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QUESTION 2: WRITE ON SOCIAL MEDIA PROLIFERATION OF FAKE NEWS DODGY HEALTH ADVICE AND FAKE CURES OF COVID-19.

**ANSWERS.**

Social Media refers to websites and applications that are designed in a way that helps people share information and content quickly and more efficiently. Social Media allows you to be up to date on happenings in the country and the whole world at large. It enables you to share valuable information to families and friends at a low cost and this information get to individuals in no time. Examples of Social Media are as follows; Whatsapp, Facebook, Youtube, Instagram and so much more.

Fake News on the other hand is also known as junk news, psedo-news or false news. It is a form of news consisting of deliberate disinformation via traditional media (print or broadcast) and Online Social Media. Digital news has increased the usage of fake news.

The main purpose of fake news is to mislead people in order to damage an agency, entity or a person and it can be used for political interest. Fake news is always dishonest or it could be fabricated headlines to gain the attention of audience.

Often time we have seen people post fake news on social media to destroy or discredit the image of a person, and this has caused a lot of damage to affected individuals either, mentally or psychologically. Some people have even gone to the extent of committing suicide due to the gravity of the fake news. It has been seen over time that nothing good comes out of fake news, it completely misleads the people, tarnish their image etc.

A particular bill was introduced by the Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria Last year and it is called “Anti-social Media Bill”. This bill was introduced on the 5th of November 2019 by the Senate to criminalise the use of social media in peddling false or malicious information. The original title of the bill was “Protection from Internet falsehood and Manipulation Bill 2019”. This bill was proposed by Senator Mohammed Sani Musa. The purpose of this bill was to punish anyone that posts false information or fake news against the Government, when this bill was made known to the public, it was opposed and rejected by the public as it limits individual’s freedom of expression. Later on, the bill was rejected due to many oppositions.

Even after this, the rate at which fake news is spreading is very alarming. Everyone in Nigeria wants to share news on their various social media as it is very common nowadays as many Nigerians trust information gotten from their families and friends.

The world is currently suffering from a pandemic (Coronavirus) and it very saddening that the dissemination of fake news concerning this matter isn’t helping at all, infact it has only caused more fear and panic to the world at large which isn’t good. Examples of fake news surrounding COVID-19 are as follows;

1. News circulated worldwide about the Russian Government unleashing 500 lions to ensure that their citizens stays inside. Later on, we found out that the news was indeed fake. Before we got to know, a lot of people have insulted the Government and the information already spread like wildfire which isn’t good for the reputation of the Country.
2. People started sharing fake news on remedies to cure the Covid-19 which are: gaggle your mouth with hot water, make use of vinegar and do not stand under the sun too much. They also said make use of Chloroquine (even though this was recommended by health practitioners) but many people over-used it and ended up in the hospital. Health Practitioners have made it known that there is no definite cure for the deadly disease and people should stop spreading fake news as they are still working on getting a permanent cure.
3. Some say when you drink alcohol, this will prevent you from getting Covid-19.

The Director General of the World Health Organization (WHO) Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus says “We are not just fighting an epidemic; we are fighting infodemic, “Fake news spreads faster and more easily than this virus, and it is just as dangerous,” If we believe in misinformation rather than facts, “we are headed down a dark path that leads nowhere but division and disharmony.” Through Social Media fake news is spreading easily, these messages contains useless, incorrect or harmful information or solutions which can destroy the health of different individuals.

In Conclusion, we need to make sure we verify any news we get on social media before circulating it this will go a long way in preventing the spread of fake news. We need to ascertain if the news is true or false before spreading it because this will be of help in reducing the dissemination of fake news.

REFRENCES

1. “2019 CIGI-Ipsos Global Survey on Internet Security and. . Trust.” [www.cigionline.org/internet-survey-2019](http://www.cigionline.org/internet-survey-2019).
2. www.who.int