

Fact Shala tip sheets on news and information literacy



UNDERSTANDING BIAS

Bias is a disproportionate weight in favor of or against an idea or thing, usually in a way that is closed-minded, prejudicial, or unfair. Something we all carry, both cognitively and physically!

- Thinking about something or someone in pre-disposed way
- An inclination to have pre-determined views or attitudes
- Something we ALL carry, both cognitively and physically!
- Built in to every decision we make – if it goes unchecked it can lead us to making poor decisions
- A very nuanced phenomenon



SPOTTING MEDIA BIAS



- Selection of events
- Stories that are reported
- Stories that are ignored
- What facts and information is present vs missing?
- Are the same sources used all of the time?
- Are same panellists appearing again & again
- Diversity in journalists and editors
- Ownership of news organisation



PEOPLE OFTEN IGNORE FACTS

People often overlook facts because of confirmation bias which occurs when people ignore information that contradicts their existing beliefs. At the same time, they search for information that re-affirms those beliefs and views – thereby rejecting new information that is contradictory.

