

## Role of Social Media: Amid lockdown

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### Abstract

The present study focuses on the impact of social media on the lives of the people amid lockdown because of the pandemic created by the recent created disease of corona virus. In the times, social media was considered as the problem by the family members as the people used to spend excess of time on this platform but the same platform has now become the source of survival for the people who are locked in their homes during this pandemic. Social media became a major tool for virtual connection and interaction with our beloved. This pandemic situation across the worldwide forced to turn global village into social media villages.

**Keywords:** social media; viral, social distance; lockdown; corona virus; pandemic

### 1. Introduction

Social media can be defined as the applications including various forms of websites which are helping its users to run and get information as well as use it according to their applicability. This media helps the people from the different regions, states, countries to be in connection with each other, it also helps the individuals to provide some of the information about the happenings in the world. Social media includes social networking sites and blogs where people can easily connect with each other (Siddiqui S & Singh T., 2016). Social media has helped in removing barriers and restrictions which were being faced by the people in earlier times. People can have access to each and every thing, shopping items, news channels, office work, and leisure activities just sitting at their places and clicking a button. Social media has impacted various facets of modern life and it has profound influence in inter-personal communication (Subramanian K.R., 2017) [2]. All these advantages of social media are known to each and every person but what limited our actual use was the time. But because of this lockdown individuals can look upon the advantages of the social media and side-line the negative impacts.

In this lockdown situation social media is also being used as a weapon to share viewpoints by the delegates of the world. The WHO has held its recent conferences via video conferences as the meeting isn't possible amid the fears of COVID-19, the SAARC meeting between various nations was also held through the medium of social media, higher authorities of not only our country even the worldwide is holding the meetings and conferences through the use of video calling, central government also giving their advisory and useful information related to COVID-19 through these platforms, state government also clarifying related doubts of the citizens and reduce rumours about the same. This lockdown has proved the positive impacts of social media as this is the need of the hour. It was in news recently that the doctors of the world are also connecting with each other through the use of social media to discuss the stage of the disease and the ways of combating it in a better way. Thus,

social media has proved a boon not only for the individuals sitting at their places rather than the esteemed delegates of the country. This has helped maintaining a connection worldwide to collectively come together for combating the disease. The popularization of smartphones and the social media allows the world to be constantly and conveniently connected (Woolley S., 2013) [10]. Social media is emerging as a most vital tool of communication which is equipped with the ability to share information, mould opinion, connecting individuals and communities and tool of active participation (Bala K., 2014) [11].

Pandemic is a situation when a disease spreads to the whole nation or the whole world. During this time the government with their intelligence has to take some of the critical measures to stop the spread otherwise it can take the whole nation into its trap and devastation would be the next thing to happen. The term Pandemic has been used to describe the diseases that are new or are at least attached with the novel variants of existing organisms (Morens D.M., Folkers G.K & Fauci A.S., 2009) [3]. It has been recent outbreak of the news regarding the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) which earlier started from the Wuhan City of China in the month December 2019 and slowly and steadily it took over the whole world. The whole world including our country India is facing the pandemic and still there is no vaccine for the disease. All the doctors, medical staffs across the world is fighting for bringing the situation back to normal and so is being done by the Indian government. As the spread is through people to people, the government has now-a-days announced a lockdown of the whole nation for few days. Coronavirus are known to have a high mutation and recombination rate, which allows them to break all barriers and adapt to new hosts (Lau S.K.P & Chan J.F.W., 2015) [4]. During this period of lockdown, no individual is allowed to leave their homes and maintain social distancing as well as they has to strictly follow the guidelines being provided by the health ministry.

Now as each and every person is trapped in their homes, they have only one source of entertainment and time pass

i.e. social media. The advantages of the social media which was criticised some time ago is being watched during this period of lockdown. People have started spending time with their family members, they have started enhancing their lost hobbies, they are allowed to work from home, they are reconnecting with their old friends via internet which they lost because of busy life schedule; they have started watching their favourite television shows. All these things are possible because of the internet facility and social media. Due to the prevalence of social media in our lives, the people are getting connected with each other which help in framing a perception that people are happier as they are connected with more people (Christensen, Spencer P., 2018). COVID-19 outbreak has resulted in a significant upsurge in data consumption across the World. As the dependency of every citizen on internet to connect with each other's through social platform create pressure on telecommunication service providers and consistency of data speed will be also decreased. As per the data of Ministry of Telecommunication, India has about 687.62 million internet users, of which only 22.26 million are wired broadband users while the remaining are mobile or wireless internet users. Due to the lockdown in all over the India and some companies giving preference to work from home COAI (Cellular Operators Association of India) estimates that the data consumption across the India on average has increased 30% in the lockdown period especially during peak hours of 9-11 am and 4-9 pm. As per another government reports reveal that data consumption will increase by 30% at least over the next few weeks and the upticks will continue till lockdown exist. The Economic Time reveals the consumption of the internet data that mobile internet usage had increased only by around 10% on average since the start of the lockdown. A recent study was described in the Amar Ujala newspaper that the mobile phone has a lot of uses which can be used during this lockdown period like giving a presentation via mobile phones, metrological services can also be implemented via phone. Thus, there is no need to panic regarding the work as even those who aren't having any digital gadgets at home can use their mobile phones to work from home.

#### **Impact of social media on lives of People amid lockdown**

**Helping in fulfilling the lost hobbies:** During the lockdown, as people are sitting at home, they are practising their hobbies which they don't get time to do in their daily life schedule. With the help of YouTube, they can watch how to master their hobbies and enjoy their lifestyle to the fullest. People can learn cooking, dancing, tailoring, gardening etc by just sitting and watching the YouTube videos. Social media diversifies a person's skills, which in turn helps them navigate the modern society successfully (Akram W. & Kumar R., 2017) [6]. Most of the youngster trying to fulfil their friend's challenges over the social media platforms such as some daring to post on WhatsApp status, sharing some childhood memories and more things while someone is playing online games with their peer groups like; Ludo, Carom, chess, pubg and others online games.

**Connecting with the old friends:** This lockdown time has given all the people a chance to once again connect with the people which wasn't possible earlier as they were following a tight workout.

Social media has removed all communication interaction barriers and everyone today can communicate their thoughts on any of the topics (Harchekar J. S., 2017) [7]. People are taking this lockdown time as an opportunity to call or recall their old or childhood friends because of the tight schedule or less time to talk with them in normal days. People are using many social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter and more for the interaction over the video calls and chats.

**Watching favourite TV shows:** One part of social media includes television also. With the coming up of the mobile phones, laptops and other electronic gadgets the importance of television has been lowered but still people prefer to watch it other than keeping their eye on the electronics. In the busy schedule they don't get that much time for television but this lockdown has given them a time has an eye on the television and watches their favourite channels with great zeal and enthusiasm. Television stimulates and reinforces ideas, beliefs and tendencies already possessed by the viewer (Bhandari N., 2017) [8]. Instead of the television some of the social media platform such as Netflix, Amazon prime, Hotstar and more given an option for the people to access easily to choose their favourite serials, movies, songs etc during this lockdown.

**Work from home:** One of the important part which the social media is giving is that the employees don't have to curb their work in this lockdown period they can still continue with the work from home by just sitting and conducting various conferences, presentations, teachings etc by the use of technologies. Social media refers to the use of web-based and mobile technologies to turn communication into interactive dialogue (Baruah T.D., 2012) [9].

#### **Role of Social Media in Pandemic Situation**

- Social media is a very good source of information. We don't have to go anywhere and just sit down at any place and remain updated about the all-round happenings.
- Social media is a source of global communication. Through various networking sites we can connect to any part of the world.
- Social media can be a platform where one can share their viewpoints without any fear or stage facing.
- Social media can be a site where individuals can fight for bringing in the social changes and they can also come up with new patterns and ideas.
- Social media has today become a platform also to show the talents which ever a person is possessing.

#### **Conclusion**

With the above stated literatures about the advantages of social media it is concluded that during the period of lockdown it is the social media which provides individuals with a ray of hope. People are supposed to not go anywhere still they get each and every information about the country at their homes, people should utilise this lockdown period to spend with their family members and enjoy and every moment which wasn't possible from the past various years. The period of pandemic spread gives chance to each and every individual to contribute towards their nation by not going anywhere.

Social media can be a friend and the lockdown time period proves this fact.

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