



How does the Global South fight information pollution in the age of AI?



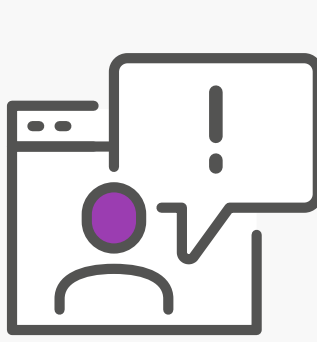
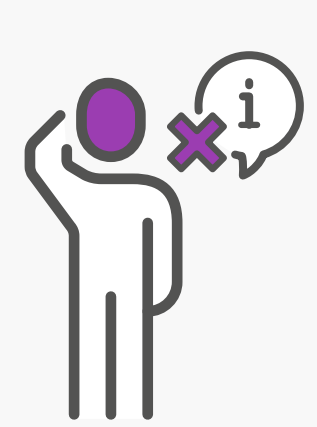


Fueled by generative artificial intelligence (AI), misinformation and disinformation have emerged as severe global risks deepening societal and political divides.

Why does information pollution undermine public institutions?

Misinformation, disinformation, fake news, and hate speech, collectively termed “information pollution,” is a growing yet dangerously under-researched threat in the Global South. We examined its impact on political processes and public health by conducting literature reviews, interviews, and case analysis. India’s case illustrates the urgent need for practical solutions, international cooperation, and stronger regulations to ensure information integrity.

Findings show that:

- 1  **Propaganda and polarisation** motivated by political gain are among the primary drivers of **information pollution in politics.** Conversely, there was no evidence of malicious intent in health.
- 2  **AI-generated misinformation** poses a significant challenge that **remains unregulated,** amplifying the scale and reach of false information through tools like deepfakes.
- 3  **Global South governments** and institutions are ill-equipped to safeguard information integrity in the face of rapidly evolving technologies, **leading to an urgent need for stronger policies and technological cooperation.**
- 4  **Information pollution** disproportionately **affects minorities, migrants, and low-literacy communities,** making them more vulnerable to manipulation.

To foster global information integrity, stakeholders must:

- **Promote media literacy.** Governments must implement educational strategies to enhance public awareness of the dangers of information pollution and promote the ethical use of online content, particularly focusing on marginalised groups.
- **Establish a high-level Global South Consortium (GSC).** There is a need for funding, research and advocacy to map the Global South’s information ecosystem and strengthen the ability of governments to counter information pollution.
- **Implement accountability mechanisms for AI-driven content.** Tech companies and platforms must be made responsible for preventing the spread of misinformation.
- **Strengthen fact-checking mechanisms.** Expanded collaborations between fact-checkers, journalists, and tech platforms can help identify and counter false information swiftly.

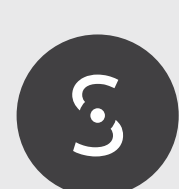
Digital **disinformation campaigns** target specific groups, such as **youth,** to manipulate their **behaviour, beliefs and voting preferences.**



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