



## ROLE OF MASS MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION DURING PANDEMIC

*Key role at crucial stage: categories and challenges*

<sup>1</sup>Shalvee, <sup>2</sup>Saurabh Sambhav

<sup>1</sup>Student, <sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor

<sup>1</sup>Amity School of Communication <sup>2</sup>Amity School of Engineering & Technology

<sup>1,2</sup>Amity University, Patna, Bihar, India

**Abstract:** Media works as a bridge between government and society. Media have been recognized as robust power to form how we experience this world. Whether a viewer or a reader, we just close our mind and open our eyes. In this crisis, media played a very significant role in making people aware about the situation, calm the junta and encourage them to do positive action. The different kind of media like digital media and print media with their impact have been presented in this paper. There are many challenges at ground level in spreading information to the people across the nation, some have been discussed in the latter part of this research article.

**Index Terms - Journalism, digital media, print media, mass communication**

### I. INTRODUCTION

COVID-19, you must have been aware of this term if you lived in the year 2020, which turned the world upside down. A novel coronavirus is a virus that causes the disease COVID-19 (SARS-coV-2, previously known as 2019-nCoV), which causes an acute respiratory illness has started in China in December 2019 and spread throughout the world. On 30 January 2020, following the recommendations of the emergency committee, the WHO Director-General declared that the outbreak constitutes a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC). Due to outbreak of COVID-19 Disease more than half of the world is practicing lockdown, which made a deep impact on our daily life routine, unlike we used to practice before. But as we know that to lower the spread of virus we require social distancing. We're more dependent on internet, mobile and laptop, with which we could work from home or study from home. Online content are made available by many educational institution for free in order to help the student and teacher across the world. Here media plays a vital role in our life. Media is the mirror of society, as it reflects the society. These days massive effect of media is seen. According to a survey there is 87% of increase in social media usage during lockdown. In the rouse of global pandemic COVID-19, in India, social media activity experiences a bounce of 50X. It has also been witnessed that there is a huge jump in the intensity of the social media when Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi addresses the nation related to lockdown. Here we can see the strength of media as they provide emotional support and community. They are never back behind in order to entertain us, each day we came to see different level of creativity, as I can think of many funny memes, to deal with lockdown. Positive outlook of sudden increase in social media can be due to various awareness campaign shown on social media, with which people across the nation knew about the essentials as well as the precautionary measures that should be taken during lockdown. It also shows the stats, like the number of people being affected by virus at a particular area, it educates us of safety tips as well as the symptoms of COVID-19. There is an increase in number of I'd on social media. Social media has become one of the best tact to spread news nowadays, even if we are alerting people about something serious, in post-haste. As social media platform such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, twitter, etc. gives a bundle of information each day, has led to increase in fake news and misinformation, which causes panic among people. People who read or see that misinformation interpret it as true fact. In order to distinguish between facts and false narrative, we need to crosscheck the information that we get from social media with at least two different credible sources. We can break the chain of false narrative by doing a little research before forwarding it next. Apart from social media, Electronic media has also made a special effect on the public. Media is something that could create panic as well as provide relief from panic. As most of the part of India is in rural area so dependency on electronic media increases, because it is easily accessible. Even illiterate people of villages and town, could understand the presentation that is given on television screen. Nobody could ignore to repeated items of information and news by the speaker of television set. There is open discussion about what people hear or watch. Media around the nation reaches our heart and brain at the same time. With news, documentaries and telefilms close to social issue increases awareness in youth and children also make them responsible towards society. During this crucial time, electronic media such as television and radio could bring a change in attitude and belief of people by sharing the positivity, as it is most impactful on elders as well as youngsters. As per law, journalism should be practiced as ethical communication but private ownership diverted the self-governance of the press freedom and journalism. News which is broadcasted, struggles in the filter of conflict of interest. During this pandemic outbreak many counter voice have picked up the genuine problem of social concern. Hardly four hours were given before the suddenly announced lockdown, created a panic among the nation and migrant, daily wages workers were most affected. No transportation and no food, forced

them to end their journey on foot. Some were died on the way back to home. While some media houses shown their problem, other media projected them as the worst enemy by tagging their “irresponsible behavior” in the era of pandemic. As it was a sensational issue, so many media houses were compelled to display their story. As many fearless journalist are still there, so the mainstream media in journalism could survive. Doing ground reporting, two different English daily displayed the calamity with more compassion. Consequences were faced by others who tried to show the reality. Print media is most badly affected. Due to lockdown, distribution of newspapers and magazine are adversely affected. Many people were posting on social sites about not getting newspaper, while others asked vendors to not circulate the newspaper. Due to fear of spreading disease, many people refused to take the newspaper and many vendors refused to circulate it. People are turning to online edition rather than risk their life to buy newspaper. Think of the consequences for the print that was already facing end in the era of digital media. Here Outlook, Mid-day and Times of India’s Mumbai edition are various newspaper publication, they stopped their printing process till further notice. Coming to small screen, due to COVID-19, the engagement of television has sensed a high jump with 40% grown viewership in India. Talking about whole world, other countries like UK, Australia, Czech Republic and Australia has also grown the number of television audience. Nowadays, everyone have a lot of time therefore, they can take in a lot of material. Also a number of old shows are re telecasted and also getting lot of engagement. Ramayana is bringing the same craze in viewers like it was before 33 years back. Small screen is not focusing on bringing new episode rather entertaining people, with old content only. Those youngsters who have only listened to the name of shows, too, could now watch them. Film industry has been brutally impacted due to lockdown. Many shooting plans for film, web series, film releases were postponed. There were many daily wages workers, spot boy, who are waiting for film industry to reopen. The trouble with lockdown is people don’t want to risk their life to watch the fresh telecast, instead they are happy watching old content. 183 billion film industry is facing this crisis phase because of lockdown caused due to COVID-19. Many films were forced to remove from theaters, other film’s release date was postponed. Many of them have seen a few losses in its second week. The loss that film industry is facing is still being evaluated.

## II. DIFFERENT CATEGORY OF MEDIA

Media is known as one the most important means of communication, in this era. During this crisis situation, mass media informs and aware the people. Media has the power to calm the people as well as encourage people for positive action, and vice versa, terrorize people and make chaos. Here we aim to analyze the role of media in making people aware of the crisis. With increasing reach and influencing of media in today’s time, they became a most important part of society in crisis. Media helps to access the situations by bringing information to managers, policymakers and citizens, and speed is increased with the help of which information are collected, accumulated and supplied. However Media could be portrayed as evil of society, but anyways they have to increase the scope of positivity. In crisis situation, public opinion is badly affected, here media could control the emotions of public and their opinion with positivity. Media worker should collect information only from credible sources in order to stop the confusing or contradicting facts. Indian media is one of the biggest media in the world, it contains more than 1,000 newspaper, 100,000 magazines, 200 television channels and a number of websites in different languages. Whether it is Facebook/twitter page or WhatsApp information, either news publishers, YouTube is having the news from every small happening around us.

### 2.1 Electronic Media

Media states different means of communication just like communication device is use communicate and interact between people. Electromechanical device is the medium through which content of electronic media can be accessed. Nowadays most of the people are getting information through this medium only, as it makes the communication easier and get relevant data. In this crisis situation electronic media has found their place, as other medium are in tragic situation and not easily accessible. As a number of social media platform can be shown, a number of channels are shown on television, a number of radio station are nm air at present time. So the reach of electronic media is growing day by day and lockdown gave a boost to its usage.

#### A. Social media

More than two billion users are on social media, so we can’t overstate the impact of it. On a monthly basis, only Facebook contain 1.78 billion active users; daily, approx. 500 billion tweets are posted from twitter. Social media has changed the way transmission and consumption of information. For the organizations it can be boon for marketing their ideology, as it allows the direct contact between consumer and Organization. It can also be curse to many organizations, as it could damage the reputation in seconds. The viral hashtag says everything. So the overall result says even if companies are online or not people will be talking about them. In this crisis it is the easiest way to exchange information or spreading propaganda. Even after so many restrictions people are posting and spreading fake news. While you’re an active user of social media you should react with open eyes and ears to every post. In this challenging time, social media have played a massive role. Lockdown has made a new time of compulsive isolation and also probably increase on mental strain. This time is scary and fearsome, but positive thing is people are coming out to help each other. We’ve always been alleged that we’re selfish and self-centered, but the way people came out for offering help was incredible. While being online every time we should be careful of information that are overloaded on social media. In comparison to amount of information available, rumors and propaganda are in greater amount. It’s the duty of author to give credible and authentic information with fact to their followers. They should not focus on gaining profit by sacrificing their ethical rules, rather create the positivity in their write-ups. The shared information by any platform should be verified and truthful content. They should more focus on positive news and ignoring negative, after fact checking. They should be presenting the information in a way that is easily accessible by the audience, like adding infographics from the government official updates. One of the features of Instagram is promoting the guideline, guess what’s it? You must have seen Stay home, stay safe feature in stories, which shows the togetherness of the world. People could share their videos and photos by supporting government guideline. Social behaviors are directly encouraged by Facebook information center that could save our lives. While sharing photos and videos owner of page should share the content that is motivating and inspirational, so that someone could start their day with positivity. Even in this scary time, the humor should go on, and people with smiling faces should be shown everywhere. Social media is also boosting up our interest by showing us our favorite dish’s recipe or painting tricks. It is very easy to stay up on what negatives are being reached to us by social media but in this time we need to be engaged with it in a healthy manner- relatively when everyone is struggling to this crisis, we’re all facing this with togetherness after all.

## B. Television & Radio

As per cases of covid-19 is increasing day by day, the load of media to entertain people is also increasing. Here the role of Television and radio is very crucial, as most of the medium is not accessible. They are loaded with dual responsibility is not only entertaining the audience but also providing with relevant and genuine data. Television has a very crucial role in building any society. It has changed the world a lot that we can't lay aside its presence. In this pandemic time, television can be used as the source of information as media plays a valuable role in everyone's life. The initial role of media in this time or anytime is to educate, inform and entertain. And here the credibility arrives, things should be told with facts to avoid further conflict or confusion. It works as breeze between government and general public. Television has robust power to make how we see the world, as it so flexible that could influence the people in a large extent. Television is becoming the voice of those whose voice had been graved. There are two aspects for everything in this world and i.e., positive and negative. In this situation there are some positive as well as negative effects of media on society. Biased form of media could be most dangerous kind of media. Here the narratives are shown as news, many news agencies are still there who shows the information with facts. Why there is a need for calling a meeting and advising media officials to show positive news? What they have to do media knows that very well. Let's talk about the roles of media and how much were done by them. When lockdown was suddenly announced, people were barely given 4 hours of advance notice, which took turn in panic, in which migrants were mostly affected. With no money and no work left, they were forced to go back to their respective places on foot. However a few media houses shown the unpleasant condition of migrants but other media coverage shown them as the evil for their irresponsible behavior during lockdown. Well some of media were forced to cover this issue as it made the news Sensational. Further many doctors and nurse were badly trolled by the unwanted particle of society when they complained about lack of personal protective equipment. Let me take you to the first case of this virus in India, didn't remember? The first case of covid-19 was found in India on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2020. Well nobody questioned why people from other countries were allowed at that time and why such gathering was allowed? However most of the people are in their home so the need of media is at high rate, we can look at the increase in media grasping. Apart from this a positive step has been taken by the government through television. In order to continue learning process in lockdown among the students living in remote villages with poor internet connections. On doordarshan the lectures are scheduled for two hours in morning and evening every day for interested students. At the same time audio lectures are also broadcasted on radio. For visually challenged students efforts are made to get similar content on radio so that students can listen to the lectures and continue their learning. As of now, classes from 1<sup>st</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> will be assigned on doordarshan, later it will be extended to 12<sup>th</sup>. I'll how you one kindness of technology, in this fast growing world while everything is online. But still there are some traditional medium which are being used rapidly, people are using it with interest. Radio is one of them, it is one of the most important educational tool, which is used the most by the people during this lockdown. Every time radio has been one of the most powerful medium to reach masses. Yes, radio was found to be most trustable source for information in the time of covid-19 pandemic, as per latest research. According to AZ Research PPL, during covid-19 a total 82 percent of population has turned to radio, as FM channels are being categorized as second most trustable source in the name of credibility. Credibility score of radio is 6.27, for internet it's 6.44 and lowest in TV with 5.74, as per research. Research shows that radio listenership has taken a growth by increasing 23 percent in lockdown to 2.36 hours every day. It is so motivating that radio is coming out as one of the most credible and authentic source for infotainment. This study was done in top six metros of the country, in which a growth of 2.36 hours was recorded with 23%. The study was done in Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore, Kolkata, Pune and Hyderabad with a sample size of 3,300 people. Radio has always been a stable ally to everyone, in both tough and pleasant times. It is a medium which is used by people of remote village to metro cities throughout. In this lockdown radio has come out to be one of the trustable source. As radio is being one of the crucial medium doesn't only look on to entertainment but also checking upon the genuine and correct information. In these times the power and effectiveness of this medium is rapidly increasing. People are mostly turning to radio for their satisfaction of entertainment and also for the credible and genuine information.

### 2.2 Print Media

Most affected medium due to lockdown is print media, the distribution of print media's like newspaper and magazines have gone down. Many people fear and don't want to risk any possible transmission of virus through newspaper. For just a minute, remember how newspapers are made and distributed. In factory it is printed by machines and then sent to different location in the dark morning then the vendors collect it from different spots and then give it to subscribers of that particular. Now what people fear is transmission, as it is transferred through different peoples and different places. As it was officially announced that no transmission is possible through newspaper, but most of the people seems not satisfied by it. Most of the people are still taking the subscriptions. Honorable Prime Minister has also said that newspaper is having tremendous credibility, and play a critical role in creating awareness about the covid-19 outbreak at national and local level. This loss is not only confined to newspaper organizations but also vendors who supply newspaper door to door. They are going through heavy losses as only few newspaper copies are purchased. They buy the newspaper from depot, but no one is buying. In fact many people called them and said to not to deliver newspaper at their home. Their business were suffering very much losses as printing and distribution was stopped. Coronavirus pandemic has deepened the crisis for newspaper industry. As it was already suffering a lot in the era of digital media, was this loss acceptable? Due to lockdown, distribution of newspapers and magazine are adversely affected. Many people were posting on social sites about not getting newspaper, while others asked vendors to not circulate the newspaper. Due to fear of spreading disease, many people refused to take the newspaper and many vendors refused to circulate it. People are turning to online edition rather than risk their life to buy newspaper. Think of the consequences for the print that was already facing end in the era of digital media. Here Outlook, Mid-day and Times of India's Mumbai edition are various newspaper publication, they stopped their printing process till further notice. Not only newspaper but also magazines like outlook, suspended its print edition, and turned to online version of weekly magazine. Many of print organization have turned to online version or E-paper for their readers. Even if there is a fear of spread, then also people realized the credibility of newspaper, it can't be fake. Many dailies have emphasized their reader about credibility of news provided in newspaper and safety rates in newspaper. At distribution center proper sanitizing is done and provides gloves, masks and sanitizers to safeguard further risk. The TOI also added that respected epidemiologists and public health specialist have said people should not believe rumors about newspapers being unsafe to touch and called such fears "unscientific" and "irrational". Apart from this newspaper have also published a content regarding fake news stating "print is proof" and requesting readers for their fate until the truth in prints comes to them.

### 2.3 Advertisements:

Radio and television plays a proactive role in informing their listeners, viewers about the announcements, along with educating them about social distancing and the importance of "self- quarantine" as said by our prime minster Narendra Modi. Since radio, television

is used as an important source for advertising in our country we can't deny the fact that social media like Facebook, twitter does not play their role, but these platform are not generally used by rural people or we can say this platform are generally literate and educated people. But in a country like India almost 88% people of all household have TV and radio connection. So if any of the program or advertisement is shown or broadcast, all will gain access to them no matter they are illiterate or literate. There is a kind of impact on the life of the people from advertisement. Since, these advertisements are generally broadcast by their role model or any of the famous personality. These are the personalities, who use to advertise on certain condition are generally called communicator, used to communicate on certain relevant topics. The crowd of country is generally influenced by seeing famous personality on TV or listen to them on radio. They can be famous celebrity from Bollywood or any famous cricketer or any famous sportsperson. They follow them no matter what they are saying. They are not only coming up with their innovative awareness campaign but also offering brands with creative tools and services they are keeping listeners and viewers informed and entertained. Like radio, they have changed their communication strategy and they are focusing more on delivering the messages role of hygiene and social distancing, categories such as health care, OTT, online education, FMCG products like sanitizers, etc. will look at advertising on radio. We also believe that whether it's silencing rumors or voicing awareness, advertising company is proud to be the voice the message that brands would like to convey amidst the Covid-19 outbreak.

### III. SURVEY AND FINDING

We have conducted on survey on google survey document form, mailed to our relatives, friends and neighbors. There was a total of 36 respondent received. The majority of responses were between 15 to 20 years old and they made 64% of the respondents, in which majority of them were students. The respondent were asked, which medium do they prefer the most to get information, 50% of the respondent uses social media for collecting information, 38.9% uses television, rest go for newspaper and radio. The respondent were asked do they feel positivity in news on television, 47.2 % said no, 27.8% said yes and 25% said maybe. Respondent were asked about cross checking of news, 54.3% said yes while 45.7% said no. The respondent were asked about, have they seen any advertisement on coronavirus, 94.4% of them said yes while 5.6% people have not seen any advertisement. When it came to media credibility, question was asked that is media standing up on your expectation, 41.7% people said yes, while 27.8% said no and 30.6% said maybe. From this it is clear that most of the respondent uses social media for collecting information and majority of people don't feel positivity in news shown on television, and most of them crosscheck the news and credibility, which is most important in today's time. Advertisements are always impactful, and so this research shows. Majority of the people are getting what they wanted from media, media is standing on their expectation.

### IV. CHALLENGES

Media should show the impact of social distancing by creating general awareness among people. A crucial role is being played by media in spreading information to the people of across the nation. Media should let the people know about the lockdown that states has ordered and about what is necessary, beside highlight data of other countries should be included with the impact of epidemic and journals by scientist of other countries. In case people show any symptoms, in any case they should be told protocols to be followed. To inform the people about medical facilities and isolation protocols. Many channels and journalist have been criticized for spreading fake news. Our society has been seriously affected by "fake news", which led to increase in hatred and violence, and horrific incident of lynching". As per credibility, over 80% of people in metro have turned to radio. People are not finding the credible source in television or internet. Narratives are shown as facts and this causes the rise in fake news. Many important information are not given privilege, instead rumors and narratives are shown for whole time. The current situation of media is out of order, and in this case it's too rigorous to expose lurking data out of haze of government. Thus other than inquiring government's action freely, media is limited to only exhibit to the news which has ability to influence the importance placed on the topic of public agenda proposed by them. In this time when everywhere else in the world, all the prisoners are being released from the jail, here 25 to 30 arrested since the lockdown was announced, this incident is not getting any media privilege. News executives are impelled to show or promote influencing and constructive narrative done by the government. Misleading of information has been done throughout. There is a crisis of credibility in Indian media, in the race of the TRP and rating, sensation are put above sense. On private news channels debates have been condemn for being shrill and strident. In India, we have world's most vibrant and competitive media environment. Now it's high time to organize a reality check and have a look at what is wrong with it? The media should never be anti or pro government, rather it should what actually is going in the society. In this crisis news channel should more focus on entertaining the viewers with letting them know about the medical facilities available in country, what equipment are necessary in fighting this crisis, showing the fact based things rather than creating a hostility between two religion, caste, state or country.

### V. CONCLUSION

As we know social media is spreading its foot day by day, and becoming one of the most popular online activities for entertainment, but in these days it has become most popular for getting information about the world. According to study, it is true that majority of people are using social media for information. From this study it is clear that most of the people don't feel positivity in news shown on television. As we know negatives are always sensational, which increases the viewership and TRP, so in short they show what people want to see. That doesn't mean the way news are shown is correct. Moreover, news is news, it can't be fiction. Most of the people don't trust news so they cross check it with some authentic source. Advertising is most impactful tool for conveying the message, by this study it is proved, as majority of people are being satisfied by the advertising and understood the message that was given. Media is doing a fabulous job during quarantine, media has won the battle of providing all the information to the people, and it is proved by this survey, as most of the people are satisfied by media.

**REFERENCES**

- [1] Gadekar, R., Krishnatray, P., & Gaur, S. (2012). A descriptive study of Facebook use among Indian students. *Media Asia*.
- [2] Gurleen, K., & Sukhmani. (2011). A study of TV viewership patterns among youngsters in north India. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*.
- [3] Rajagopal, A. (2001). *Politics after television: Hindu nationalism and the reshaping of the public in India*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- [4] Khalid Mehraj, Hakim, Akhtar Neyaz Bhat and Hakeem Rameez Mehraj. "Impacts OF Media on Society: A Sociological Perspective." *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention* (2014).
- [5] Philo, G. (1990). *Seeing and believing: The influence of television*. London, United Kingdom: Routledge.

