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A YouTube spokesperson told MediaNama, “We **set** and **publicly** share information about our Community Guidelines and we consistently and impartially enforce those guidelines to protect our users’ freedom of speech while providing clear guidance on content that is not allowed on the platform. We’ve developed robust **Community Guidelines**, and enforce these policies effectively. We’ve also taken **a number of steps** to limit the spread of misinformation on our platform.”

Earlier, 22 January: The Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY) has sent notices to Google and Facebook to take down “false and malicious” videos and misinformation about the food safety and quality in India’, **reports the Economic Times**.

- The notices include requests for content take down and blocking of accounts uploading these videos, ET’s sources told it.
- The notices contain examples of plastic eggs, plastic rice and melamine in milk, and one particular video where it shows that FSSAI allowed melamine in milk, which was alarming to FSSAI.
- It also wants the platforms to “institute a system” in order to prevent the uploading of such content.
- The FSSAI has also suggested that these companies have a nodal officer which the organisation can contact directly “for quick remedial action.”

The Ministry, the report says, is concerned with “fake information” being responsible for destroying people’s faith in Indian food safety organisations, after FSSAI CEO Pawan Kumar Agarwal approached the IT Ministry.

We have reached out to both companies and will update this when we hear from them.

Facebook itself has been taking measures to “fight” fake news and information:

- In November, it **partnered** with news agency Agence France-Presse (AFP) to curb the spread of fake news including photos and videos on its platform.
- In September, it said it would **screen** photos and videos for fake news across 17 countries through its 27 independent third-party partners.
- In April, Facebook **announced** a partnership with Mumbai-based fact-checking website BOOM.
- Facebook **rolled out a feature** that provided more information on both publishers and articles that users saw in their News Feeds. This feature, however, was only available to users in the US.

Recent takedowns of fake news and misinformation

- Earlier this week, ShareChat **banned** 50,000 profiles to keep pornographic, violent and fake content off of its platform.
- Last month, Facebook and Twitter **removed** a combined 30 accounts spreading misinformation in Bangladesh, 10 days before the country went to polls.

Funding into the spread of fake information

In November, WhatsApp **started funding** research from 11 countries including India, into fake news on the heels of receiving global backlash for being a catalyst towards the spread of fake news and misinformation. In August, WhatsApp **partnered** with the Digital Empowerment Foundation to hold workshops on fake news across the country.

Changes to Safe Harbour

Note that the government is looking to **amend the IT Rules governing Section 79**, which cover intermediary liability, of the Information Technology Act. The section provides safe harbor to platforms including all payments providers, e-commerce marketplaces, ISPs, content or messaging services. Proposed amendments to the IT Rules would mean that intermediaries may be held more liable for the actions/behavior of their users.