

Media during the Pandemic lock down in India

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Abstract

The study mainly highlights on the significant roles of mass media during the pandemic lockdown in India. The paper mainly identifies the connection between media and observation of the media in health, communication, educational activities, entertainment media, commercial and business activities, fake news and misinformation as well as provides an insight about the various aspects and roles which the media plays in different sectors. Understanding and evaluating the impact of Covid-19 and the pandemic lockdown in India.

Keywords: Social media, Pandemic, Lockdown, Media.

Introduction:

The impact created by the communication media is very serious in our society especially during the lockdown. It is very clear that only because of the media, be it the traditional modes nor the modern modes of communication that this virus Covid-19 has got so famous and dangerous and has led to a complete transformation and change that the world has ever been. It also served as an avenue for both the sender and the receiver to share meaning to understand regarding their ideas, feelings, opinions, emotions, perspectives and knowledge about the social, economic, political, cultural and other related issues. The media also played a key role in the execution of government plan objectives, ideas, restrictions, rules during the pandemic in the country. The impact of media reporting and public sentiments had a strong influence on the various sectors in making decisions on continuing or discontinuing certain services at least for the time being including airline services, hotel and education sectors, transportation sectors etc.

The main intention behind the online platform and dashboard was to provide real time alerts of rumors and concerns about the spread of the corona virus spreading globally and would enable not just public health officials but also public health people to take necessary steps and to avoid the spread of misinformation.

One of the foremost responsibility of the role of media in every democracy is to inform, educate, entertain, mobilise and utilize so as to persuade the people as catalyst for social transformation and to bring about progressive development in the society. Media is just like a mirror of the society it clearly depicts how the society works.

Media and Surveillance Function

From the very inception of the corona virus in China and further the spread of the virus through the world almost all countries went for lockdown. In India the lockdown was announced from March 20, 2020 to almost a complete lockdown for a month and slowly started with relaxation of each sector and finally all were open. The public is also highly depended on media to know what is happening in the world. Sushil et al (2017) point out that the mass media plays a crucial role in disseminating health information. With the help of the very media all are able to get regular update on the status of Covid-19 new cases, death rate, recovery rate projected upcoming cases. It also helps in educating people about the precautionary measures to be taken and the protocols to comply with during the lockdown period. The media also acted as major helping hand to the government to control the panicking situation to spread the latest information and to rebuild confidence in the minds of the people.

Media and Entertainment Content

The media especially the social media has become the most popular source to keep the people entertained. People were so much into the social media that even at the cost of their professional work they used to get involved with it. No doubt that the social media was the main means of relaxation for the people without any age barriers during the lockdown. Right from small kids to older generation all had their own platform in the social media to keep them engaged like WhatsApp, Facebook, Youtube, Netflix, Instagram etc. Social networking sites are a hot topic for marketers right now as they present a number of opportunities for interacting with customers including via plug in-application groups, fan pages" (Zarella, 2010).

Media, Commercial and Business Activities

Many of the business and other commercial activities has been affected tremendously and many business had collapsed where in people even committed suicide because of the loss caused due to pandemic. However the modern media platform was most favored during the pandemic to boost business and commercial activities using online Ads and online business where made easy with cashless payment. The billing counters totally went in for a cashless payment system. Organizations were able to upgrade their operations through online ads and online stores like Amazon, Swiggy, flipcart, snapdeal etc not just carrying on business locally but also across borders.

Media and Health communication

Health communication was the most awaited information one was waiting to receive during lockdown. Gupta and Sharma (2015) emphasize that mass media positively diffuse significant health info that is relevant to our

daily lives and making it possible for common people to dedicate and take appropriate action about their lives and health. It is always the media that remains as the most reliable platform for the public to get health related info about the disease, its symptoms ,tips ,preventive measure and recommendation, the various ongoing researches and vaccine trails happening giving a ray of hope for the public to boost up their confidence and expectation.

Media and educational activities

The education sector was the most hit sector during the lockdown. Initially it was a total dilemma to understand how to handle education in the pandemic and slowly the option of online tutoring was executed. Though the effectiveness of the tutoring was a doubtful element it was serving the purpose atleast to a certain extent. Some of the main platforms adopted for the oline teaching sessions were Zoom, Google meet, Microsoft teams etc and the sessions were backed by seminars, workshop, conference, lectures class assignments and examinations. It atleast to a great extent helped to keep the students engaged and get them used to the academics and to update their portions and awreness.

Media, Fakeness and Misinformation.

Alcott and Gentzkow(2017) confirm that fake news is closely related to the growth and development of social media because they have greatly affected the flow of quality news production and dissemination as a result of lack of gate keeping process. Media had a lot of misinformation and fake news during the lockdown period and few of these news mislead people to a great extent. It used to give such a shocking vibes that people were scared and panicked to even step out of the house .And the same media is now taking the covid virus lightly that even people started forgetting the pandemic and that has resulted in the huge raise in the positive cases. However the social media is a room for the spread of fake news, it equally provides room for authentic info and factual narratives and real perspective to counter the fakes spread of inappropriate information.

Conclusion

The mass media is what so said is an integral part of the society as well as in once own life in today's era and thus its operations and activities during the lockdown is remarkable. Media in India both the traditional and modern platform including newspaper ,magazine, Radio, T.V and social media plays a very significant role. Media during the pandemic was undoubtedly the source for many of the commercial activities and business which helped people and government to stay financially strong during the pandemic without hitting major loss. It was so useful for people to shop online shopping be it groceries, provisions, healthcare products, vegetables ,milk ,medicine etc which was delivered at the doorstep. Though during the lockdown

many business hit major loss resulting in unemployment of many it is inevitable. We have to still move on in life looking for new opportunities. It will be a major challenge for the government, public and nation to revive from such a great fall but we all have to face it and leave with it until we get a complete solution.

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