



## **Role of Women Journalists in Countering Misinformation & Disinformation in the Indo-Pacific Region**

*Workshop for mid-career women journalists and women media professionals from the U.S., India, and the Indo-Pacific Region.*

### **BACKGROUND OF THE WORKSHOP**

**Date:** August 11-12, 2022

**Venue:** Lincoln Room, American Center, 38A, J L Nehru Road, Kolkata 700071, India

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### **Objective**

The workshop is aimed at promoting responsible journalism among women media-practitioners from the Indo-Pacific region, while also training them on several aspects of information asymmetry, including countering disinformation, misinformation, and mal-information – all of which pose a significant threat to their lives, careers as well as the overall society

Also, the workshop has a broader objective of ensuring peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region by developing a strong collaborative network of women journalists, equipped with the tools and techniques to counter “infodemic” and reinforce positive counter-narratives across borders to create stronger democracies.

### **Brief note**

The ‘Digital Age’ has enabled access to diverse sources of knowledge at a mouse click. However, it has also created unprecedented challenges and structural changes in the news industry. In the absence of any gatekeeping entity, journalists and media educators everywhere are grappling with a deluge of speculative and sensational content in news making, which is further amplified by echo chambers and trust networks. In such a situation, verification/ fact-checking platforms are the need of the hour in order to navigate the distorted and fear-mongering information circulating on traditional media, and social media platforms.

In this context, this workshop aims to train media practitioners and journalists to discern and respond to deceptive, biased or false news and to combat disinformation across borders. They will be able to share insights and learn from experts about a variety of methods to counter all forms misinformation and encourage professional and responsible journalism in the Indo-Pacific region. Additionally, the workshop will also feature panel discussions to highlight the serious consequences of misinformation and disinformation for modern day warfare, geopolitical stability and democratic processes.

## AGENDA

### DAY I

Time	Session Description	Speakers
9:00 am - 9:30 am	<b>Registration &amp; Networking with Tea/ Coffee</b>	
9:30 am - 10:30 am	<p><b>Opening Session- Countering Information Disorder in the Present Era</b></p> <p>The session will set the tone of the two-day workshop, by highlighting the prevalence and the adverse impacts of information disorder, especially on women journalists in the Indo-Pacific region. It will also establish the need for capacity building workshops in the era of digital news dissemination and consumption, all the while highlighting the importance of responsible journalism and its role in countering mis/dis-information.</p>	<p><b>Moderator:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Adrian Pratt</b>, Director, American Center Kolkata, and the Public Affairs Officer (PAO), U.S. Consulate General in Kolkata</li> </ul> <p><i>Briefing about the Project:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Bipul Chatterjee</b>, Executive Director, CUTS International</li> </ul> <p><i>Guest of Honour:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Melinda Pavek</b>, Consul General, US Consulate, Kolkata</li> </ul> <p><i>Setting the Context:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Susan Kreifels</b>, Media Programs Manager, EWC Representative</li> <li>• <b>Nilova Roy Chaudhary</b>, General Secretary, South Asian Women in Media (SAWM) India</li> </ul> <p><i>Screening of two short films on COVID &amp; misinformation</i></p>
10:30 am - 12:30 pm	<p><b>Session on “News literacy in the Age of Misinformation”</b></p> <p>This session looks at media literacy as a core competency for everyone but more so for journalists. It will explore the role of journalists in the age of misinformation/disinformation.</p>	<p><b>Resource Person-</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Dilrukshi Handunnetti</b>, Executive Director of the Centre for Investigative Reporting, Sri Lanka</li> </ul>
12:30 pm - 2.00 pm	<p><b>Session on “Press Unmute: Combating Workplace Harassment and Online Trolling for Women Journalists”</b></p> <p>Journalists are often targeted through online trolling, which can have a</p>	<p><b>Resource Person-</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Swati Bhattacharjee</b>, President, South Asian Women in Media (SAWM) &amp; Senior</li> </ul>

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	<p>detering effect on their freedom of speech and their mental wellbeing. Hence this session will focus on strategies that can help them protect themselves in the virtual world.</p> <p>Additionally, the session will also apprise them on strategies to combat workplace harassment within and outside of office space, by colleagues and others so that they are safe online as well as offline.</p>	<p>Assistant Editor, Ananda Bazar Patrika</p>
2.00 pm - 3:00 pm	<b>Lunch Break</b>	
3:00 pm - 4:15 pm	<p><b>Panel Discussion I – Disinformation and Geopolitical Stability in the Indo-Pacific Region</b></p> <p>Disinformation in the context of geopolitical stability concerns the deliberate spread of false or unbalanced information by foreign states (or relevant non-state actors) with the primary objective to confuse and mislead, to sow disagreement and discord among parts of the population in other countries.</p> <p>While disinformation has been an age-old aspect of foreign policy and warfare. But it is different today. It is technology, more than intent or content that makes disinformation today rather unlike earlier forms of international information manipulation.</p> <p>Given this context, this session will see the panel deliberate on the repercussions of dis/misinformation on international politics and security.</p>	<p><b>Moderator:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Namrata Sharma</b>, Centre for Investigative Journalism, Nepal</li> </ul> <p><b>In Conversation With:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Suhasini Haidar, Diplomatic Editor, The Hindu</li> <li>2. Mrinal Chatterjee, Regional director, Indian Institute of Mass Communication, Odisha</li> <li>3. Priyadarshini Sen, Freelance Journalist</li> <li>4. Monideepa Banerjee, Former Executive Editor, NDTV</li> </ol> <p><b>Floor Discussion, Q&amp;A</b></p>
4:15 pm - 6:00 pm	<p><b>Session on “Be right, not First. Navigating the Journalism Industry as a Woman”</b></p> <p>Women journalists find themselves in the spotlight and under intense criticism while simply trying to do their jobs. The fact-checking world — and its focus on disinformation and bad actors — brings deeper scrutiny, and even danger. In this session you will learn tools that can</p>	<p><b>Resource person-</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Brittani Kollar</b>, International Training Manager, MediaWise - Poynter Institute, U.S.A.</li> </ul>

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	<p>help you navigate the dynamic world of journalism, fact-checking and media literacy. These pillars are much more intertwined than many think. These tips and techniques in this session will ensure your accuracy when reporting, shifting the spotlight from you as a woman to your work. We will discuss fact-checking social media, the importance of media literacy for you and your audience, and ultimately what it means to be a woman journalist in the current global landscape.</p>	
6:00 pm Onwards	<b>High Tea followed by Networking Dinner</b>	

DAY 2

Time	Session Description	Speakers
9:30 am - 10:30 am	<p><b>Session on “Visual tools for fighting Misinformation &amp; Disinformation”</b></p> <p>This session will introduce how journalists can use visual tools to aid in the pursuit of truth telling. The session will train them to use both traditional and 360 cameras to tell stories in a way that combats mis/disinformation. Additionally, participants will be trained to use a variety of basic online tools that can aid in fact checking and ensuring that they are getting the story right.</p>	<p><b>Resource person-</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Brooke Van Dam, Director &amp; Steve Johnson, Founder, SeeBoundless, USA</b></li> </ul>
10:30 am -12:00 pm	<p><b>Session on “Photojournalism and the Manufactured Bias”</b></p> <p>Photojournalism can be of various types like spot news, features, illustration, portrait/personality, pictorial etc. Each comes with their own benefits, which will be discussed in this session. However, photojournalism can often become a tool for spreading misinformation, through malpractices like mislabelling, forgery, selection bias etc. The session will apprise the participants on such pitfalls, and also build their capacity to identify and deal with such malpractices.</p>	<p><b>Resource Person -</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Smita Sharma, Photojournalist and TED Fellow</b></li> </ul>
12:00 pm – 1:30 pm	<p><b>Session on “Fact-Checking and Cyber Security for Journalists”</b></p> <p>This hands-on session will teach the basics of fact-checking and cyber security to the participants- how they can use tools available online for fact-checking viral images and videos, debunk claims beyond the scope of those tools along with some fact-checking tips and resources.</p>	<p><b>Resource Person-</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Divya Chandra, Fact-Checker, Boom Live</b></li> </ul>
1:30 pm – 2:30 pm	<b>Lunch</b>	
2:30 pm-3:30 pm	<p><b>Panel Discussion II - Challenges to Network Building and Cross-Border Information Sharing among Journalists</b></p> <p>Networking is crucial when it comes to cross-border information sharing.</p>	<p><b>Moderator:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Vasanthi Hariprakash, Founder-Editor, Pickle Jar</b></li> </ul> <p><b>In Conversation With:</b></p>

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	<p>The session will discuss the barriers to cross-border collaboration between journalists, stressing on the need to ensure a free flow of information across borders in the context of a globalised world. A sustainable framework to facilitate cross-border collaboration among the participants will also be deliberated upon by the panellists.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bharat Nayak, Founding Editor, The Logical Indian</li> <li>2. Joydeep Dasgupta, Fact Check Trainer, News Sense</li> <li>3. Rogena Akter, Special Correspondent, Prothom-Alo</li> </ol> <p><b>Floor Discussion, Q&amp;A</b></p>
3:30 pm- 4:15 pm	<p><b>Group Activity on Learning from the Workshop and Strategy Building</b></p>	<p><b>Moderators –</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Arnab Ganguly</b>, Associate Director, CUTS International &amp;</li> <li>• <b>Sameek Ghosh</b>, Head of Communications and Media, Public Diplomacy Section, U.S. Consulate General Kolkata</li> </ul>
4:15 pm- 4:45 pm	<p><b>Vote of Thanks and Way Forward</b></p> <p>The concluding session will summarise the key points of discussion from the training workshop. The same shall be used to frame and discuss the way forward for raising awareness and building capacity of women journalists from participating countries.</p> <p>This shall also include encouraging participants to create a ripple effect in their respective countries, by collaborating among themselves to develop cross-border stories. Lastly, a vote of thanks would be delivered.</p>	<p><b>Summarising the Sessions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Sucharita Bhattacharjee</b>, Policy Analyst and Deputy Head, CUTS Calcutta Resource Centre</li> </ul> <p><b>Way Forward &amp; Vote of Thanks:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Adrian Pratt</b>, Director, American Center Kolkata, and the Public Affairs Officer (PAO), U.S. Consulate General in Kolkata</li> <li>• <b>Mr Arnab Ganguly</b>, Associate Director, CUTS International</li> </ul>