"COVID-19: Role of Media and Issues Faced By Media"

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Abstract:

COVID-19 has spread to all over the world. Huge number of territories and countries is suffering from this issue and try to deal this pandemic situation. The first case of the corona virus infection is reported in India on 30th Jan 2020 in Kerala. First Lockdown is announced on 24th Mar 2020 by prime-minister Narendra Modi. The government trailed it up with lockdowns in 75 districts where COVID-19 cases had observed as well as all major cities. Media plays an important role for the nation in this epidemic situation. This article discussed about the role of media in this COVID-19 period. It also discussed about the challenges/issues faced by media.

Introduction:

What is COVID-19?

A novel corona virus also known as COVID-19 outbreak was first identified in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China in December 2019.Coronaviruses (CoV) are a large family of viruses that cause illness or sickness extending from the common cold to more serious diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS-CoV). A new corona virus (nCoV) is a new strain that has not been previously identified in humans. Common signs of infection include respiratory symptoms, fever, cold, and shortness of breath or breathing difficulties. In more serious cases, infection can cause pneumonia, severe critical respiratory syndrome; kidney failure and even it cause death.

Most people infected with the COVID-19 virus will experience minor to adequate respiratory disease and improve without lacking special treatment. Old age people and those with underlying medical problems like cardiac disease, diabetes disease, respiratory disease, and cancer are more likely to develop serious diseases. Standard recommendations by world Health Organization (WHO) to avoid infection and spread of COVID-19 include regular hand washing with soap, covering mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing or using mask, thoroughly cooking of meat and eggs before eating. Avoid close contact with anyone showing symptoms of respiratory illness such as coughing and sneezing is also protecting some extent from COVID-19.

Impact of COVID-19 and Lockdown:

It has declared a global health crisis by world Health Organization (WHO) that had a deep impact on the way we perceive our world and our everyday lives. Not only the rate of contagion or infection and patterns of transmission of this disease threatens everyone's sense of action, but also the safety measures put in place to contain the spread of the virus also require social distancing by nonparticipation from doing what is essentially human, which is to find comfort in the company of others.

There is huge impact of lockdown on the society. There is a great impact on social life of people as well as on psychological and health also gets hampered in this lockdown of paramedic crisis. "The Google Trends data suggests that stress levels in India skyrocketed during the lockdown, with search levels for stress exceeding that of several other countries which were under lockdown over the past few weeks. And along with stress, searches for therapy also have risen in the country." [21]

Effect on Social Life:

The social life of people had a great impact of COVID-19. As we know human being is a social animal. In this period people have time but restricted to gathering, social visits. Weekend plans and outing plans of people are hampered because of lockdown. The day-today lives of people get vulnerable. Buying vegetables, grocery is also becomes a difficult task.

The greatest psychological change among extensive crisis may be concerning simple social tasks, like checking in on neighbours, helpful for the penurious, food preparation for friends. Planning tends to become tentative and short-term. People cultivate moments of joy when danger recedes, knowing it might not last.

Psychological effect on People:

Social distancing seems to be hitting people even more than the scare of the deadly virus. People are getting highly restive and agitated in spite of social media connectivity. Cases of domestic violence have more than doubled in the country during this period. The government is currently all caught up in dealing with the immediate threat of the pandemic, which has disrupted daily life and toppled the markets. It will soon be imperative to consider and take proactive measures about the more long-term effects of the pandemic and a long-drawn lockdown.

Challenges:

Not only India but the number of countries which are suffering from this COVID-19 facing lots of challenges. The main challenge faced by government is economical challenge. Many packages are announced by the government to stabilize the economy of their nation.

Effect on Economy:

According to the survey, COVID-19 is having a 'deep impact' on Indian businesses, over the coming month's jobs are at high risk because firms are looking for some reduction in manpower. COVID-19 crisis has initiated an exceptional failure and collapse in economic happenings.

"It has caused the small proprietor-partnership businesses, travel/tourism and other service sectors to wind down. Such a situation poses a serious to the survival of daily-wage workers, roadside vendors, petty traders etc. because of less money in hand." [1] Large gatherings are going to be rare. Many weddings, sporting events or concerts would be ruled out. And a full return to commuting by public transit will also be delayed. Malls, gyms, restaurants, bar and places of worship, the list is endless. Sectors that would be much affected include logistics, auto, tourism, metals, drugs, pharmaceuticals, electronic goods, MSMEs and retail among others.

- **Agriculture** – The nationwide lockdown has left farmers across the country bereft of agricultural labour just before the crucial harvesting season. Farmers also uneasiness and had fear about government attaining and their capacity to trade their reaps, given that many agricultural markets are still locked, regardless of orders from the home ministry to exempt all farming activities from the shutdown. They are not able to sell their product in market. Vegetable and fruits are rotten in their field because of non-availability of transport or lockdown instructions. If by any means they able to manage transport they charged very high by the transporter and they get very less price for their product. As it was very hard to manage the crowd in vegetable market government has to close down the market for some days.
- **Textile** – Production halts in China and lockdown in India have had an impact. Mainly because of dependence on China for textile raw materials including synthetic yarn, synthetic

fabric, buttons, zippers, and hangers. India also exports cotton yarn in huge quantity to China, and poor demand in China has caused cotton prices to decrease in India.

- **Automotive** – The sector was already witnessing a sluggish demand for the last one year. The present situation has further aggravated the problem and compounded the situation with an acute liquidity crunch.

- **Hotels and restaurants** – Demand has dropped significantly with vendors stressed to recover the fixed costs.

- **Poultry** – Fictitious prerogatives regarding spread of COVID-19 through chicken and other meat have impacted the sales and price of poultry items.

- **Chemicals** – Dependence on China for active ingredients and shortage of essential chemicals amidst the lockdown has resulted in a reduced production of organic and inorganic chemicals across India.

- **Consumer durables** – Electronic appliances are going through a go-slow due to lack of demand, abridged economic activity, and supply chain dependencies with China and other impacted countries. India imports around 50 percent of its totally built units of consumer durables from China.

- **Entertainment and sports** – Places of crowd like cinema halls and malls have been closed in period of lockdown to maintain social distancing. Promotional and sport trials are also being called off. One of the major cricketing events in the country – Indian Premier League (IPL) has been postponed for the time being.

- **FMCG** – After the lockdown announcement, demand for essential FMCG products spiked up owing to hoarding and panic buying by consumers. Grocery items, milk, and hygiene products have seen an increase in demand while supply restrictions have limited the manufacturing capacities.

- **Pharmaceuticals** – According to Trade Promotion Council of India, the country imports from China about 85 percent of its total requirement of active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs). Dependencies for this on China have obstructed manufacturing operations of pharmaceuticals in India. However, request for essential medicines and safety equipment has gone up in this pandemic crisis. Government has controlled the export of some medicines and pharma products and is monitoring the overall inventory on regular basis.

- **E-commerce** – Several e-commerce players are unable to service existing orders and are not accepting new orders, even when there is a surge in demand for home delivery. However, companies are trying to provide facility of essential items on priority basis.

- **IT and ITeS** – Slowdown in markets have reduced the influx of IT projects from international markets. Work from home has given increase in demand for communication tools, conference platforms, and cyber security applications, among others. These software tools are being used across sectors such as education, finance, and HR to ensure business continuity.

Traffic Jam:

As lockdown extended in India it has led to a limited number of pass-holding vehicles on the road, but with the police having to check each pass manually, long jams have been created. After resealing borders with national capital, huge traffic build-up was witnessed at the Ghaziabad border near east Delhi as the movement of vehicles was restricted after this traffic jam. Traffic congestion was seen on Delhi Noida Direct (DND) Flyway amid people in the ongoing corona virus lockdown.

Migration:

This has been a huge migration of the people after partition of the India. Many daily-wages workers migrated to their native place because they are not able to survive in this lockdown period. India's business capital Mumbai has taken in the highest number of migrants. Migration from Mumbai, Delhi and Uttar Pradesh had huge migrants. In the lockdown period about tens of thousands of daily-wage migratory labours unexpectedly found themselves short of jobs or a source of income. Sudden, the

cities they had facilitated construct and run seem like to have turned their backs on them, the trains and buses which should have carried them home deferred.

So with the imminent anxiety of hunger, men with their families were forced to begin difficult journeys back to their villages by cycling or coupling rides on tuk-tuks, Lorries, water tankers and milk vans. For many, walking was the only option. Some travelled for a few hundred kilometres, while others covered more than a thousand to go home. They weren't always alone - some had young children and others had pregnant wives, and the life they had built for themselves packed into their ragtag bags.

Tablighi:

The centre of operations of Muslim missionary movement, the Tablighi Jamaat, in the slender roads of Nizamuddin area in New Delhi, is jam-packed of activity, with hundreds of flocks flooding in and out of the five-storey building. But, on Mar. 22, authorities of these Tablighi Jamaat shut its gates - with about 2,500 worshippers still inside - after it arisen that a religious assembly organised by the group on March 13-15 began the biggest corona virus spike in India. Of about 4,400 COVID-19 positive cases in India, nearly a third out of it is related to the religious gathering at the Markaz, as the Jamaat headquarters is known.

While condemning the Jamaat management of "carelessness" in the course of a global pandemic, experts and civil society members also blamed the central government for its late response and allowing foreigners into India, particularly those coming from COVID-19 hotspot nations such as Malaysia and Indonesia.

Fake News:

As today everyone is on social media and social app. Fake news related to social media is spread among the people e.g. COVID-19 is airborne. Counterfeit preventions related to COVID-19 like intake of gomutra or alcohol consumption prevent from this disease are spread among the people, which had negative impact among people. This results in panic situation in public.

Role of Media in COVID-19:

Media is one of the most powerful instruments of communication. It promotes the most crucial information and brings real and influential aspects of the world to a broad spectrum of people. Media refers to several links, namely- mass media broadcast media, print media, the web media and the digital media. But I will deal here with print and video.

The world is moving towards progress in every step of life because of the information we are educated with, daily. Social issues including poverty, violence, corruption, and bribery, suppression of human rights, rape, discrimination, and crime, killing in the name of honour are being covered by journalists daily. Today news channels, newspapers, radio, digital etc. help us to evaluate the facts of every social element with the pure and free effect. The media has given us a chance to explore the issues of society more naturally.

Media is all the more critical in a democracy. It is often regarded as the heart of a democratic society. Without media or free press, democracy cannot be thriving. In simple words, democracy is the government of the people, for the people and by the people. In this sense, the active and vigilant participation of media is essential in a democratic society. It is the voice of the people.

We can't even imagine a regular or even a "locked-down" day without news. The outbreak of corona virus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has created a worldwide health crisis that has had a profound impact

on the way we perceive our world and our everyday lives. The pace of contagion of transmission threatens our sense of agency. With quarantine, lockdown and social distancing being implemented, our only source of credible information is the media or press. In the time of lockdown, the one sector that has been working without adequate acknowledgment is the "press" or "media".

The journalists, like healthcare workers and delivery executives, are our front line resistance against the virus. The people running the press have to tackle the rough weather, leave their families behind and work tirelessly 24 hours a day. The news never stops. The kind of motivation that drives them is commendable. They brave every odd situation that comes their way.

The main agenda of this continuous work is to update people with all the latest information about the pandemic. The media, today, has secured people quarantined in their houses. They have eased the mental health of people under anxiety. They have given information on the degree and scale of the virus. They have provided us with suitable solutions. They have even entertained us as we sometimes need to deviate ourselves from difficult situations. All of this press is available in every regional language to cater to people living in every region of our diverse country. And it's not easy to provide news to such diverse viewers.

In times like these, media has become almost as necessary as food and clothing. The media is indeed playing an outstanding role in strengthening our society. But it also has the power to build or destruct communities. Fortunately, in India, its responsibility has revolved around informing & educating people. It helps us to know about the current situation around the world. The media has a strong social and cultural impact on society.

Amid of lockdown situation and social distancing, the role of media, including print media, is immense in every form. The media has formed various public discussions on COVID-19 and helped in disseminating information to a broader section of the people. "The media has ensured that the discourse shall focus on the concerns related to the current situation and trends. Through various mediums, it ensures to give awareness to the public on the spread of Corona virus, and the measures being undertaken by the government against its transmission."[18] " For example, through several effective mediums, such as the airing of PM *Modi's Mann ki Baat,* addressing on issues related to COVID-19 and current situation, which are thus accessible to the remotest and rural areas. "[19] It gathers processes and disseminates the information in the form of news as the "one-way" daily delivery system. However, as the flip side of the coin, each media house has the preferred audience to reach out. Therefore, there are differences in reporting of COVID-19 related issues by several media platforms.

Media, The one which has power to motivate a society towards prosperity or destruction can play a great role on impacting the lives of people in the situations like any pandemic, any natural disaster, or any accident. But these all things are good and really works only when media isn't corrupted or government don't have any influence on freely working of it but unfortunately both the things become true when talk about India media. There even though lockdown is still implemented then also many people not following it resulting in abruptly increasing virus cases. Now in this conditions media should come forward criticize government for it's bad decision (announcing lockdown very late), at the same time encouraging people to stay at home by using many a creative things.

These are testing times for the government and the media as COVID-19 continues to spread. The government seems rather unwilling to let critical voices have their say about the way in which the crisis is being dealt with. There is an explicit expectation that the media's coverage should be "positive" and follow the official line. While much of the media, corporate-owned as it is, has surrendered, a small section is courageously following journalistic ethics. The spread of the COVID-19 has proved deadly, and this is a challenging time for the union as well as state governments as they work to address this health emergency. However, shows that in times of crisis, democratic governments may take a dangerous autocratic turn. In such a situation, journalism has a great role to

play in a democracy, as it has been ideally visualised as a platform for objective information and critical-rational discourse. Thus, the health of journalism in a country can be examined in the times of a crisis.

However, corporate control over most media bodies also means that they become an instrument of the ideological apparatus of the state. There are many concerns associated with the COVID-19 crisis: ill-equipped public health systems, policies to combat the pandemic, and the lack of planning and support to the vulnerable sections. These issues demand serious examination, but the mainstream media, barring some courageous exceptions, seems to be forgetting its democratic role. The vilification of migrant labourers and a minority community whilst failing to critique the lack of measures to help these sections deal with the crisis is an important such indicator.

Fake News and Media:

Media play a key role, also coupled with increased responsibility, in providing accurate, reliable information to the public, but also in preventing panic and fostering people's understanding for and cooperation with necessary restriction. Media organisations and journalists should adhere to the highest professional and ethical standards, give priority to authoritative messages regarding the crisis, and refrain from publishing, and thus amplifying, unverified stories.

News like Daily News &Analysis (DNA) by Sudhir Chaudhary who is an editor-in-chief of zee news and news anchor of DNA give clarity about COVID-19 with Corona virus के ख़िलाफ़ भारत की 'डरो नहीं करो' नीति का विश्लेषण and COVID-19 pandemic has changed lives. Many entertainment TV channels give a break of 20 seconds which is a reminder of hand wash break. As we discussed in challenges about the fake news media has great help to make people aware of correct preventing practices of COVID-19. As print media is restricted for some days digital media is only source of getting news related to COVID-19 in lockdown period, journalist and reporters of media are there 24X7 to keep public connected with outside world. Many sessions are organized by regional and national news channels with medical experts to increase awareness of COVID-19 among people, which leads to increase the positive thinking of the people and avoid panic situation.

To lessening fear of disease and to motivate people in this lockdown period of COVID-19 media telecast many videos of celebrities who are their own work and how they spend time and treat this period. These types of shows give a moral boost to common people to live happily in this period.

Fake news consists of useless, incorrect, or may be harmful information, which can harm the public health response and incite a social disorder, further, leading to a law & order situation. "During the lockdown period, the Maharashtra Cyber Cell registered 115 cases against individuals for their alleged involvement in spreading fake news and hate speeches. The government of Maharashtra had issued an advisory explaining 'dos and don'ts' regarding the fake news and rumours related to Corona virus pandemic".[17] "In a similar situation of 'infodemic' in Assam, police registered 52 cases in which 25 people were arrested for spreading fake news over social media and instant messaging applications. The Cyber Cell and police force are ensuring that no rumour or fake newsmonger is left unpunished."[18]

Keep Entertained:

As there is an outburst of disease people are in stress, media had a great help to overcome from such situation. With all the shootings at a standstill due to the corona virus lockdown and reserve episodes of new shows depleting, television channels are reintroducing old and recent hits such as "Ramayana", "Kasam Se", "Kumkum Bhagya" and "Bigg Boss" to name a few.

Some of them are also airing popular Hindi web shows on their channels to keep the slots occupied as people turn to TV and streaming platforms to stay entertained as they spend time indoors in this lockdown period. All the shoots were suspended from March 19, impacting the on-air shows though some of them have episode banks to last till this month. Doordarshan will be telecasting mythological series "Ramayan" from Saturday on public demand.

Issues face by Media:

Across India, instances of healthcare and essential services workers being attacked in small and big towns have been reported over fears that they may help spread the virus. Writing and reporting about these instances and keeping people informed about government measures have journalists confronting a situation that most of us prepare ourselves throughout our careers- ensuring that information that reaches people is accurate while hanging on to our wafer-thin job security. Some news media outlets with a national reach taking austerity measures such as layoffs and pay-cuts for their staff have already been reported. But while bigger newspapers, TV channels, and digital outlets with corporate backing may weather the storm, journalists in smaller outlets are tackling even bigger challenges than just pay-cuts. While serving the people 24X7 journalists had tested positive for COVID-19

Just like in many other sectors, the corona virus pandemic has also had a great impact on the media. In a time when professionals from different occupations are trying to manage work from home, correspondents, who usually spend a significant part of their time on the field, running after stories and people, and the whole media sector, in general, find themselves face-to-face with new challenges. Fighting an increase in fake news, managing work remotely, and the traditional media's adaptation of a new digital model will be among the many tests the sector will have to go through.

Currently, journalists are listed under essential services, but the general lockdown has hit those without vehicles. Many young journalists had moved on to using a combination of public transport and Uber, Ola. They have been badly hit. The police, too, are uncomfortable when they stop media professionals at a checkpoint that is far from their home and office.

In Mumbai, for example, some of the infected journalists have homes in an apartment complex built for media professionals. The entire complex has been sealed to prevent community spread.

Media outlets are facing severe financial pressure due to the loss of advertising revenue and circulation going down. As distribution networks are down, THE WEEK is printing only from one centre now. Stand sales of all publications have come down to nil; only house deliveries are continuing. On the advertising front, for example, summer usually brings ads of white goods. Akshaya Tritiya, the auspicious day for buying metals, usually sees heavy advertising from jewellers. All that has been wiped out.

The media sector will have to adapt to survive. Technology will play a bigger part in the sector as digital media gains power. Yet, digitalization surely will bring along new challenges and problems with it. For instance, as social media takes place of conventional media, the problem of fake news will be more obvious than ever.

Social distancing guidelines drive cancellations of live events nationwide at stadiums, arenas, theatres, resorts, theme parks and other venues, resulting in lost revenues from ticket sales, merchandising, advertising, and promotions. The cancellations affect not just the main performers or teams, but also stadium workers, businesses in close proximity and the community at large in terms of economic impact.

Social distancing guidelines trigger office closings, requiring more employees to work remotely. This may increase cyber security risks. Compensation and benefits may not be adequate in the wake of the crisis. Suspension of movie and television production causes delays in release dates. Upfront go digital, an untested format that could negatively impact ad sales. Social distancing generates a boost in digital media — video and music streaming and downloads, as well as online publications.

New state and local tax implications arise for employees who are now working remotely as a result of the crisis. Tax compliance operations could lag as newly remote employees lack timely access to information. In the short term, changes to income statements — such as short-term losses — may affect forecasts.

A sudden or prolonged economic downturn will likely lead to media to consider significant budget cuts to eliminate discretionary spending. Remote work and social distancing will create demand for accurate update of news by media. The crisis underscores the need for flexible, resilient business models, including increased focus on cash-flow forecasting.

Fan energy lags, as postponed events don't generate the same interest they originally did. The crisis could fundamentally change how some sports are viewed, becoming "studio" events with empty venues. Some sports segments that are currently stalled due to COVID-19.

List of issues in brief:

- Health - Suffered by COVID-19 as working to telecast the news in outside world 24X7, make sure that information that reaches people is correct.
- Pay-cuts - Due to the loss of advertising and promotion revenue and flow going down.
- Transport – Media comes under essential services and lockdown transport is not available.
- Event Cancellation: Many events cancelled due to lockdown in COVID-19.

Conclusion:

The onslaught of the COVID - 19 pandemic has changed the social lives of people across regions and economic sections. The lockdowns and restriction on movement of people has not only led to an increased demand for content but has also changed content consumption patterns. Imagine, for a moment, a raging pandemic in India without credible journalists to verify the facts. Rumours would become the only information available. Amidst the uncertainty, fears would grow. The panic in society that any government rightly fears would be much worse without trusted facts to counter it. Everyone should wish India well in its war against corona virus.

Media had a great role in to make aware people about COVID-19 and spread awareness about fake news and reality of this disease. Media keep updated all the people by working hard. Problems like migration, transport and many more are enlightened by media and keep people aware all the time.

Media faced many issues like health. Many reporters and journalist are suffered by COVID-19, many of them suffered with high stress. As media is an essential service in spite of all these problems they serving people at their best.

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