.

Bhalla, S. (2021). Foregrounding Space and context: A discursive study of fact-checking in India. *The Great Mediation (University of Chicago)*.

Bhalla, S. (2019). The Technological Mediation of Political Rhetoric on Twitter. *Mediated Campaigns and Unmediated Politics in Millennial India*, Centre de Sciences Humaines, New Delhi.

INVITED TALKS **Bhalla, S.** (2024). News and Information Consumption in the Contemporary Media Environment: Are Fact-Checkers Enough? *Jio Institute Masterclass*. with *Harsh Taneja & Rik Ray*

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS *Member, International Communication Association*
Member, American Political Science Association

Affiliate, Center for Information, Technology, and Public Life (CITAP)

IN THE MEDIA Interview on Centre for Innovation & Sustainability in Local Media. [Q&A with media and politics researcher, Sakshi Bhalla](#)
Also syndicated by [Editor & Publisher](#)

DATA SCIENCE & TECH **Languages:** R (proficient), Python (beginner), HTML/CSS (intermediate)

Programs: UCINET, LaTeX

Statistical Modelling: Statistical inference, causal inference, network analysis and statistical modelling, spatial econometrics, machine learning

SERVICE TO THE DEPARTMENT ICR Graduate Student Conference: **Organizing team & Reviewer** 2023
ICR Graduate Student Representative 2023-24

SERVICE TO THE DISCIPLINE **Reviewing for annual conferences:**
International Communication Association (Political Communication, Journalism Studies, Mass Communication divisions) 2022 onwards
Reviewing for journals: *Journalism Studies, Humanities and Social Sciences Communications - Nature*

OTHER CERTIFICATIONS **Role of Media in Conflict and Peace** 2014
Certification workshop offered by Women in Security, Conflict Management and Peace.

Journalism as a Public Good 2014
Short term certificate course offered by Lady Shri Ram College for Women.

Film Appreciation 2013
Six-week certification offered by Lady Shri Ram College for Women.

NATURAL LANGUAGES English (proficient), Hindi (proficient), Punjabi (intermediate), Ahirani (beginner)

RELEVANT COURSEWORK **University of Illinois**
Theory: *States, Space and Informatization; Public Opinion Public Sphere; Mass Media and the Individual; Public Opinion Public Spheres; Political Campaigns Analysis; History, Politics, and Identity; Communication Public Opinion; Political Communication.*

Method: *Network Analysis; Computational Political Communication; Postcolonial Theory and Methods; Quantitative Research Methods; Statistics and Probability I II; Statistical Modelling I; Spatial Econometrics and Causal Inference; Hierarchical Linear Modelling; Statistical Learning.*

Jawaharlal Nehru University
Sociolinguistics; Semiotics and the Philosophy of Structures; Issues in Linguistic Theory; Forms of Media: Senses, Mediation and Perception; Field Methods; Media, Politics and Violence; Visual Histories; Media in India.

Lady Shri Ram College for Women

Media and Culture Studies; New Media Technologies; Indian State and Democratic Polity; International Politics; Advertising and Public Relations; Human Rights, Gender and Environment; Seminar on Urban Spatiality; Communication Research Methods.

**NON-
ACADEMIC
WORK
EXPERIENCE****Junior Writer – Senior Writer**

Thinkstr Consultancy Pvt. Ltd.

Mar 2016-Jul 2018

Gurgaon, India

- Advertising and strategy for a battery of brands and organizations.
- Longhand Awards shortlist.

Associate

D. E. Shaw & Co.

Jun 2015-Feb 2016

Hyderabad, India

**INTERNSHIPS
AND PROJECTS****Summer Intern**

The Coca-Cola Company (India and Southwest Asia HQ)

Summer 2014

Gurgaon, India

- Worked with the Public Affairs and Communication Department. Assisted with the strategy of the TCCC's Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives and outreach to customers.

Associate Editor

Counter-talk (The annual journal of Department of Journalism,
Lady Shri Ram College)

2012-2014

New Delhi, India