

## **Mass media and social media during Pandemic: A review**

**Dr. S.Mohammad Shameer, Visiting Faculty, Potti Sreeramulu Telugu University**

**Prof.Sathi Reddy, Department of Communication, Potti Sreeramulu Telugu**

**University**

Abstract: A novel coronavirus named as COVID-19 crop up in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. Quickly it spread to other countries worldwide to turn out to be a pandemic. Internationally, governments imposed quarantine and social distancing measures to put off the spread of the infection. Mass media and social media played a vital role in disseminating information regarding the Covid-19. Since a little information and knowledge about COVID-19, various fake news, misinformation and grapevine spread across the social media that scared people to make panic decisions. The swift spread of misinformation and stories through social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube became a crucial concern of the government and public health authorities. Medical misinformation and unverifiable content about the COVID-19 pandemic were spread on social media at an unparalleled pace. Social media as a secondary medium, it should be utilised to convey important information. Besides, it allows citizens to address their queries directly. Several governments across the world have taken actions against misinformation spreaders. Yet, measures are to be needed to stop misinformation. Mass media especially electronic tried to disseminated information through Doctors and Scientist and allotted separate columns in newspapers. Due to misinformation about Covid-19, many people stopped subscription to newspapers. The advertisements revenue fall down. As a result many newspapers reduced pages.

**Key word: Mass media, Social media, Covid-19, misinformation, anxiety, fear**

### **1.INTRODUCTION**

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) first reported in early December in Wuhan province of China spread worldwide to become a global pandemic (Pan et al., 2020). First case of novel corona virus outside of China confirmed in Thailand -13<sup>th</sup> January 20. Novel corona virus disease named COVID-19 on 11<sup>th</sup> February 20 (WHO report 2020). Governments across the world put into action social distancing and isolation methods to reduce the risk of infection (Zhai and Du, 2020). Self-quarantine and seclusion become a threat to the psychological health of the people (Brooks et al., 2020). Since little was known about the

novel Coronavirus, it is essential to make available the accurate information acquired from an authentic source (Hua and Shaw, 2020). In the initial stages of corona pandemic, It was difficult to collect the data of the affected, recovered and casualties, because rapidly changing data on Coronavirus. It was reported that the elderly and immunocompromised individuals were more at risk for COVID-19 infection (Hua and Shaw, 2020). Initially, we lack pharmaceutical aids to manage the outbreak. The tools to combat COVID-19 were identified as quarantine and social distancing. In order to reduce panic, social media platforms were used to encourage people to follow directions of public health workers and the quarantine rules (Depoux et al., 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic considered as a unique and new to medical fraternity (Farooq et al., 2020). The size of misinformation was so disturbing on the individual and community levels that governing bodies began to acknowledge its impact and made efforts to limit them(Kouzyetal., 2020). Usually, an outbreak of infectious disease unpredictable in a particular community, region, or period (Oh et al., 2020). The misinformation, misapprehension, or rumours significantly hamper the communication response and escalate panic amongst the people. Since the information increases rapidly through social media, it is necessary to monitor media and manage rumour (Frost et al., 2019). Social media was one of the preliminary source proliferated the information regarding the virus (Gao et al., 2020). The major negative aspect of social media amid a challenging circumstances as COVID-19 epidemic is that social media has been conveniently used as an approach to convey misinformation and fake news (Park et al., 2020). The popularisation of social networking platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube, the information dissemination in disaster contexts has increased worldwide at diverse levels (Park et al., 2020). Social media gives a platform for sharing public opinion and perceptions, which can be volatile and sensitive during a grave situation as COVID-19 pandemic (Han et al., 2020).

## **2. Objective**

To study the role of Mass media and Social during covid-19 and to find out effectiveness of media in generating awareness during pandemic.

## **3 .METHODOLOGY**

Data for the present review paper were drawn from original articles available on ‘Google’/ ‘Google scholar’ search engine using keywords such as “Mass media and social media efficacy in India”.

## **4.Social Media as an Asset During A Pandemic**

Marshall McLuhan has said that social media is the framework which changes with each new technology and not just the picture within the frame”. Now a day's Social media become very

important source of information; twitter has the potential to provide real-time content acknowledging the public health authorities to reply the queries of the people promptly (Ahmedetal.,2020). During COVID-19 pandemic, social media had presented immediate disease related information to exchange among the people in real-time (Ohetal.,2020). It was found in a study that the H1N1 flu occurrence was also first reported in social media.(JangandBaek,2019). Due instant approach and reach, government organisations like the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) started using social media to inform people of the noticeable infections such as Zika and Ebola outbreaks (Oh et al., 2020). The incessantly growing social media has turn out to be a key platform for messages during a crisis. Social media platforms are predominantly used by public health departments as well as individuals to communicate and interact with people during public health emergencies (Zhao et al., 2020).The popular social media platforms such as Twitter, YouTube and Facebook , measures to avoid misinformation during COVID-19 pandemic, remain questionable (Li et al., 2020). In the environment, in which people are born, live, study, work, play, worship, and age are social determinants of health, which are the factors that influence a wide variety of health outcomes, risks, and overall quality of life (WHO-world Health Organisation report, 2020).

### **5.Emotional Confusion during the pandemic due to social media**

Usually, a pandemic outbreak threatens the fitness of a huge range of people, thereby requiring on the spot measures to cease the contamination at the community level (Würz et al., 2013). The Studies have revealed that panic and rage resolve the correlation between social media access, menace perception at the personal level and protective behaviours (Oh et al., 2020) and these emotions manipulate the association between threat perception and mass media. (Oh et al., 2020). Anxiety was the relevant negative emotion during the Covid-19 Pandemic (Oh et al., 2020). When in correct or false information pass on to the public, people may tend to panic and react to such in accurate information in different ways, which leads to take hasty decision to purchase and use unwarranted or even unsafe drug regimens(Liuetal.,2020).

The imperative obligation to ease the panic due to social media has become a priority (Depoux et al., 2020). When the outbreak began, the public tried to find out appropriate online resources and information to protect themselves. (Zhao et al., 2020).The search term about infectious disease on social media garner much attention (Zhaoetal.,2020). WHO expressed grave concern over social media relating misinformation that caused anxiety, fear and anger among people (Gao et al., 2020). Misinformation and misleading news about

Covid-19 during pandemic fuelled baseless panic, confusion and hampered mental health of the citizens (Haetal.,2020).

### **6.Pandemic Misinformation and its consequences**

A major risk related to using social media is the posting and forwarding of unethical content which have adverse effects on health care professionals (HCPs), students, and health-care institutions (Peck, 2014). Facebook introduced a new update, which warned users if they are engaged with incorrect information (Ahmed et al., 2020). Some research mentioned that validated Twitter accounts and health care accounts had least unverifiable statistic in assessment with others (Kouzyetal.,2020).. Some researchers found that the 'humour effect', of users joins the debate to derision the conspiracy theory inadvertently draws more attention to it, turning out as a threat for half-truths (Ahmed and Lugovic, 2019). Misleading information on Facebook about probable medications, as well as hydroxychloroquine to cure COVID-19, stirred many people to procure such drug without medical approval, resulting in the abnormal health consequence and in sufficient of these drugs for patients who actually need them (Abdelhaiz et al., 2020). The misleading news consists of different facades of the epidemic, which is proficient enough to become threat to public safety, which over again worsen crisis management (Heena,Sahni et al., 2020).

### **7.Infodemiology**

Infodemiology is a new field of research targeted at educating public health agencies and drafting public policies to assess automatically created and consumed health data (Eysenbach, 2009). The advantage of infodemiology is its capability to gather health-related data instantly from unstructured, written, picture or user generated content or information which is shared through digital platforms such as websites, blogs, and social network sites (Eysenbach, 2011).But, authenticity and reliability of user-generated data is doubtful (Zhao and Zhang, 2017). Sometimes, user- generated content and shared health information relating to the COVID19 will act as an efficient method for public health surveillance (Park et al., 2020). Examines the online interpretation, responses to health problems by the public as seen on social media propose insights into the public's awareness and self-disclosure of symptoms related to the infection (Park et al., 2020). Studies indicate that network analyses are significantly useful for monitoring shared networks between various stakeholders, and also the appropriate distribution of sources during national disasters or emergencies (Park et al., 2020).

## 8. Cyberchondria

Cyberchondria is a term which explain the situation, where patients can research all symptoms of a atypical disease, ill health or condition, and anxiety. Cyberchondria and information overload were observed from excessive internet use during COVID-19 pandemic. Cyberchondria is characterised as infatuated online searching for information related to health, typically about specific symptoms (Kumar Chandan Srivastava et al.,2020). During the panic situation, uncharacteristic and potentially fatal pandemic conditions such as COVID-19 pandemic, a unclear communication may arose confusion and even fear among people (Farooq et al., 2020). Often, Social media news is more sensitive and lacks the impartial and broad approach like the reports of journalists (Farooq et al., 2020). Social media networking website and search engine developers should take steps to allow transparent and clear information so as to avert adverse effects of information overload and cyberchondria, while disseminating the seriousness of the pandemic situation and recommended health measures to citizens (Farooq et al., 2020). Educating people on the accountability and safe use of social media may, help to alleviate the negative influence (Farooq et al., 2020).

## 9.Influence of Mass media relating to Covid-19

Mass media have been observed as critical sources of public perceptions of risk (Oh et al., 2020). The information relating to risk is offered in a manner that persuade people's perception of risk, particularly sensational media coverage of a pandemic crisis (Chong and Choy, 2018). Anxiety and anger mediate the effect of media reporting on the perception of personal-level danger and increase beneficial preventive behaviours. The outbreak of COVID-19 is a negative incidence, consequential in an unpredictably high number of illnesses and mortalities, ascertain negative self-relevant emotions from the public (Oh et al., 2020). People frequently convey their concerns about the virus outbreak through social media (Oh et al., 2020). In some occasions, though, the mass media are incapable to capture the epidemic on time, and unable to become the prime indicator (Liu et al., 2020). Since mass media news reports fall behind to report real-time corona virus trends, it may not play a helpful pre-warning role in disseminating and sensitising about public health (Liu et al., 2020). As the virus was new and un predictable. There was no sufficient research on it, misinformation transmitted by the mass media leading to adverse psychological effects among people. (Liu et al.,2020). BBC India website has witnessed massive increase in traffic. WhatsApp itself is reportedly build a team in India to help deal with the spread of fake news on its platform (Shan Wang 2018). Just before the announcement of the nationwide

lockdown, Prime Minister Narendra Modi asked print and electronic media owners and editors of the country to present “positive news” related to COVID-19 (Bupen Singh 20). Mass media especially electronic tried to disseminated information through Doctors and Scientist and allotted separate columns in newspapers. Due to misinformation about Covid-19, many people stopped subscription to newspapers. The advertisements revenue fall down. As a result many newspapers reduced pages (the print 2020).

### **10. Improvement Actions Taken By Several Government Bodies**

Globally, government organisations have used social media for creating awareness and encouraging citizen during the crisis (Chen et al., 2020). In United Kingdom, Local government officials used Twitter features, such as hashtags and mentions, to converse with the general public to elucidate rumours and recognize perpetrators during the 2011 riots (Chen et al., 2020). Indonesian government agencies used Twitter to convey early alerting communications with people during the 2012 Tsunami (Chen et al., 2020). Government officials in the United States, used Twitter during the 2012 Sandy Hurricane crisis. However, they mainly engaged individuals, important government agencies, and media outlets (Chen et al., 2020). The Chinese government had opened many services across various platforms, including hotline, online counselling, and outpatient counselling, but unable to provide more attention to depression and anxiety (Gao et al., 2020). In order to reach public concerns, the Chinese government started disseminating a series of updates on the official "Weibo" accounts about the disease, on how to handle probable cases, (Li et al., 2020). Whenever false news was circulated, the Chinese authorities took swift corrective action (Hua and Shaw, 2020). In Egypt, the Ministry of Health (MOH) started using different forms of communication to inform the public about the epidemic, including television and street advertising, as well as text messages and even used supported ads on Facebook, (Abdelhaizetal.,2020). In India, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare provided continuous update on Covid-19 and launch Arogyasethu app to track patients.

### **11. Media should be used as a Shield**

Social media should be used to strengthen the public health response (Depoux et al., 2020). Public media, newspapers and radio, Television stations must take necessary steps and put stop to false news by addressing theories of conspiracy circulating at the time (Ahmed et al., 2020). Well-timed monitoring of risk networks and public social media communications will promote awareness and assist in developing the policies needed (Park et al., 2020). Social media analytics help government authorities to react on real-time information about current

infectious disease threats. People exchanged information using different news sources and social media (Park et al., 2020). A critical/immediate remedial measure against false information should take place on the platform itself, where it occurs because people don't visit a website to crosscheck report.(Ahmedetal.,2020). To prevent the collapse of the health system, a successful health interventions are needed, the media can play a vital role in disseminating updated policies and convention from authorities to the people.(Liu et al., 2020) Effective communication link between the citizens and the public health authorities /or governments through the media and social media platforms will make ease to handle the pandemic situation successfully.(Depoux et al., 2020).Effective risk communication is need of the hour program will enable to preparedness for health emergencies. Strengthening the capacity of risk communication is an essential component of global efforts to enhance global health security(Frostetal.,2019).

### **12.New conceptual views on media**

The changes in media scene associated with globalization and digitization stipulate new conceptual frameworks and call for spontaneous indulgent of what transforms and what endure in professional practice, media industries, and journalistic cultures more widely.

Edgerly and Vraga suggests the concept of news-"ness" in order to understand audience and how they process, characterize specific content messages as news. Jason Cabanes focuses on the rise of digital disinformation and proposes that we use imagination to understand it. Vasudevan observes the design essentials of digital interfaces such as color, affordances, feedback, and metaphor and proposes the concept of "design of journalism" to contextualize. Hermida suggests a model consistinf of four P's -public,platforms, paraphernalia and practise and a framework for studying the secondary processes of gatekeeping. He argues that the assemblages of these elements shape digital circulation and news profiles. Ferrucci construct a theoretical model, how social and technical aspects manipulate efforts to carry on the flexibility of unreliable information in the swiftly growing digital media landscape.He describe closely related aspects: dominant public discussion and alternative information., Qun Wang suggests a theoretical framework which aim of understanding the developing power dynamics between the news industry and the tech industry and interdependence of the tow industries (Claudia et al., 2020).

### **CONCLUSIONS**

Since the announcement of COVID-19 as a pandemic, the mass media and social media has been flooded with information. Some information is directed to educate people about the new

virus, whose management is yet to be known. Several governments across the world have taken timely actions against misinformation of pandemic. The Government bodies and public health care authorities should utilise the media in teaching awareness among the people and narrowing panic. The several countries' government has used social media in informing the people about the imminent danger, thus making the best use of the resource. The media should also be obliged to ensure the reports 'accuracy.

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