Fact Checking In The Days Of COVID-19 Infodemic

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Its not JUST Information, it could be...

- **Misinformation**- Information that is false but not created with the intention of causing harm

- **Disinformation**- Information that is false and deliberately created to harm a person, social group, organisation or country

- **Mal-information**- Information that is based on reality, used to inflict harm on a person, social group, organisation or country

Recent COVID-19 Fakes….

- COVID-19 has become airborne
- COVID-19 is spreading through pet animals
- COVID-19 can spread through poultry products
- COVID-19 vaccine is ready!
- Traditional herbs/drinks can "CURE" COVID-19
- COVID-19 can spread through Chinese goods
- COVID-19 is a bio-weapon, conspiracy!

Got this BREAKING NEWS…Now What?

- Thumb Rule- IF IT IS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE, THEN IT COULD BE TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE!

- Do I really need to react/respond/forward?

- Are there any other sources confirming this?

- But it is renowned news service! Really? Have you checked original page? Their social media accounts? Also, refer to previous point

- Its from my BFF/Parents/Relatives!!! Follow all above points!

Why we TRUST fakes?

- It is common tendency to believe/trust. Also, it is sort of knee-jerk reaction.
- The information/stories/messages are spicy and "interesting" ones, grabbing attention
- They confirm our believes/biases
- They come from peer groups/echo chambers
- They are presented in such a manner that only trained person could decipher

Losses and Damages Caused by Fakes in Current COVID-19 Infodemic

- Rumor about spread of COVID-19 through chicken caused statewide disruption in poultry business

- Fake news about suspected COVID-19 patient in an area/society caused panic

- Blind trust in so called COVID-19 preventive measures made people complacent in some cases

- Mal/Dis-info on lockdown caused people falling into panic-purchase trap.

How to Check Fake and Fact-1

- If the information is without source, check with reliable news agencies, authorities
- Don't over rely on single source
- Be extra careful of forgery, photoshoped images/web-pages
- Check use of language, words, terms
- Try to reverse search
- Be aware of fact finding tools, websites

How to Check Fake and Fact-2

- World Health Organization- https://www.who.int/

- Center for Disease Control- https://www.cdc.gov/

- COVID-19 related fact check resource-

- https://www.boomlive.in/

- International News Agencies

- Google fact check tools, IFCN country specific fact check groups

UNESCO-MIL

- Above all we need media and information literacy. Fact checking is part of the same
- We need to train ourselves and people around us about how to consume mass media
- UNESCO has launched GAPMIL (Global Alliance for Partnerships on Media and Information Literacy). Various resources are available on it's website

THANK YOU!