

# SAKSHI BHALLA

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

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EDUCATION	<b>Ph.D. in Media &amp; Communications</b> University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign Honors: <i>Phi Kappa Phi</i>	2021 onwards Champaign, IL
	<b>Master of Arts in Linguistics</b> 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
	<b>Bachelor of Arts, with Honours in Journalism</b> Lady Shri Ram College for Women, University of Delhi	2012-2015 New Delhi, India
AWARDS/ FELLOWSHIPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Illinois Distinguished Fellowship</i></li></ul>	2021-25
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>SPARK Award</i>, American Political Science Association (Political Communication Section)</li><li>• <i>Local Journalism Researchers Workshop Travel Grant</i>, Duke University</li><li>• <i>National Center for Supercomputing Applications</i>, 750,000 core hours</li><li>• <i>Institute of Communications Research Graduate Travel Grant</i></li><li>• <i>Prime Minister's Scholarship</i>, Government of India</li></ul>	2024 2024 2023 2022-2024 2012
RESEARCH/ TEACHING EXPERIENCE	<b>Pre-doctoral Fellow</b> University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign	2021 - Present Champaign, IL
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Teaching Assistant:</b> Intro to popular TV and movies (MACS 100), Intro to Advertising (ADV 150)</li><li>• <b>Research Assistant:</b> Examined approaches to media literacy used by high-school teachers in the state of Illinois through semi-structured interviews with the <a href="#">IMEDIA</a> research group.</li></ul>	
	<b>Graduate Student Mentor</b> Undergraduate Research Apprenticeship Program ( <a href="#">URAP</a> ), University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign	2022-23
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Guided undergraduate students new to research on research projects. Includes research mentorship training as well.</li></ul>	
	<b>Student Researcher</b> Open Markets Institute (Center for Liberty and Journalism)	Jun-Aug 2021
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Worked with the <a href="#">Illinois Project</a> team and collected data for multiple research projects.</li></ul>	
	<b>Research Analyst</b> Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR)	Jan 2021-Apr 2021
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Collection and analysis of online survey data to study online and on-ground protest networks in India. The findings have been published in <a href="#">Communication, Culture &amp; Critique</a>.</li></ul>	

## 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)*

<b>IN THE MEDIA</b>	Interview on Centre for Innovation & Sustainability in Local Media. <a href="#">Q&amp;A with media and politics researcher, Sakshi Bhalla</a> Also syndicated by <a href="#">Editor &amp; Publisher</a>
<b>DATA SCIENCE &amp; TECH</b>	<b>Languages:</b> R (proficient), Python (beginner), HTML/CSS (intermediate)  <b>Programs:</b> UCINET, LaTeX  <b>Statistical Modelling:</b> Statistical inference, causal inference, network analysis and statistical modelling, spatial econometrics, machine learning
<b>SERVICE TO THE DEPARTMENT</b>	ICR Graduate Student Conference: <b>Organizing team &amp; Reviewer</b> 2023 ICR Graduate Student Representative 2023-24
<b>SERVICE TO THE DISCIPLINE</b>	<b>Reviewing for annual conferences:</b> International Communication Association 2022 onwards <b>Reviewing for journals:</b> <i>Journalism Studies, Humanities and Social Sciences Communications - Nature</i>
<b>OTHER CERTIFICATIONS</b>	<b>Role of Media in Conflict and Peace</b> 2014 Certification workshop offered by Women in Security, Conflict Management and Peace.  <b>Journalism as a Public Good</b> 2014 Short term certificate course offered by Lady Shri Ram College for Women.  <b>Film Appreciation</b> 2013 Six-week certification offered by Lady Shri Ram College for Women.
<b>NATURAL LANGUAGES</b>	English (proficient), Hindi (proficient), Punjabi (intermediate), Ahirani (beginner)
<b>RELEVANT COURSEWORK</b>	<b>University of Illinois</b> <b>Theory:</b> <i>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.</i> <b>Method:</b> <i>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.</i>  <b>Jawaharlal Nehru University</b> <i>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.</i>  <b>Lady Shri Ram College for Women</b> <i>Media and Culture Studies; New Media Technologies; Indian State and Democratic Polity; International Politics; Advertising and Public Relations; Human Rights, Gen-</i>

*der and Environment; Seminar on Urban Spatiality; Communication Research Methods.*

**NON-  
ACADEMIC  
WORK  
EXPERIENCE**

**Junior Writer – Senior Writer**

Thinkstr Consultancy Pvt. Ltd.

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

Mar 2016-Jul 2018

Gurgaon, India

**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