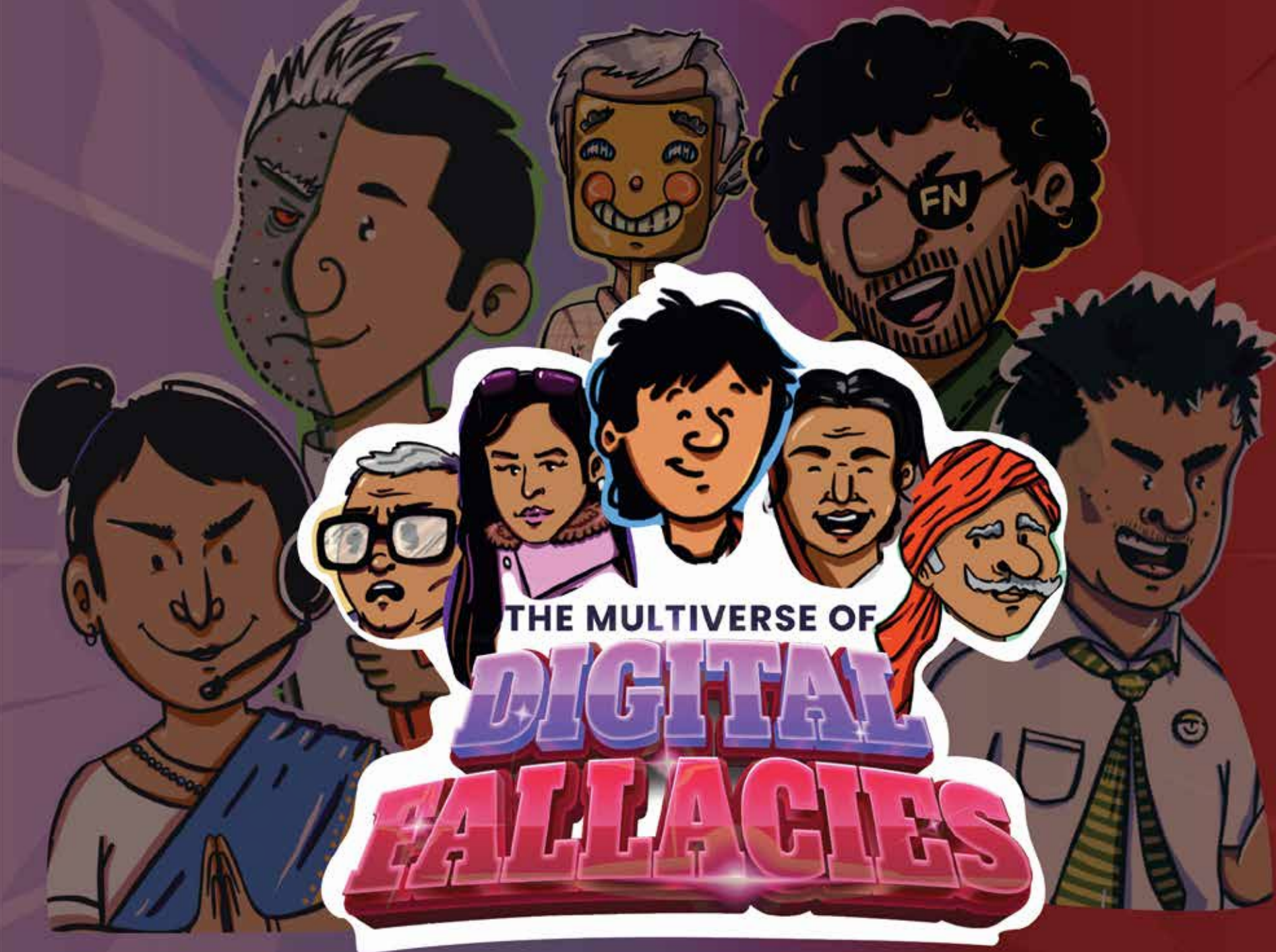




Adopted the Heroes and Villains Concept From





FAKE NEWS BUSTER

UTHA LE RE BABA,
MISINFORMATION KO UTHA LE



Detects and debunks
false or misleading
information online.

Promotes critical thinking
and responsible sharing
across digital platforms.

Educates others on how to
verify sources and spot
misinformation.

VS

Demonstrates how digital
misinformation can
destabilise trust in media.

Symbolises the deliberate
spreaders of false information
and propaganda.

3. Encourages audiences to
fact-check before forwarding
or believing any content.

FAKE NEWS DAKAIT

FAKE NEWS TEEN AUR AADMI
140 CRORE. BADI NAINSAAFI HAI



DIGITAL DIDI



KAUN HAI JISNE DIGITAL LITERACY
KE BAARE MEI NAI SOCHAP WHO ARE THEY?

Represents awareness and empowerment — she educates others on safe and responsible internet use.

Symbolises women leading the way in closing the gender digital divide.

Acts as a mentor figure who stands up against online bullying and misinformation.

VS

Highlights the psychological harm caused by unchecked online behaviour.

Embodies harassment, trolling, and emotional manipulation on the internet.

Serves as a reminder of the importance of empathy and online accountability.

ONLINE BULLY



MEIN APNA FAVORITE HOONI

CRITICAL THINKING DADA

DON'T UNDERESTIMATE
THE POWER OF THE COMMON MAN!



Embodies logic and reason, promoting evidence-based decision-making online.

Encourages users to verify sources and question biases in digital content.

Represents the antidote to emotional or impulsive sharing of misinformation.

VS

Represents how misinformation can be disguised under trust and familiarity

Symbolises online deceit — people who steal information or spread falsehoods.

Acts as a cautionary example of what happens when digital ethics are ignored.

CHOR DIDI

AAYI HUN KUCH
TOH LEKE JAUNGII!



DIGI LITERACY CHACHI

MERE KARAN
DIGITAL LITERACY
ARTUN AAGE AUR
SEEKH KE JAEGE



Serves as the community teacher who simplifies technology for everyone.

Promotes digital hygiene and awareness of cyber safety tools.

Symbolises inclusivity in digital learning, especially for rural and older women.

VS

A key "villain" who highlights why digital literacy is vital for financial and personal safety.

Represents the dangers of online fraud and cybercrime.

Exploits digital naïveté to manipulate and scam users, showing the need for vigilance.

SCAMMER CHACHA



AUT MERE PAAS PAISA HAI. BANGLA HAI.
GAADI HAI. TUMHARE PAAS KYA HAI?

ACCESS STARBOY



CHOTE CHOTE SHEHRON MEI BHI
DIGITAL BAATEIN HOTI REHTI HAI

Represents digital inclusion
and equitable access to
technology for all.

Believes the internet should
be a tool for opportunity,
not exclusion.

Embodies youth-led digital
empowerment and advocacy
for connectivity rights.

VS

Represents law, vigilance, and
accountability in online spaces.

Acts as the cyber protector —
guiding victims on how to
report and respond to crimes.

Helps restore faith in digital
systems by teaching practical
safety responses.

SHIKARI BABU



PICTURE ABHI BAAKI HAI MERE DOST

900 million
Internet users

85% house-
holds have one
smartphones

Indian's receive
minimum **3 SPAM**
CALLS a day

MISINFORMATION
was declared an
epidemic in India

Misinformation &
scams is a problem
of **1 TRILLION**

**At Digital Empowerment Foundation,
we fight Digital Wrongs everyday!**



About MIL@@P

MILaap: Media Information Literacy Awareness and Action Program is Digital Empowerment Foundation's flagship initiative aimed at tackling the growing challenges of misinformation and digital exclusion, particularly at the grassroots level in India. In a rapidly digitising country, where millions are coming online for the first time, the ability to critically engage with media is no longer optional—it's essential. MILaap equips individuals with the skills to interpret and evaluate media and information content, empowering them to become informed users and responsible creators of digital content.



One of the core challenges MILaap addresses is the gender digital divide, which continues to marginalise women and girls across India. Despite the increasing penetration of smartphones and internet access, women in South Asia are still 31% less likely than men to use mobile internet. In India specifically, boys are 1.5 times more likely to own a mobile phone and 1.8 times more likely to own a smartphone than girls. As of early 2024, only 31.4% of India's social media users are women. This gap is not just about access to technology—it translates into reduced access to education, economic opportunities, and participation in civic discourse, further deepening existing social inequalities.



Communities at the margins—women, rural populations, and those with limited access to formal education—are the most vulnerable to these digital threats. Without the skills to verify information or the confidence to participate in digital spaces, these groups are further marginalised, creating a dangerous cycle of exclusion and misinformation.

This is where MILaap steps in. Through community-led training sessions in local languages, the project fosters awareness around digital rights, online safety, media ethics, and critical thinking. Special focus is given to women and young people, who are often excluded from digital discourse. The initiative also leverages tools like the Humara MIL Kit for the Multiverse of Digital Fallacies—an interactive learning toolkit designed to demystify digital fallacies and promote responsible content creation.



KNOWLEDGE SPHERES



**Fact-checking
and Verification**



**Media and
Information
Literacy Skills**



**Development of
Critical Thinking**



**Ethical Use of
Digital Tools**



**Community
Engagement &
Digital Empowerment**



**Digital Hygiene
and Cybersecurity
Awareness**



**Crisis Response
and Education**



**Collaboration with
Local Institutions**

Accessible Learning

Ensure that the toolkit is accessible to diverse audiences. This makes information inclusive and accessible to a broader range of people

Empowerment

Such a toolkit empowers marginalised communities with digital literacy skills, helping them navigate the online world confidently and avoid misinformation, scams, and cyberbullying.

Engagement through Gamification

Interactive games and role-play activities can make learning more engaging and enjoyable. This approach is particularly effective for marginalised communities who may find traditional educational methods less appealing or intimidating.

Critical Thinking

The comprehensive modules on critical digital literacy encourage individuals to think critically about the information they encounter online. They can learn how to verify sources, detect biases, and for making informed decisions.

Online Safety

Staying safe online is paramount, especially for vulnerable populations. The toolkit can provide practical guidance on setting strong passwords, recognising online threats and protecting personal information. It can also teach them how to report online harassment or abuse.

Storytelling and Representation

The comic book with unique characters can facilitate storytelling and story sharing, allowing community members to share their experiences and perspectives. Representation in media is essential, and having relatable characters can help build a sense of belonging and empowerment.

Community Building

The toolkit can be used in community workshops or training sessions, fostering a sense of solidarity and shared learning among community members. This can lead to the formation of support networks and a stronger community bond.



Roleplay Masks



MIL Snakes and Ladder Game



Fake or Not Cue Cards



Stickers



4 Comprehensive Modules



Comic Book with Case Studies on Digital Heroes vs Digital Villains



Methodology

Workshops with Community Members





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Workshops with Students and Young Leaders





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Training Civil Society Organisations





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Representing MIL in International Forums



In Finance Forum, Riyadh



MIL session in J



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RightsCon, Taipei



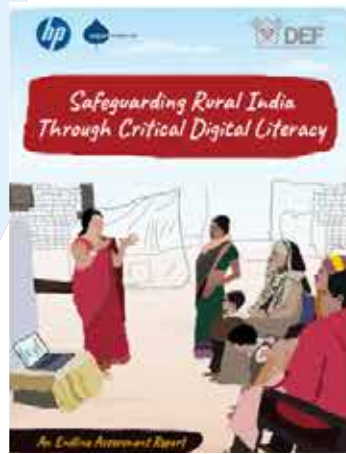
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GSIC Event, South Korea



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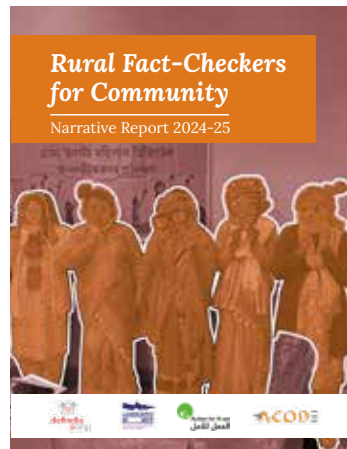
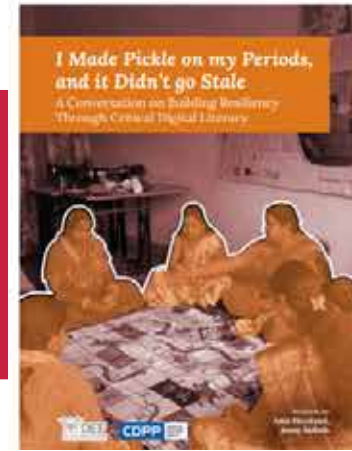


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Publications



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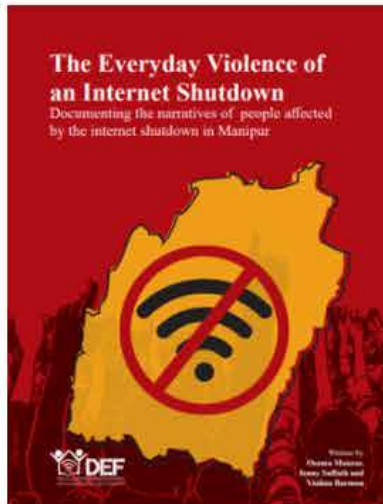


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Community Assessment

on Internet Shutdowns in India



@SFLC Roundtable Workshop

**Suggestions, Inputs & Recommendations
by DEF & CSDD**

July 2022



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Scan to read



Creating a cadre of rural fact-checkers

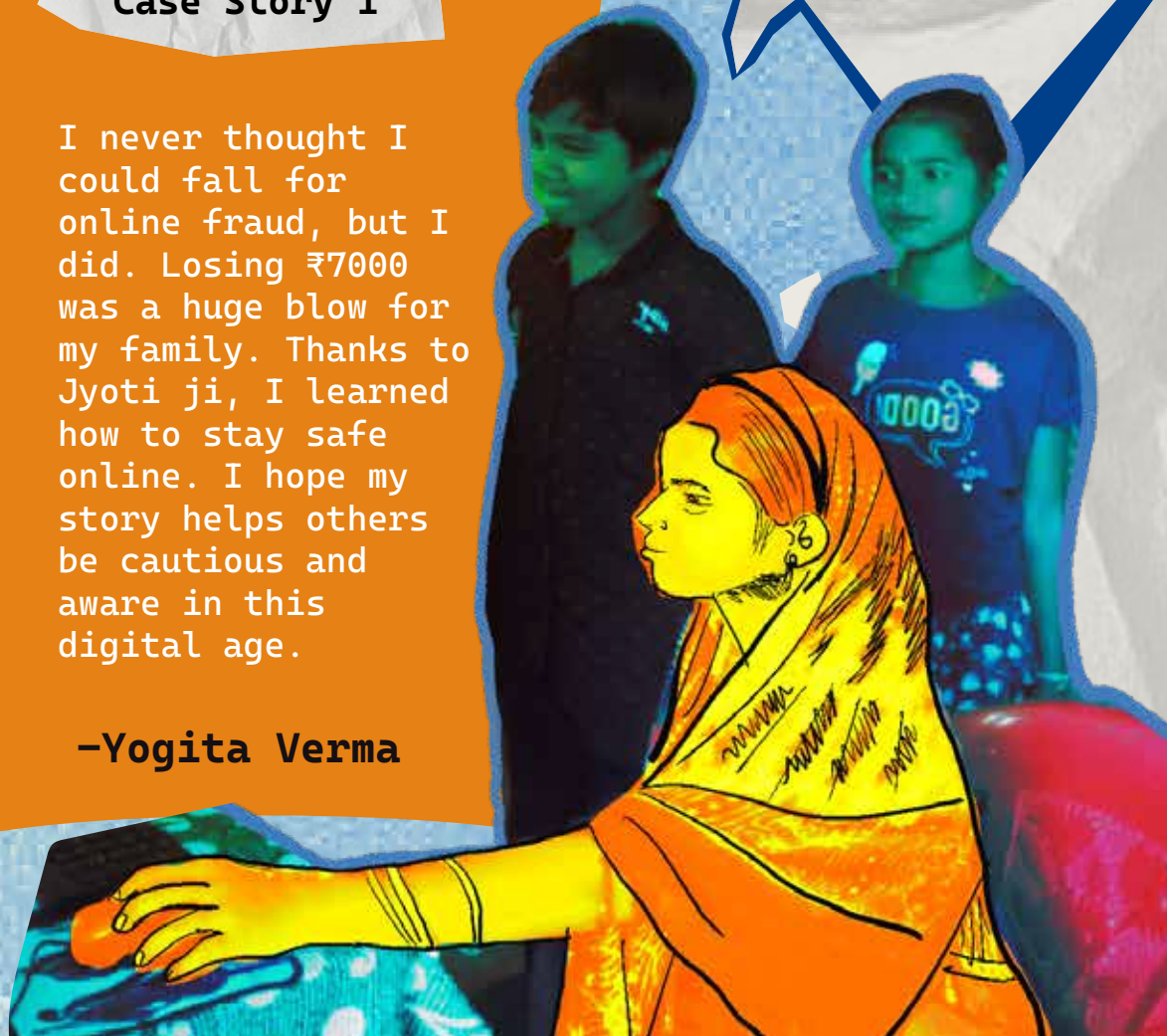
Our information entrepreneurs and female fact-checkers, and their experiences with misinformation/disinformation and digital wrongs from across rural India.



Case Story 1

I never thought I could fall for online fraud, but I did. Losing ₹7000 was a huge blow for my family. Thanks to Jyoti ji, I learned how to stay safe online. I hope my story helps others be cautious and aware in this digital age.

-Yogita Verma



I received a call one day claiming to be from the Gauthan Yojana. The caller said ₹25,000 had been transferred to my account and asked me to return the money by first depositing ₹1,000, followed by more installments. Trusting them, I transferred ₹7,000 before realizing it was a scam.

As someone managing a household with limited income, this loss was devastating. I was hesitant to share my story, fearing judgment. It was only when Jyoti ji, our community's SoochnaPreneur, stepped in that I learned about online fraud and how to protect myself during digital transactions.

This experience taught me the importance of staying informed and cautious online. I share my story so others don't face what I did. If you're using digital payment platforms, always double-check messages, verify callers, and never share personal details or transfer money without confirmation. Together, we can build a safer digital community.



Case Story 2

I was a victim of financial fraud. I got a call from someone assuring me that I have won money and took advantage of my economic status. I was too naive and clicked on the link without thinking, like this I lost the little amount I had in my bank account.

—Rameshwari Verma

Rameshwari Verma was tricked by a fraudster who claimed they had deposited ₹25,000 into her account. When the money didn't show up, the scammer convinced her to transfer ₹7,000. Thankfully, SoochnaPreneur Anju Sen intervened, explained the scam, and helped Rameshwari report it on the cybercrime portal.

This incident highlights the growing threat of social engineering fraud, where scammers manipulate victims through trust and confusion. Research shows that raising awareness and staying cautious is key to preventing such scams. Always verify unknown calls and avoid transferring money without confirmation.





Case Story 3

The way that social media is being used today, is for good but also for bad, people have been using social media to spread malinformation and harmful content, especially with AI now helping in generating false images and no knowledge in the minds of citizen of understanding what image is authentic.

—Premlata Verma



I once faced a huge challenge when my social media account was hacked and used to spread false information about me. Friends and family started looking at me in a negative light, and my image was tarnished. I was mentally disturbed for a long time.

Fortunately, I reached out to Kaushal ji from the Digital Empowerment Foundation, who helped me recover my account and delete the hacked ID after a long effort.

This experience taught me the importance of using social media carefully. I now advise others to join platforms cautiously, connect with the right people, and stay away from those with negative intentions. Your online presence should always reflect the real you.



Case Story 4

As a labourer, the financial loss that I bore was tremendous, I trusted the message I saw only because it came from a known number and wanted to help. This has happened to other people I know as well, you think that things like this will never happen to you till it does and then you can only regret. It's high time we learn about digital rights and wrongs.

—Mohan Singh



On May 19, 2024, Mohan Singh received a call claiming ₹50,000 had been sent to his account by mistake. Trusting the caller, Mohan transferred ₹43,788 to an account provided, only to discover later that he had been duped through fake messages.

The money, saved through labor for buying roofing materials, was gone. The emotional and financial toll that it took on the family was debilitating, especially because Mohan wanted to start his own small business. His community members also mocked him for his naivete.

However, Rajpal, a rural fact-checker stepped in. He educated the community about cyber fraud and stressed the importance of critical digital literacy—verifying information, recognising scams, and reporting incidents.

Mohan's experience serves as a reminder that digital awareness is essential in today's connected world. Empowering rural communities with knowledge can prevent such incidents and protect livelihoods.



Case Story 5

I was awarded with a scholarship and a government entitlement scheme that would support me financially in buying a bike. The amount never got deposited to my account. On inspection, we realised that my bank account number had been changed in the records and someone else took that money. This really affected my education and mobility and made me even more vulnerable.

—Muskan Sahariya



Mahendra Sahariya, a daily wage laborer, approached the Community Information Resource Center in Bhulay village run by Bankesh Dhakad for help. His daughter, Muskan, had been awarded a scholarship and bicycle by the government, but the funds never reached her account. Struggling with the lack of support, Mahendra turned to Bankesh, who took immediate action. After thorough investigation, including visits to Muskan's school and tracing the funds, it was discovered that the scholarship amount had been transferred to an unknown account. Bankesh and Mahendra filed complaints with the Collector and SP, leading to a promise of ₹9,000 compensation and an investigation into the fraud.

Mahendra, grateful for the support, shared how crucial Bankesh's help was in securing his daughter's rightful scholarship. This story highlights the importance of community centers and digital literacy in combating corruption and ensuring that government benefits reach those in need.



Case Story 6

In our village, girls are hardly allowed to use social media, so when I got the chance it was an important shift. Due to this, I was denied my rights of being an online citizen and was made to feel really unsafe online.

-Priyanka Rajput



In the village of Lawan in Dausa district, a young girl befriended a boy through Facebook. Their online friendship led the girl to decide to elope without ever meeting him or consulting her family. Once her friend found out, she got suspicious of the intentions of the man she met online and consulted the community's information agent (SoochnaPreneur).

Manju ji spoke to the girl about the risks of social media relationships and the importance of verifying the boy's intentions. When Manju ji invited the boy to meet the family and discuss marriage, he vanished, deleting the girl from his Facebook friend list.

Incidents like these not only highlight the dangers of online predators but also make the internet feel unsafe for women, discouraging them from participating online and perpetuating the gender digital divide. Bridging this gap requires collective action to make the digital world safer and more inclusive for everyone.

Case Story 7

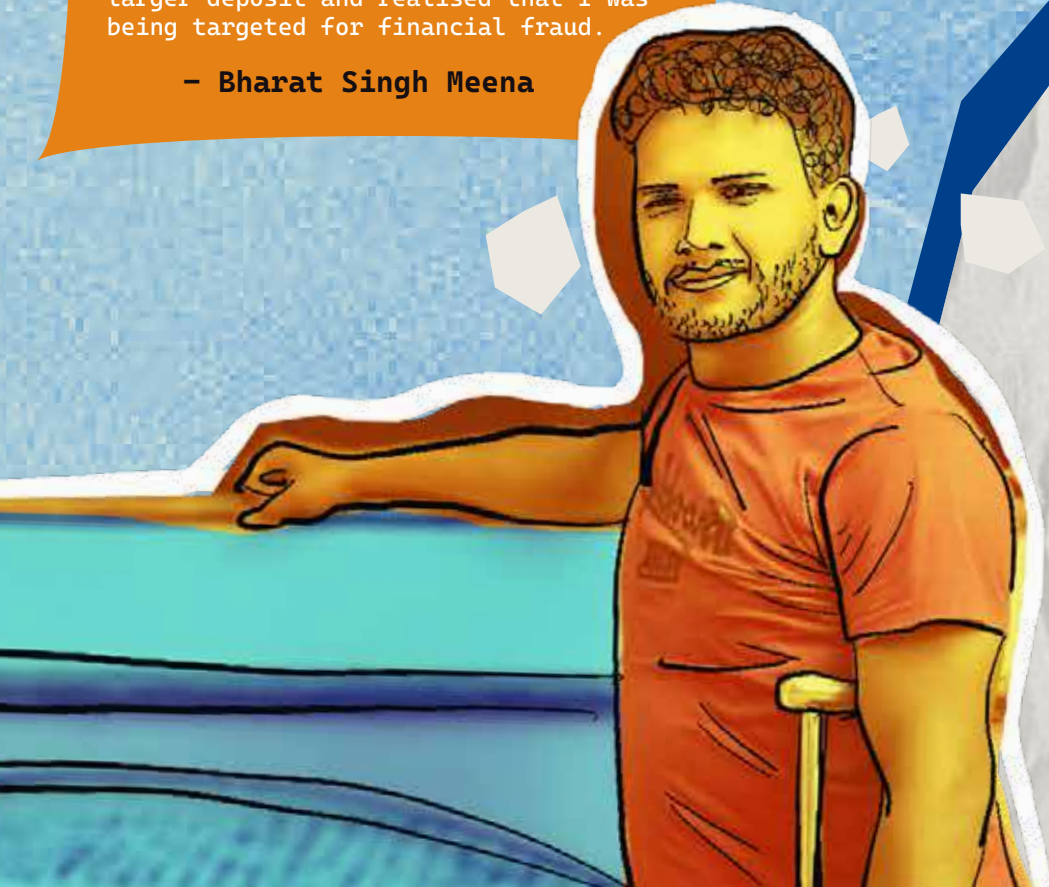
As a person from an underprivileged background, when I got a call saying that I have won a lottery for 25 lac, I was ecstatic. When they asked me to pay a fee to verify my account, I jumped at the opportunity. Thankfully, I asked the local information entrepreneur in my community when they asked me for a larger deposit and realised that I was being targeted for financial fraud.

– Bharat Singh Meena

In January 2024, Bharat Singh Meena, a hardworking farmer, received a call claiming he had won a ₹25 lakh lottery. The caller asked him to share an Aadhaar OTP and a ₹2,500 transaction fee, promising instant credit of the prize money. Trusting the promise, Bharat transferred ₹2,500 through PhonePe.

The scam escalated with another demand for ₹25,000, the final step before receiving the "lottery." Unable to arrange the amount, Bharat went to the community information agent (SoochnaPreneur), who quickly recognised the scam. Vijay's timely intervention prevented Bharat from losing more money and alerted the community.

This incident underscores the importance of critical digital literacy. Scammers exploit trust and greed, especially in rural areas. Awareness of online fraud, verifying claims, and resisting unsolicited offers are essential skills.





Case Story 8

Research shows that misinformation spreads rapidly, especially in communities with limited access to accurate information. By focusing on digital literacy and awareness, we can empower individuals to navigate financial systems confidently and safeguard them from harmful rumors.

-Kalyani Tandon

In my village of 2400 people, most of whom rely on agriculture, I run an Information Promotion Centre offering digital and financial services like money withdrawals, photocopies, and government scheme assistance. Recently, a false rumor spread about the Chhattisgarh government's Mahtari Vandan Yojana, claiming that if women didn't withdraw their monthly ₹1000 benefit, their accounts would be deducted.

This misinformation caused many women to rush to my center. After speaking with them, I explained that the government does not deduct money from accounts linked to this scheme. Over time, they understood, and the panic subsided.

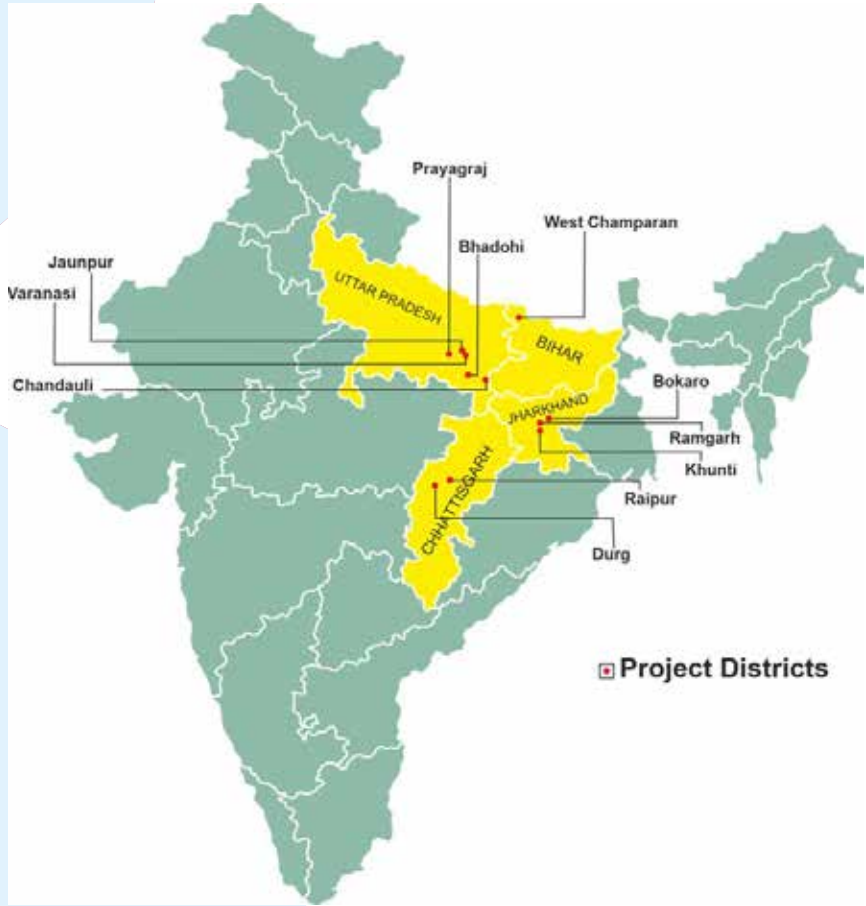
The confusion started when a woman had loan repayments deducted, which was mistakenly interpreted as a scheme-related deduction.

This experience highlighted the importance of combating misinformation and ensuring communities have the right knowledge to make informed decisions about digital and financial services.



Safeguarding Rural India with Critical Digital Literacy

Build the capacities of 480 rural women across four northern Indian states, who will then build the capacities of local communities to produce, disseminate, and consume digital content critically.



Coverage Area	In Numbers
States covered	4
Districts covered	11
Panchayats covered	120
Villages covered	360
Infopreneurs identified and trained	120
Women Learners Identified & Trained	360
Community Members Outreach (till 31st March 2024)	131440

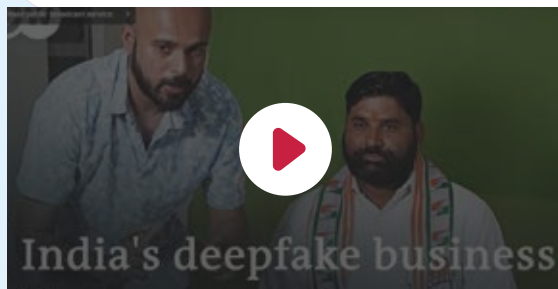
Media Coverage on the Initiative



India's War On Fake News: How Disinformation Became India's #1 Threat | Fact Vs Fiction by CNA Insider



India's elections offer a look at the impact of deepfakes | DW News:



Educating Against Deepfakes: India's Disinformation Battle Offers Crucial Lessons for Upcoming Elections by National Security News:



India's Elections Offer a Look at the Problem of Deepfakes by DW News:



Case Studies





Work with MILaap

Reach out to info@definia.org if you would like to interact, partner and understand how DEF is taking media information literacy to the last mile by:

Booking a training on
Media Information
Literacy

Accessing the
Humaara MIL
Toolkit

Partnering with DEF
for MIL enhancement
at the grassroots

Talk to our MIL
experts

