PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt / Egyptology

# IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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**Abstract:**

The world is facing the extensive spread of severe acute respiratory syndrome-corona virus-2. It demands special treatment of a dangerously ill patient and causes a great damage in economic and social structured. The Covid-19 Pandemic has had an enormous impact on the entire world in past few months. This pandemic has affected adversely the users of social media such as the general people and other professionals. Social networking services have been engaged to spread information to find humour and diversion from the pandemic via internet. In addition to being a global threat, the Covid-19 has created an excessive amount of information concerning a problem such that the solution is made more difficult. Users' direct accessing to the content of social media platforms easily influences them and questionable information. Social networking sites allow us to communicate, share, ideas, activities, events, play games, listen music, thus helping us to create own virtual social space where we identify ourselves as one unique among the others. Social media has become undoubtedly an amicable source of entertainment, news and global awareness. Social media platforms have widely used during the pandemic due to measure social distancing encouraged by governments. People are informed to stay at home for avoiding the epidemic that is why they have been diverted to social media to maintain their relationships and to access entertainment to pass the time. Moreover, social distancing has compelled to change the way of life, creates un-relaxation on mental health. To utilise this opportunity many on line counselling services have been introduced with the connection of mental health workers, which help to raise popularity of social media. This review explains both the positive and negative impact of social media during Covid-19 epidemic on health-care professionals and on the general population. The capacity to bringing people closure than never before, social media have also established new and special challenges, including phenomena of cyber-bullying, exploiting public opinion and other forms of crime. Despite of this, social media can prove itself a positive weapon for influencing people's behaviour and flourish the well-being of individual and public health.

**Introduction:**

Social media are the widest used sources of information in the world. They make an easy and inexpensive access to the internet, so that a large number of users get opportunity in accessing to one of the earliest and most effective ways to disseminate information. With the help of technological advancement, it has been playing a significant role in human lives. It is making easier and better lives day by day with its advancement. Social media platforms are one of the boons of technology. Social media is the only connecting network to the outside world during the Covid-19 pandemic. Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, or TikTok etc. are running in the web world in this pandemic era. If we think about it, these platforms or applications are the most powerful tools of 21st Century.

As social media been an inspirational means of mass communication these enable us in experiencing the world connecting, sharing positive information and getting guidelines

through these. Because of these when social media performs its true role, it positively connects, motivates and enrich our lives as a savoir faire. Social media platforms are doing wonders in many aspects, especially during the corona virus pandemic, on the other hand it is leading to nowhere but hatred and chaos.

Due to terrible nature of the infection and the resultant lockdown, which forced people to remain imprisoned within the four walls of their homes, the social media has come handy for the users to communicate with each other. According to Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) data usage has been seen over 20% surge on average, with far higher demand in urban areas. Social media has changed journalism practice. Real-Time audience engagement has given rise to crowd sourcing content, and even reporting tasks like verification can now be outsourced to the audience. On Covid-19 many information are being floated on social media platforms.

There are reports that propaganda in abundance on the social media platforms about the pandemic. Just about everyone has something to say about pandemic that is the possible cure of the disease in traditional Indian medicines and also home treatment procedures. Besides such media reports about misinformation there is already prevailing panic among the people. In some cases complaints were lodged with the police against people who are spreading fake news on Corona virus outbreak in the social media.

The social media platforms are been used to overcome mental agony during the mass quarantine and lockdown. This crisis highlights the strength of social media in how they can be used for emotional support. In social platform, people shared many funny videos about how to creatively deal with the lockdown, created neighbourhood facebook groups that organize entertainment and practical support to help neighbours who need assistance with essential commodities or medicines and the quick rise of apps and functionalities allowed live chat and video conference with multiple people at a time.

Social media must be restricted for using these platforms to prevent the spread of misinformation and rumours. An urgent requirement should have to recover the panic due to social media taking a priority in the society. Since the information increases rapidly through social media, it is necessary to monitor and manage rumour. World Health Organisation conveyed that determining the primary causes of fear, anxiety and igniting the misinformation through social media is of serious concern. Therefore, social media should be used for wisely since it provides an opportunity to acknowledge the measures to be undertaken and to advice to prevent misinformation and panic. Governments and healthcare authorities should use social media to spread updates, news and scientific reports about Covid-19.

**Social Media Engagement Rate (Increases in usage) in various ways:**

1. **Messaging and Calling App Services:**
   The usage of social media websites have been significantly increased as it is advised to maintain social distancing. Since many people cannot connect with their friends and family in person, for the time being, social media has become the main form of communication to maintain these valuable connections. For example, Facebook and WhatsApp reports show and significant increase in overall messaging over 50% and 40% respectively. Similarly, there is a noticeable increase in the use of Zoom and for other App went a 5% in March 2020. Other new Group Quarantine Chat that connects people randomly after its launching of on 1st March 2020.
2. **Psycho-Care Online Services:**
   The overburden of information and regular usage of social media increases depression and anxiety. Many elaborating psychological researches are proving that the significantly increasing number of connectives with each other develops a sense of belonging and

psychological wellbeing, which boost-up mental health and reduces risk for anxiety and depression.

3. **Social Media Used As A Tool of Entertainment:**
   Internet contents have been proved as great source of entertainment during the vulnerable period of pandemic. It has provided a space for young people to share their thoughts. It also played jokes and entertain self-quarantining teenagers, and its member had crossed in Zoom software usage has over 5 lakh members as of April 2020. The group entertains the hundreds of thousands of young people who compelled to switch to online school, and passing extra time to cope with the situation. During the pandemic social media has faced a unique challenge to link individuals to one another and to bring entertainment of the individual's attempts. Celebrities are to alter their videos on YouTube to produce make-up looks that work around wearing a mask to prevent the spread of the pandemic.

4. **Impact of Covid-19 on Online Business:**
   During pandemic many businesses shut down and workers become either out of job and working from home. People are compelled to stay at home in self-isolation and quarantine as an effective measure of preventing the spread of Covid-19. Due to this online businesses have been emerged in a rather opportune position. Many business organisations are losing sales because there were no walk-in customers, while businesses with a social networking websites are serving more customers than ever.

5. **Dissemination Information:**
   Social media has been used negative and positively in both ways. Valid information was aired which valued enormously, at the same time misinformation diverted people in wrong way and causing depression and anxiety. The World Health Organisation, Medical Journals, and Health Care Organisation have been updating and dissemination information across numerous platforms to educate the general people about the effect of social distancing, wearing mask and PPE such as Facebook, Google Scholar, TikTok etc.

6. **Misinformation:**
   The spread of misinformation by the social media can influence a bad effect and therefore government should take precautionary measures to the virus. Political leaders are ornamenting and manipulating the spreading misinformation to general people. Misinformation can be spread strategically or by mistake. Misinformation has the budding to make the pandemic very dangerous. Therefore, Social media rumours have a problem in India and other countries also.

7. **Risk Control and Disaster Management:**
   Social media platform like Twitter, Facebook etc. had a great role for spreading public health awareness and encouragement regarding public health issues. An active page on Twitter and Facebook are controlling by The Centre of Disease Control (CDC) to allow users to post large numbers of short messages in less time. The role of Social networking sites serve as disaster management that during pandemic or any emergency it can prevent or easily communicate and access information.. Social media playing as a lifesaving role that is minimize risk and disaster management.

8. **Reliability impact on social media:**
   The unreal health information has been served on social media which affects the true concept of Covid-19 virus. During pandemic ample medical or health related information are served often unknown, incomplete, informal and without references. Health workers should make aware general people patients try to find genuine information only on reputable websites were quality assurance is there. The WHO advised the internet service provider taking initiative to serve only validated information on pandemic so that people can get truthful information and reliable health related advice.

**Conclusion:**

An amount of large volume of potentially dangerous misinformation has been flustered about Covid-19 pandemic and much of it has been disseminated via social media which is capable of threatening public safety, aggravating crisis management and can cause fear, stress, depression and anxiety in people with or without be the causing of psychiatric illness. The False rumour about Covid-19 spread faster than the virus. But at the same time many researches demonstrated the efficacy of providing and transmitting truthful facts by health experts. The responsible use of social media positively helps during a pandemic to spreading speedily new important information, sharing diagnostic, treatment and follow-up protocols. Pessimist information about pandemic related to devastating condition may lead to depression and in some extreme cases, the suicide. Therefore, it is the suggestion not to contribute to infodemic and follow a responsible use of social media when disseminating information.

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