**METHODOLOGY FOR FACT CHECKING**

**Alt News**

**1. Selecting a claim to debunk**

Alt News continuously monitors social media and mainstream media for incorrect and/or dubious information. Our sources for topics include:

1. Speeches and tweets of politicians and officials in positions of authority
2. Claims made by political parties and their leaders via their social media pages.
3. Provocative hashtags promoted by media to influence public opinion in favor of a political party or leader.
4. Social media suspect list. For social media, we have compiled a comprehensive list of pages, groups, accounts and websites which we routinely check for false information. We monitor them closely on a real-time basis.
5. Messages from social media users on Facebook and Twitter bringing claims to our attention for fact-checking.

Given the volume of fake claims that are circulating on any given day, Alt News makes a selection of which ones to debunk. The following parameters are considered for selection of topics we write on:

1. How viral is the claim (extent, reach and spread)
2. Source of the claim (who shared it? A prominent politician? A verified account?)
3. Nature of the claim (Is it provocative? Can it lead to violence or physical harm to individuals?)

**2. Researching the claim**

Once a suspicious claim has been selected for a fact check, Alt News engages in systematic research to verify it. To debunk any fake claim, Alt News may use one or more of the below methodologies:

1. Using internet tools like Google Reverse Image search to determine the origin of viral photographs or videos and also to verify if the same image or video has been used earlier in similar or different contexts. In order to use Google Reverse Image search for videos, we break the video into individual frames and also use publicly available tools such as [InVid](https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/fake-video-news-debunker/mhccpoafgdgbhnjfhkcmgknndkeenfhe?hl=en) for the same.
2. Internet search using various Search filters (date, time etc.) to arrive at the origin of posts and messages circulating on the internet.
3. Establishing contact with the local authorities or police in case of viral rumours, particularly the communally sensitive ones to verify the truth behind them.
4. Reviewing original video or transcript to verify if the statements attributed to public figures have been clipped to distort the message.
5. Referring to primary data or official data source/s to verify exaggerated claims about achievements.
6. Contacting the person to whom a seemingly fake claim is attributed.
7. Consulting reputed subject matter experts where necessary.

**3. Evaluating the claim**

Using a variety of tools and methods described above, Alt News evaluates the veracity of a claim and arrives at a conclusion. Where relevant, more than one tool is used to conclusively debunk the fake claim.

**4. Writing the fact-check**

Once the claim has been selected, researched and evaluated, Alt News puts out the information in public domain through articles that are detailed yet reader friendly. We strive to establish the context in which the particular claim was made, focus on simplicity of language, and provide links that debunk the claim so that readers can verify the information for themselves. If the information is inadequate or out of bounds, we refrain from passing conclusive judgment.

**5, Updating the articles**

Information is often dynamic, as a result of which stories have to be constantly updated. Alt News keeps an eye out for relevant news and updates its articles so as to provide readers with the latest and the most accurate information. In the event of an error on our part, we are prompt in acknowledging and correcting it.

**BOOM LIVE**

### **Methodology:**

**1.    Select a claim to fact check:**

 We actively monitor news while keeping an eye on social media, especially public statements of politicians and people in position of authority. We also have a WhatsApp hotline number (**7700906111)**where readers can send us messages that are viral and need to be fact checked. In addition we also get tagged on Twitter and Facebook by our readers to fact check claims. The claim is selected based on a number of factors for example, is it newsworthy? Does it impact a large number of people? Is the content provocative or sensitive and could potentially cause harm if left unchecked?

**2. Trace the source of the claim:**

 Once we have zeroed in on a claim to fact check, we then look for where the claim originated. Often the source is a crucial starting point in establishing whether a claim is trustworthy or not. For example in case of news stories, we first determine if it is from a reliable site. In case of pictures, we use Google’s Reverse Image Search to decipher whether the image is old or if it has been manipulated in any way or used out of context. In case of single source claims and eye-witness accounts we try to determine if the person making the claim could have access to such information.

**3. Contact the source:**

 In case of claims involving public figures, we reach out to the person concerned or their office to understand their side of the story. We also look for video evidence or publically available transcripts to ascertain what exactly was said and in what context. In case of reports or data points, we contact organizations that have published the reports to understand the context and disclaimers if any.

**4. Look for evidence and data to support or knock down a claim:**

We look for all publically available resources on the topic including sifting through material previously written on the subject. We search for data within government databases, global think tanks, research firms and other trustworthy sources that could support or debunk a claim. In case we are unable to find data we openly say so.

**5.    Speak to experts/people in the know:**

BOOM does not claim to have expertise on every topic under the sun. More often than not we rely on the knowledge of experts in a particular field. We try and avoid source based stories as far as possible and only quote those who are willing to speak on record.

**6.    Write a fact check:**

We write our stories based on the steps detailed above. We provide links to the sources referred to in our stories. In instances where we are unable to prove or disprove a claim we explicitly say so and list all the steps we have followed.

**7.    We correct mistakes promptly and openly**

 BOOM is committed to debunking fake news on a real-time basis. We acknowledge that sometimes we might get it wrong. When we do go wrong, we do not shy away from our mistakes but correct our story promptly and inform our readers about the correction. Stories that have been corrected contain an advisory. BOOM is active on social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook. We are open to constructive feedback and criticism.