

AN ASSESSMENT ON EFFECTIVENESS OF NEW MEDIA IN CREATING AWARENESS OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC AMONG USERS

S. H. Sheik Mohamed¹, Mrs. M. Nirmala², Mrs. S. Judy Anitha³

¹M.A., (JMC) M.Phil. M.A., (SW) M.A., (P.A) PGDBA. PGDCL. PGDPR. D.M.Art.,
Assistant Professor. PG -Department of Electronic Media, St. Thomas College, Koyambedu, Chennai

²M.A., M.A., M.Phil., Assistant Professor, PG -Department of Electronic Media,
St. Thomas College, Koyambedu, Chennai-107.

³M.Sc., Assistant Professor, PG -Department of Electronic Media, St. Thomas College, Koyambedu, Chennai-107.

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ABSTRACT

The modern world, which is evolving on the foundations of ancient society, is interlaced with social websites, which are a type of social networking site service that can be used to foster compatible civic and express social ties. Human needs have become as significant as food, clothing, and shelter attributable to social networking platforms. Notwithstanding the fact that many people lack a bank account, they all have accounts on social networking sites. Social media is a new media, it's a wider platform where the users can easily access and participate with their messages, thoughts, opinion, and ideas towards society. Also, users can create any content such as e-content, banners, photo documents, poster designs, videos, and advertisements.

Social media platforms are being heavily utilized by both for-profit and nonprofit groups as a means to promote their products and spread awareness of their events or Public Service announcements. The aim of this study is to analyze how social media platforms have contributed to global awareness of the COVID-19 pandemic. Both quantitative and qualitative research was used in this study. A survey was carried out using a questionnaire and randomly 100 users were selected and distributed to social media users. Moreover, descriptive and cross-sectional methods were used for the analysis of interrogations in this study. The research and analysis show that social media is a significant factor in raising awareness of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: Social Media, Awareness, Pandemic, Mass Media, Users

1. INTRODUCTION

The creatures have been exchanging knowledge with one another since the Earth was created. Even more in communication with one another via a specific network. Since the time of their origin, humans have been interacting with their ethnicity. The growth suggests that man has altered the nature and mode of communication. No one can dispute the media's significant contribution to the world's numerous changes and upheavals.

The media is important to our society. The mass media has a significant impact on raising public knowledge of a given subject and gathering public opinion, opinions, and attitudes. Its operations and use have expanded ever since it became a mass medium. In the current era of information and awareness, the media plays a huge and excellent role in society. It is present everywhere we go, whether we're watching television, listening to the radio, reading books, magazines, or newspapers, or using social media networking sites to gather countless facts and knowledge. As a result, the media must play a responsible role in society.

Whether it's watching shows online or making contacts on social media, the media has a stronger impact on spreading information in society. Through information sharing, early warnings, environmental awareness, and public participation in disaster-affected areas, the design of social media network sites enable quick interpersonal communication during disasters and crises, allowing emergency personnel to react more quickly and effectively.

Social network sites are gaining more and more power over the mass media. The number of people using social networks daily is increasing than the number of television, radio, and newspaper users in mass media. Social network sites are currently known as current online networking that witnesses an energetic and influential development, and initially, social media like Facebook and WhatsApp were only a restricted and tight virtual society which subsequently developed to turn from a printed instructive instrument to a varying media device that influences the choices and reactions of individuals. Larger part of people has managed this kind of innovation.

In this study, how social networking sites can be used to raise awareness of health communication, particularly during COVID-19 pandemic. The cross-sectional and descriptive study was conducted and based on a questionnaire that asked individuals about their attitudes, their go-to social media source for Covid-19 awareness, and their primary source of information during the pandemic. The questionnaire was then sent online by an invitation message with a link to it on various social media sites, including Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp. The adults who made up the targeted sample population had

to be at least 18 years old. The survey was completed by 100 individuals, and convenient random sampling techniques were used for this study.

2. THE ADVENT OF MASS MEDIA

In this changing environment, mass media play a crucial and inevitable role. Without the activity of the world, wherever we go and whatever we do, it becomes an unfathomable universe. From every viewpoint, the development of mass media is astounding. No one can forecast how quickly this industry will develop. Although the mass media has performed its duties in a variety of ways, its role in contemporary media, particularly social networking sites, is immeasurable.

In this age of technical advancement, social networking sites have become the most effective global means of mass communication, according to numerous studies. Users see social networking sites as a place where trustworthy information can be exchanged. Since the mass media is regarded by many democratic organizations worldwide as the fourth pillar of democracy, it has emerged as the most powerful immovable force of the modern era. The nature of the media is evolving in the modern day along with the state of advancing technology. We may observe and feel how media nowadays is evolving in accordance with the advancement of technology.

The mass media's efforts added to the natural and technological transformations that were occurring, which were drastically altering social culture. Particularly important and unavoidable, social networking activities are growing in popularity among people. Particularly, social media has become a force that has the power to drastically alter the psychological and cultural climate of the populace. It must be acknowledged that social networking sites have evolved into channels that individuals can promptly use in today's times if they need to be informed of any news.

It must be acknowledged that social networking sites have evolved into the channel that individuals can promptly use in today's times if they need to be informed of any news. With every second that goes by, the number of social networking sites exponentially increases. No one can contest the fact that the media plays a role in raising public awareness. Social networking sites, in particular, have grown to be a powerful instrument for raising public awareness among large audiences.

We have additionally waited for the right circumstances to use it for media-related purposes. For instance, in order to view a movie, we must visit a theatre or wait for the right moment for its television broadcast. To watch it on television, we had to wait until it was time for it to air. To listen to the news on the radio, we were in a situation where we had to wait until the time they aired it. We had to wait until the next day to read a news item in the newspaper. We now live in a world where everything that can be run is in our hands, as opposed to back then when we had to wait for the world's actions.

Social networking sites come in a variety of shapes, but they all function fairly simply and are quite accessible. The world of technology has been significantly transformed by mobile websites. Social networking has significantly altered society, much as how society changed when computers first appeared. Social media has a significant role in significant topics, from rapid remarks to massive protests. Social networking site users are steadily growing in number.

These social media platforms are an area in which everyone may excel in today, from people with Internet expertise to young children who are computer literate. Even while it has certain advantages like fostering friendships and information sharing, their boasting takes precedence. In particular, India is at the top in the number of users of the social networking site Facebook. More than 150 crore people worldwide use social networking sites. Most of them are children and youth. The main reason why so many people use social networking sites is that they are so free to share anything. Social networking sites bring together a society that has shrunk into individual individuals due to globalization. The use of social networking sites has become an essential need of everyone today.

A person uses social networking sites including YouTube, Facebook, WhatsApp, Viber, IMO, Skype, Line, Instagram, Twitter, Google, and Messenger for more than 8 hours every day on average. With numerous new amenities being added daily, these are improving in order to further pique the attention of addicts. Social networking services are used by more than 150 billion individuals globally. Most of them are young people and children. Social networking services are so widely used because anyone may share anything with them. Social networking websites unite a society that has fragmented into isolated individuals as a result of globalization. Today, using social networking sites has become a need for everyone.

3. MASS MEDIA AND AWARENESS

The fourth pillar of democracy in our constitution is the mass media. The role of the mass media is transforming it into the pillar of society. As a result of the mass media's dependence on our society, its responsibility is growing. The media is a vital component of modern society and is getting increasingly powerful. Additionally, society and the media are both undergoing daily change. The widespread usage of the media has allowed society to become more aware of every human activity. Print, electronic, and new media are three different categories of mass media. Websites for social networking are effective instances of new media. The phrase "social media" refers to both websites and mobile applications. Very accustomed

Numerous social topics have been covered by the media, but it has always placed a special emphasis on spreading awareness of environmental difficulties and health issues. There are numerous sorts of mass media. Social network is one of the most effective media platforms the present among them. Both AIDS and polio prevention have benefited from increased public knowledge thanks in large part to the media. Radio, television, and journalism all benefit greatly from social media, even though traditional mass media also plays a role, especially in light of the current pandemic.

4. DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media networking sites are internet and application-based tools that allow users to share or exchange information and ideas through text, images, videos, and even more with each other through a particular network. Social networking sites like Facebook, Whatsapp, YouTube, Twitter, and Telegram have become a tool of entertainment and persistence until today before it became an important tool in raising awareness of the spread of this infection among users. These social media platforms or applications are one of the most powerful artifacts of the 21st century.

Though social media has played a vital role in shaping global events, elections and revolutions, highest of us use it to share photos of delightful lunch and watch humorous videos. Currently, around 2.5 billion people are empowered by social media. Social media networking sites have many positive advantages and implications, including helping to promote awareness of social issues, advertising, and branding and campaign businesses and platforms to help foster friendships between individuals who have never met without social networking.

5. FEATURES OF SOCIAL MEDIA

First of all, it is very useful for e-commerce advertising companies. That is, it collects each member's personal information and their location, preferences, the information they search for on the Internet or pages they browse, and serves them advertisements from related companies.

- It is used for professionals and office workers to be more productive in their less time by connecting with their contacts, exchanging information, and video conferencing. On the contrary, the youth have no way of being productive.
- Used to increase friendships. However, one cannot be sure about the character traits of the new friends. It will take a long time to figure it out. Because everyone shares their good sides. Their false faces are revealed through private emails and calls, rather than being put out in public.
- It is useful for social activists to share their ideas and messages with people.
- It helps someone who is looking for useful information to share some of the information they have found with others.

6. COVID-19 AND ITS EXISTENCE

The corona virus pandemic, also known as the COVID-19 pandemic, is a persistent worldwide outbreak of corona virus illness 2019 (COVID-19), which is brought on by corona virus 2 that causes severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS CoV 2). In the meantime, corona virus is a fatal illness that can strike anyone anywhere in the world. On December 31, 2019, the World Health Organization declared "mystery pneumonia." It is costing individuals a lot of money all across the world. Not the first digital epidemic, COVID-19. Zika in Brazil, Ebola in Africa, influenza in Europe, and Nipah in India have all recently broken out. COVID-19 has resulted in the highest death toll in recorded history, and the current economic depression remains the main culprit.

Social media is a fantastic way for people and the public to stay connected during the pandemic, even when they are physically separated. The COVID-19 epidemic poses serious problems for global maintenance. Unlike other global concerns like climate change or global warming, this pandemic crisis heavily depends on the choices made by individuals and, as a result, the calibers of the information to which people are exposed.

7. SOCIAL MEDIA AND AWARENESS ABOUT COVID-19

Undoubtedly, awareness is regarded as a necessary condition for human progress. In general, awareness is regarded as a measure of one's level of education in life; without awareness of any action, a society is undoubtedly quite backward and subject to several negative effects. Numerous studies and experiments have demonstrated the importance of environmental and illness awareness.

Social media is a powerful, dynamic, and quick-processing communications environment that is always being developed and innovated by both established networks and new players, as well as by changes in user behavior across network platforms. As more people have access to the internet, the use of mobile phones and smart phones increases, and the functionality of digital devices advances, the high levels of complexity in content, targeting, and delivery are changing quickly, as are the user bases. Social media network sites are essential for educating the younger generation about our social activities and teaching them how to use social networking as a tool for social change and revolt.

Social media networking sites offer numerous beneficial benefits and ramifications, such as fostering friendships between people who would never have otherwise met, promoting social issue awareness, and branding and marketing

campaigns for businesses and platforms. The majority of social media network platforms can be used to reduce pandemic concerns and their propagation. Through identification, tracking, and communication, social media network sites that share information and communication teach the public about infectious and contagious diseases like COVID-19 and polio and visualize the behavioral patterns of users.

Social media can be used to support the response to public health. For instance, during the extensive community-wide quarantine that is currently taking place in India, China, and many other nations, it is especially crucial to use social media wisely because these platforms offer a chance to communicate the fundamental requirements and significance of quarantine, as well as to offer support and helpful advice to improve public mental health in order to prevent rumors and panic during this pandemic situation.

Most of social media users are free to openly share their opinions and thoughts on COVID-19 across various social media platforms. In the past few weeks, we have seen individuals, organizations, and corporate sectors use social media to share awareness of COVID-19. Worldwide governments are working on getting a handle on the emerging COVID-19 pandemic, a necessary initial part of this process in gaining a better understanding of the current situation.

While working from home, representatives of the Regional Outreach Bureau (ROB) of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting have begun to use social media channels to inform the public about COVID-19. ROB was warning people about some bogus information spreading on social media platforms and instructing them on how to verify the veracity of such false information. The Press Information Bureau had launched a "fact check service" for the general public. Social media represents a unique way to enhance current reporting and commentary by better understanding and considerate what the public talking about in real-time.

At this time, the social media sites have partnered with World Health Organization to create awareness about COVID-19, WHO has partnered with short-form video platform Tic-Tok to create awareness about COVID-19, the latest example of social media, celebrities, and influencers being tapped to help fight the outbreak with correct information.

This partnership also enables TikTok users to make their own videos that inform users of risks and provide them with informed medical information and advice. WHO has framed an informational page on TikTok that offers reliable and trustworthy information, offers advice on staying safe and preventing the spread of the virus, and debunks common misconceptions about COVID-19. The World Health Organization has been live-streaming from its TikTok network website. In order to combat COVID-19 misinformation in Turkey and South East Europe, UNESCO undertakes a social media campaign.

People from all across the world are attempting to do everything they can to cooperate and stop this pandemic. In addition to this, university and college students are also contributing to helping those in need. The majority of the student volunteers have launched an online or new media campaign on social networking sites. They are also assisting the neighborhood police and non-profit organizations by assisting them with the installation of posters and the distribution of awareness handbooks throughout the city. There are other volunteers who are assisting with the delivery of food and necessities. Government directives are being followed by the students.

Anoop Vijayan, a senior visualizer at SunTec, has been posting digital pictures of the COVID-19 battle on his Facebook page, Anoop Vijayan Photography, during the outbreak. He started producing socially conscious photos on the first day of the lockdown, and they now have a devoted fan base. Each one emphasizes the instructions to be followed throughout the lockdown to stop the Coronavirus from spreading.

The main goals of this campaign, which was quite successful, were to raise awareness about COVID-19 and to provide information on how to prevent it as well as the precautions that must be taken both for our own safety and the safety of others. Through the use of various social media platforms, we were able to spread a wide range of awareness about the potentially fatal COVID-19 to numerous other people from other nations.

We urge the creation of a real-time information sharing system in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis, relying on data and analyses from a variety of social media platforms, in many different languages, and throughout the global movement. It will improve the capacity of public health organizations and pertinent parties to react to and comprehend the social dynamics of information spreading more quickly and in different ways, as well as inaccurate information about the corona virus epidemic, its outburst, and responses to it. Social media awareness campaigns will also lessen public panic and counterproductive actions that are out of proportion to the problem.

Influencers on social media use their own works, such as designs and films, to share vital medical information and advice with their followers about COVID-19. Famous independent designer from Kannur is Anas VV. On his Instagram feed, he created an illustration showing 25 actors from the Malayalam film industry patrolling the streets like cops to make sure the lockdown is adhered to. The slogan on the drawings is "Stop, go home, and be safe!" These illustrations have easily explained the importance of the lockdown and social distance in a pandemic situation.

8. USERS' PERCEPTION ABOUT THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN AWARENESS OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC

A survey was done to determine how social media users perceived its contribution to public awareness of the COVID-19 epidemic. Users' perceptions of the COVID-19 pandemic crisis and the impact of social media in raising awareness of it were two of the survey's primary variables. There were a total of 100 respondents, and there were a total of 25 questions, all of which related to the role of social media in raising awareness of the COVID-19 pandemic. The questionnaire did not include questions about the respondents' demographics, economic situation, or educational level. After receiving responses from social media users, the results were tabulated using MS-Excel.

Therefore questions were asked whether the media is utilized regularly by respondents. According to the results 91.3% users said the media is utilized, 7.7 % of respondents are not used and remaining respondents are doubtful the utilization of media. 69.2% of respondents are using social media frequently, 25% of respondents are watching television and remaining respondents are using other media like print, radio and some other media.

In this study, 85.6% of the respondents are member of WhatsApp. 73% of the respondents are member of Facebook. 32.7% of the respondents are member of twitter and 9.6% of the respondents are member of Telegram. 85.6% of respondents are agreed social media is very effective tool for creating awareness about social issues. 35.6% are agreed television, 10.6% of respondents are agreed print media and 10.6% of respondents are agreed radio.

In this study survey reported that 51.9% of the respondents are using whatsapp in most of the time, 20.3% of the respondents are using YouTube, and 16.3% of the respondents are using Facebook in most of the time. 68.3% of the respondents are using social media for gathering information. 48.1% of the respondents are using social media sites for entertainment purpose and 34.6 % of the respondents are using social media for infotainment, Then 98.1 % of respondents are agreed statement that they can access the world new from using social media networking sites. Therefore a question was asked whether you know about COVID - 19, 93.3% of respondents are agreed that they knew. When asked which media helps you find out about COVID-19, 78.2% responded to social media, 54.8% to television, 16.3% to newspapers, and 2.9% to radio.

9. CONCLUSION

The role of the mass media has always been to aid human progress worldwide, in whichever direction such growth may take place. It is not an overstatement to say that the media is a necessary and unavoidable part of people's daily life. The study has been supported by the researcher's observations, conclusions, and inquiries from social media users, as well as by the perspectives of other scholars regarding the critical role that social media plays in increasing public awareness.

The COVID-19 pandemic is one of the major issues facing the globe today, and the widespread presence of this infection poses grave dangers everywhere. Public awareness has been significantly boosted by social media. Social networking sites are increasing knowledge of COVID-19 more quickly than traditional media, according to the opinions of social media users, data, and several of the researchers cited above.

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