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Dr. Anoop Kumar

Communication Scenario During COVID-19 Pandemic: Issues and Challenges

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Role of Public Service Advertisement in Spreading Awareness Among Rural Mass during COVID Pandemic: A Case Study of Amaramudnooru Village

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Awareness Through Social Media During the Corona Pandemic: Study on Role of the Odisha Government

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A Comparative Analysis of English Dailies on Coverage of Ayodhya Verdict and Integration Between Religion and Politics

Prof. Manoj Dayal, Anshula Garg

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From the Editor

Mass Media is a significant force in modern culture and society. It has the power to mobilize mass movements. When Mass Media has become one of the most dynamic and fastest growing disciplines of our times, particularly in India, Pragyaa: Journalism of Mass Communication (Pragyaa: JOMC) has the responsibility to explore all the significant changes and developments and to provide insightful research on new trends in the area of mass media and communication. Pragyaa: JOMC is a bi-annual, peer reviewed, open access Journal. The Journal welcomes high quality research papers/articles, review articles and case report describing original research in the fields of communication and mass media studies. This issue of Pragyaa: JOMC presents five research papers/articles covering diverse areas of Mass Communication.

In this issue, the first paper on 'Spread of Infodemic and Disinfodemic: A Qualitative Content Analysis of COVID-19 Related Mis/Disinformation Debunked by Alt News' attempts to understand the widespread prevalence of COVID-19 related misinformation and disinformation debunked by Alt News. Second Paper 'Communication Scenario During COVID-19 Pandemic: Issues and Challenges' aims to understand the role and significance of communication during pandemic and to identify various communication practices adopted by people during this hour of need and explore challenges that it brought forth. A third study on 'Role of Public Service Advertisement in Spreading Awareness Among Rural Mass during COVID Pandemic: A Case Study of Amaramudnooru Village' analyses the efficacy of Public service advertisements and public belief in bringing India back on the track from the Covid-19 pandemic. Fourth paper on 'Awareness Through Social Media During the Corona Pandemic: Study on Role of the Odisha Government' examines the impact of social media in creating awareness during the pandemic and the role played by the Odisha Government. Fifth paper entitled 'A Study of Cognitive Effects of New Media Among the Ageing Population in Kolkata' attempts to study some approaches that technology-based intervention might address the issues of social isolation and loneliness among the older adults in this present pandemic situation. A sixth study on 'Role of Community Radio in Health Communication: A Case Study of Suno Sharda 90.8 FM in Greater Noida' analyses the different health-based programs produced by this Community Radio Station and the extent of awareness it creates among the local community. Seventh paper on 'Effects of Virtual Education during COVID-19: A Content Analysis' shows how education institutes are adapting to the current situation by using technologies through online learning that is impacting education. Eighth paper on 'Qualitative Study on Effective Health Communication During the Outbreak of COVID-19 Pandemic' aims to evaluate the communication hindrances faced by health workers and the patients. Ninth Paper on 'A Comparative Analysis of English Dailies on Coverage of Ayodhya Verdict and Integration Between Religion and Politics' aims to highlight how religious issues are integrated with politics, how political parties use the common man as a weapon to do their party politics by crafting such incidents and divides the communities for their own benefits.

We are thankful to the authors for their scholarly contributions to the Journal. We express our gratitude to our panel of referees for the time and thought invested by them into the papers and for giving us sufficient insights to ensure selection of quality papers. We would like to acknowledge the valuable contributions of Prof. Gautam Sinha (VC), Dr. Vikash Singh (Associate Editor) and all the faculty members of School of Mass Communication in preparing the reader friendly manuscript for the Press.

We hope our readers find the contents, findings and suggestions contained in this issue of Pragyaa: JOMC as informative, stimulating and of practical relevance. We welcome comments and suggestions for further improvement in the quality of our Journal.

Thanking You

With Best Wishes

Dr. Sushil Kumar Rai

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Spread of Infodemic and Disinfodemic: A Qualitative Content Analysis of COVID-19 Related Mis/Disinformation Debunked by Alt News

*Dr. Anoop Kumar

ABSTRACT

COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted daily life of people across societies and nations. It has posed critical threats to health and well-being of the public. People's fight against the pandemic has further become challenging amid the rise in the spread of infodemic and disinfodemic. Rapid and rabid spread of epidemic of COVID-19 related misinformation and disinformation has contaminated the information landscape and curtailed people's sense-making ability necessary for combating the pandemic. Infodemic is an information outbreak wherein deluge of both accurate and inaccurate information about a disease makes it extremely difficult for people to sift through the available information, find verifiable and reliable information from trustworthy sources and identify appropriate solution(s). Disinfodemic refers to epidemic of disinformation which creates doubt on medical sciences, undermines public health response, disempowers people and yields risk-behaviours subject to a matter of life and death. Drawing on the disempowering and deadly effects of infodemic and disinfodemic, the present study attempts to understand the widespread prevalence of COVID-19 related misinformation and disinformation. This study is based on the qualitative content analysis of COVID-19 related misinformation and disinformation debunked by Alt News, Indian fact checking website and a signatory partner of the International Fact-Checking Network.

Keywords: Misinformation, Disinformation, Infodemic, Disinfodemic, Fake News, Alt News, Coronavirus, COVID-19

1. Introduction

With its outbreak, in 2019 the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has proven to be challenging to deal with for nations across the Globe. Various stakeholders including governments, public health institutes and international organisations among others are collaborating to respond to the critical public health emergency created by COVID-19. In addition to COVID-19, the epidemic of information around the coronavirus has become pervasive and thus difficult for people to identify useful information. This phenomenon is known as infodemic which is the tsunami of both accurate and inaccurate information. World Health Organization (WHO) (2020) in its Situation Report on Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) reported, "The 2019-nCoV outbreak and response has been accompanied by a massive 'infodemic' - an overabundance of information – some accurate and some not

– that makes it hard for people to find trustworthy sources and reliable guidance when they need it" (p. 2). Infodemic obstructs timely public health response by creating confusion and sowing distrust. Given the damaging and deadly impact of infodemic, the Director-General of the WHO, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, said at the Munich Security Conference on 15th February 2020, "We're not just fighting an epidemic; we're fighting an infodemic." WHO's risk communication team has launched a new platform namely WHO Information Network for Epidemics (EPI-WIN) to combat the epidemic of misinformation pertaining to COVID-19 (Zarocostas, 2020). Infodemic is a portmanteau term for information and epidemic which was coined by political scientist David J. Rothkopf in 2003 in an article published by The Washington Post.

Social media provides the fertile ground for rapid spread of infodemic. The contagious spread of epidemic of

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misinformation and disinformation gets amplified through social media networks. Sylvie Briand, architect of WHO's strategy to contain the infodemic, tells *The Lancet* that every epidemic or outbreak is followed by deluge of information but with social media the problem of infodemic has further got worsened: "the difference now with social media is that this phenomenon is amplified, it goes faster and further, like the virus that travels with people and goes faster and further. So, it is a new challenge" (Zarocostas, 2020, p. 676).

UNESCO policy brief uses the term disinformation to broadly denote the potentially serious, negative and harmful impacts of false and misleading information related to COVID-19. Going beyond the intention which demarcates misinformation from disinformation, UNESCO shifts the focus on fatal impacts of false and fabricated information. According to Posetti and Bontcheva (2020, p. 2), "the impact of the false content, irrespective of intentions, is potentially the same. In both cases, people are disempowered by being actively disinformed." UNESCO policy brief also coins the term disinfodemic to address the toxic and deadly nature of disinformation amid COVID-19. UNESCO policy brief describes broader use of the term disinformation and disinfodemic in respect of COVID-19 in following terms: "It is this focus on the damaging effects of fabricated and misleading information, rather than the motivations for its creation and dissemination, that explains the broad use of the term disinformation" (Posetti & Bontcheva, 2020, p. 2).

Fake news (popular term denoting misinformation and disinformation) has serious and deadly impact on human lives and communities. Fake news exploits existing fault lines between communities and further widens them. India's religious fault line has been an important theme in online misinformation and disinformation (Menon, 2020). With COVID-19 pandemic, this fault line was further exposed. Following the religious gathering in Delhi where members of the Tablighi Jamaat, an Islamic group, were tested positive for coronavirus, scores of false, misleading and deceptive claims and conspiracy theories were made to target Muslim community and spread communal hatred (Menon, 2020). The menace of fake news took a dangerous turn after the controversial Tablighi Jamaat congregation when the entire Muslim community was projected as spreader of the virus. Various fake, misleading and deceptive stories claimed that Muslims were spreading the virus deliberately. This hatred resulted in economic boycott of businesses run by Muslims. Sahoo (2020) reports that India's fake news problem is more lethal since there is a large base of social media users but

the regulation of the same is not clear. This shows that fake news in general and especially in the time COVID-19 has turned out to be damaging and harmful not only for public health but for social harmony as well.

Given the damaging and life-threatening effects of misinformation and disinformation around COVID-19 in respect of public health crisis and social equilibrium, it is essential to understand the pervasive dangers of fake news, popular themes, platforms used for dissemination, intentions and responses among others. It is against the backdrop of the need for understanding the hazards of fake news, the present study attempts to analyse and provide systematic description of the menace of infodemic and disinfodemic pertaining to COVID-19.

2. Review of Literature

Fake news a phenomenon where misleading, biased and false information is created and circulated with varying degrees of intention. Fake news is works contrary to "news" which is verified, objective, factually correct and which caters to the larger public interest. Several scholars have defined fake news based on various dimensions. However, the common ground for fake news among scholarly definitions is level of facticity or verifiability and the very intention or degree of deception (Tandoc et. al., 2018; Wardle & Derakhshan, 2018). Based on the verifiability and intention, Wardle and Derakhshan (2018) have described three types of fake news: misinformation, disinformation and malinformation. Misinformation consists of verifiably false information but the intention of the person who publishes or shares may not be to harm someone. Disinformation consists of verifiably false content, factually incorrect information and fabricated stories which are deceptive in nature. The intention of disinformation is to harm people and communities. According to Wardle and Derakhshan (2018, pp. 45-46):

...misinformation is information that is false, but the person who is disseminating it believes that it is true. Disinformation is information that is false, and the person who is disseminating it knows it is false. It is a deliberate, intentional lie, and points to people being actively disinformed by malicious actors.

Third type of fake news, malinformation, is based on reality and facts but intention is purely to harm people and communities. In a similar way and based on the degree of facticity and degree of deception, Tandoc et. al. (2018) have developed seven types of fake news: news satire, news parody, fabrication, manipulation, advertising, and propaganda.

2.1. People's susceptibility to fake news in online and social media environment

Social media serve as digital infrastructure for publication and further sharing of fake news. With the algorithmic editing of the web and social media, information environment for each user becomes highly personalised which creates a separate individual micro universe of information known as “filter bubble” (Pariser, 2011). These filter bubbles create a comfort zone for individuals wherein they get selective exposure to updates and perspectives and they are insulated against any rebuttal or opposing viewpoints (Liao & Fu, 2013; Pariser, 2011). Highly personalised and filtered information environment and social networks result in “echo chamber” which reverberates and reinforces users' own belief systems and separates them from diverse viewpoints (Vicario et al., 2016). There is a correlation between the digital information environment and users' susceptibility to misinformation. Echo chambers present in social media networks work as “initial bandwagon” for contagious spread of digital misinformation (Törnberg, 2018). Rumour propagation is amplified by echo chamber, network of like-minded people who reinforce each other's biases (Choi et al., 2020). According to Choi et al. (2020), “echo chamber members are likely to participate in the early stage of rumour propagation and to elicit quick and many responses from others” (p. 7). People living in “filter bubbles” and “echo chamber” get more polarised in their opinion and worldview and thus are more predisposed to online misinformation and disinformation campaigns (Liao & Fu, 2013; Ribeiro et al., 2017; Vicario et al., 2016). As contrary to the revolutionary promises of online information ecosystem, filter bubbles and echo chambers of social media and search algorithms degrade the quality information available online, weaken the democracy and obstruct the development of knowledge society. Fake news and rumours circulated through online and social media undermine democracy because they render the online public sphere or forum as vicious and leave no space for healthy public discourse (Morgan, 2018).

Online and social media environment have further augmented and amplified the spread of infodemic and

2.2. Misinformation and disinformation in the time COVID-19

With the COVID-19 pandemic becoming a global public health crisis, the world is also witnessing an epidemic of misinformation and disinformation (Brennen et al., 2020; Kouzy et al., 2020; Rovetta & Bhagavathula, 2020). Various types of fake and misleading claims make it difficult for people to receive verified information and make informed decisions to deal with the pandemic.

spread of misinformation and disinformation during COVID-19, the present study proposes its Research Question (RQ):

RQ1. What is the emergent digital ecosystem of COVID-19 related misinformation and disinformation?

With RQ1, the present study aims to identify the multimedia elements used for propagating digital falsehood and deception, platforms serving as digital infrastructure for circulation of such deceitful and harmful information, popular format types and key themes of misinformation and disinformation relating to COVID-19 pandemic.

3. Theoretical Framework

Four key disinfodemic format types and nine key themes of disinfodemic from UNESCO policy brief (Posetti & Bontcheva, 2020) have been used as theoretical framework for analysis and interpretation of COVID-19 related misinformation and disinformation in the present study. According to Posetti and Bontcheva (2020), various format types of disinfodemic (categorised broadly in four types) contaminate the very sense-making ability and understanding of the public to deal with different aspects of COVID-19 pandemic. Following the deluge of deceptive and harmful information, people are left with dis-informed choices to take preventive measures. Popular formats deployed in disinformation landscape exploit individual's weaknesses and personal biases and existing social fault lines and animosity between communities. Posetti and Bontcheva (2020, p. 5) have described the methods deployed in polluting people's understanding in following words:

They [disinfodemic format types] frequently smuggle falsehoods into people's consciousness by focusing on beliefs rather than reason, and feelings instead of deduction. They rely on prejudices, polarisation and identity politics, as well as credulity, cynicism and individuals' search for simple sense-making in the face of great complexity and change.

There are four broad categories of key disinfodemic format types: 1) Emotive narrative constructs and memes; 2) Fabricated websites and authoritative identities; 3) Fraudulently altered, fabricated, or decontextualised images and videos; and 4) Disinformation infiltrators and orchestrated campaigns. Further, Posetti and Bontcheva (2020) have identified nine key themes present in misinformation and disinformation pertaining to COVID-

19. These nine themes include: 1) Origin and spread of virus/disease; 2) False and misleading statistics; 3) Economic impacts; 4) Discrediting of journalists and credible news outlets; 5) Medical science (Symptoms, Diagnosis and Treatment); 6) Impact on society and environment; 7) Politicisation; 8) Content driven by fraudulent financial gain; and 9) Celebrity-focused disinformation. All these disinfodemic themes project an information disorder, which is created out of contaminated information landscape, resulting in the propagation of biases, prejudices, communal hatred, xenophobia and racism.

4. Methodology

The present study has investigated the emergent digital ecosystem of COVID-19 related misinformation and disinformation. Since the study is concerned with thematic categorisation of prevalent fake news stories pertaining to COVID-19 pandemic and ensuing situations, qualitative content analysis research method has been adopted to make sense of published or debunked fake news stories. Qualitative content analysis has been considered as suitable method for systematic description of qualitative data whether self-generated or sampled from sources like websites, blogs, newspapers and magazines among others (Mayring, 2000; Schreier, 2012, 2014). Iosifidis and Nicoli (2020) have also conducted qualitative content analysis of announcements made by Facebook to understand the measures it has taken to combat the menace of fake news.

There are certain advantages of using qualitative content analysis over quantitative content analysis. According to Schreier (2014), "Whereas the focus of quantitative content analysis continues to be on manifest meaning, qualitative content analysis is also applied to latent and more context-dependent meaning" (p. 173). For testing the hypothesis, coding frame is developed in a concept-driven pattern in quantitative content analysis. Where as qualitative content analysis provides the opportunity to match the analysis with data as well since it advocates for both concept-driven and data-driven coding (Schreier, 2014).

To answer the research question (RQ), a coding frame was developed which was used for pilot phase and main analysis. Coding frame consists of main categories and sub-categories which describe certain aspects of research problem. Coding was built both in concept-driven and data-driven ways. In concept-driven coding, categories are derived from previous knowledge (Schreier, 2012). For

thematic categorisation of COVID-19 related misinformation and disinformation, four key disinfodemic format types and nine key disinfodemic themes have been taken from a UNESCO policy brief authored by Posetti and Bontcheva (2020). Further, two more main categories – multimedia element and platform – were used for analysis purpose. In addition to concept-driven coding, data-driven coding was also conducted to incorporate any data-specific categories. For data-driven coding and building the coding frame, certain debunked news stories, which reflected the full diversity, were analysed. After building suitable coding frame, it was used for pilot phase analysis.

Before conducting the main analysis, a pilot phase analysis was conducted to check the suitability of coding frame and to accommodate any changes. Pilot phase analysis is very important for “recognizing and modifying any shortcomings in the frame before the main analysis is carried out” (Schreier, 2014, p. 178). For pilot phase analysis, two keywords (COVID-19 and corona) were used to refine the search results on the website of Alt News, Indian fact checking website and a signatory partner of the International Fact-Checking Network. A total of 8 stories with keyword “COVID-19” and 14 stories with keyword “corona” were selected for pilot phase analysis. Following the search query, ten stories were displayed on each page. Stories were selected from every alternate page. Pilot phase analysis revealed few new categories which were then incorporated in coding frame.

With the inputs from pilot phase analysis, coding frame was updated which was then used for main analysis (see Annexure 1). During the main analysis, one story (the first one) from each page with “COVID-19” and “corona” search queries was selected for analysis. With the keyword COVID-19, 16 pages came in search results with 10 debunked stories on each page (the last page had only one story). With the keyword corona, 27 pages appeared in the search results (the last page had only five stories). Total 37 debunked fake news stories were taken as samples for analysis purpose. Repetitive stories (appearing in both search queries) were analysed only once. There were a few unrelated stories which were not selected for analysis. For analysis of material sampled from website of Alt News, segmentation process was followed. According to Schreier (2014, p. 178), “Segmentation involves dividing the material into units in such a way that each unit fits into exactly one (sub)category of the coding frame.” Findings of the main analysis have been presented with the help of coding frame, which is itself considered as main result.

5. Findings

As the research question of the present study seeks to explore the emergent digital ecosystem of misinformation and disinformation pertaining to COVID-19 pandemic, four main categories - multimedia element, platform, key themes and formats - were identified for analysis purpose. The present study has found that fake news stories were constructed/told through multimedia elements such as video, image, text, audio, screenshot or screengrab, map or infographics and news clipping or newspaper clippings. In respect to the platform used for dissemination or circulation of COVID-19 related fake news stories, the present study has found that Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp were used for spreading of falsehood. Further, this study has revealed that mainstream news outlets were also found to be peddling fake news. With respect to format type of infodemic and disinfodemic during COVID-19 pandemic, the present study adopted four formats from UNESCO policy brief and pursuant to data-driven coding, one format has been added which includes fraudulently altered, fabricated, or decontextualised data, human/technical error and press release/order. All the analysed units from fake news stories were assigned to either sub-category.

5.1. Key themes of infodemic and disinfodemic

Following the initial coding frame (which was both concept-driven and data-driven) and pilot phase analysis, the present study has identified following key themes of infodemic and disinfodemic during COVID-19: 1) Origin and spread of virus/disease, 2) False and misleading statistics, 3) Economic impacts, 4) Discrediting of journalists and credible news outlets, 5) Medical science (symptoms, diagnosis and treatment), 6) Impacts on society and environment (police brutality amid lockdown, obstructing public health response), 7) Politicisation, 8) Content driven by fraudulent financial gain, 9) Celebrity-focused disinformation, 10) Criticizing the government and its policies, 11) Conspiracy theory, 12) Invoking support for lockdown, 13) Non-consumption of mutton and chicken, 14) Censorship for admins and members of online communities, 15) Deadly impact of coronavirus outbreak (showing of dead bodies) and 16) Communal hatred (sowing discord, targeting Muslim community).

The first theme dealt with the multiple false narratives related to the origin and spread of novel coronavirus which causes COVID-19 disease. Whereas scientific community has first identified the causes of novel coronavirus in Wuhan, Chinese city, fake stories were found to be doing

the rounds on social media blaming China or other actors/factors for the spread of coronavirus. A debunked story by Anuradha Prasad on 28 August 2020 deals with this theme where a decontextualised video (video from the 2011 Japan tsunami) was widely shared on Facebook and Twitter with the claim that God was punishing China for deliberately creating coronavirus. This study has not found any debunked fake story related to false and misleading statistics (infection or mortality) in the main analysis. With respect to economic impacts of COVID-19 pandemic, a fake story, debunked by Dr. Sharfaroz Satani on 21st September 2020, propagated a conspiracy theory that WHO knew the nature and cure of COVID-19 disease, but it was not doing anything for the sake of doing business. Theme of discrediting of journalists and credible news outlets, identified by UNESCO in its policy brief, dealt with the accusations that journalists and mainstream news outlets were themselves spreading fake news. The fake news related to this theme undermines the trust in credible journalism and leads to trust deficit. This study has analysed a false story where a fraudulently decontextualised screengrab taken from a fact-check story done by AajTak (which concluded that alcohol and weed could not stop the infection) was widely shared with false claims on Twitter and Facebook. Screengrab from AajTak broadcast was shared with following caption: "Meanwhile AajTak team has completely lost their minds."

A key theme of disinfodemic namely Medical science was common in many COVID-19 related misinformation and disinformation. This theme deals with false and misleading narratives/claims related to symptoms, diagnosis and treatment of COVID-19. The analysis of debunked fake stories in the present study has found following misleading claims: pandemic is not caused by virus rather bacteria; pandemic has been amplified with 5G; US scientists have developed vaccine which can cure patients within three hours; home isolation and false prescription for contacts of corona patients; announcement by American President regarding the launch of vaccine for COVID-19; and cure of coronavirus with alcohol and weed. It is noteworthy that false and misleading information about the medical aspect of coronavirus is extremely dangerous and deadly to people's health and well-being. It disempowers people by giving them false and deceptive information and cripples their ability to respond to the public health crisis.

In addition to sub-themes such as panic buying and false information about lockdown, the present study has identified two sub-themes - police brutality amid lockdown and mob obstructing public health response - under the broader theme of impacts on society. Analysis reveals that

a fraudulently decontextualised video of the 2019 protest in Azerbaijan was circulated on Facebook and Twitter as an instance of police brutality to enforce the lockdown in Spain. In another case, a notice issued to former MLA by Bulandshahar police was fraudulently decontextualised to claim that UP police were prohibiting everyone from helping the migrant workers during the lockdown. In another fake news, debunked by Jignesh Patel on 21st March 2020, it was found that a press release from Malaysia on 'Restricted Movement Order' was fraudulently shared as an order from PMO, India triggering panic among people. In addition to police brutality and misleading news on lockdown, a fake story with fraudulently decontextualised video claimed that mob was pelting stone on policemen in Ahmedabad and thus obstructing the response to public health emergency. The said video was found to be from West Bengal. Notably, it was shared by a mainstream news outlet and then by other users on Twitter.

Under politicisation theme, one-sided and positively framed information is presented for political advantage and for negating inconvenient truths. The present study has found several instances of politically motivated fake news stories. In one such fake news, which was debunked by Archit Mehta, the decontextualised data (old) from IMF was shared to falsely claim that India would witness growth rate while other countries would witness negative growth rate. However, as per the latest data released by IMF, negative growth rate was estimated for India. In another misleading tweet, it was claimed that Switzerland's Matterhorn Mountain was lit up in tricolour as a sign of gratitude after India supplied HCQ tablets. However, debunked story found that image of Matterhorn Mountain with the projection of Indian flag was true, but the claim made was false. Indian national flag was projected to extend solidarity to Indian public in the fight against COVID-19 and not after India supplied HCQ tablets. Thus, a decontextualised image with positively framed narrative was shared on Facebook and Twitter for political gains which misled people. In April, a decontextualised map of India (which compared states with various nations based on population) was circulated with false claim that American CEO redesigned the same to tell his employees that India was indirectly handling COVID-19 related problem of many countries. While all of the above-mentioned misleading stories were meant for political gains, another misleading and fraudulently decontextualised video, which showed people complaining that dead bodies were lying on the bed while they were not getting beds and that they were not being

attended by the doctors, was circulated to target the Government of Delhi. Video was from KEM hospital, Mumbai but it was claimed that it was from Delhi.

The present study has not found, from sampled stories, any debunked story pertaining to themes like content driven by fraudulent financial gain and celebrity-focused disinformation. The present study has found prevalence of fake news stories where false and misleading news was shared to criticize the actions and policies of governments. A screengrab of broadcast of PM's radio show 'Mann Ki Baat' on 31st May, 2020 from India TV was fraudulently decontextualised and shared to mock the PM. The screengrab depicted that one crore corona patients were treated in India. Later, India TV clarified that it was human error and it apologised for it. Nonetheless, the said screengrab was shared by several users on social media. In another instance, an old video from Pakistan was fraudulently shared with the claim that a student contracted coronavirus after appearing for B.Ed. entrance exam. This video was circulated to demand the cancellation of NEET and JEE entrance examination and thus criticize government policies.

At least three stories were assigned the category of conspiracy theory in the main analysis. The present study reveals prevalence of following conspiracy theories: alleged complicity of WHO in the spread of COVID-19 for doing business and controlling world population through mass vaccination programme; organ trading of dead bodies of corona patients by hospitals; and provision of 1.5 lakh rupees per corona patient by the Central Government and false reporting of positive cases by urban local bodies and hospitals to avail the same. Conspiracy theories related to COVID-19 pose significant challenges to people's life and weaken national and international effort to combat the pandemic. The present study has found some fake and misleading stories which targeted at invoking support for lockdown. In one story, a video from 2019 protest in Azerbaijan was shared to claim the excess use of power by police to enforce the lockdown rules in Spanish and American contexts. A comparison was made to suggest that enforcement of lockdown rules in India was not excessively harsh.

In the main analysis, one fake news story was found related to the theme of non-consumption of mutton and chicken. A viral decontextualised video from Ajmer's bakra market was shared with claim that goats were infected with COVID-19 suggesting the avoidance of consumption of mutton. The analysis of selected debunked stories has revealed the presence of a disinfodemic theme -

ensorship for admins and members of online communities - which could inhibit information landscape necessary for handling the pandemic and resultant situation of informationlessness could lead towards panic situation. A message viral on social media platforms claimed that following the implementation of Disaster Management Act, only the government agencies had the authority to post corona related information and common public was completely prohibited from posting anything. Another fake message claimed that cases were registered against 52 group admins. With fabricated authoritative identity of Principal Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, it was claimed that posting anything related to corona was declared as punishable offence by Central Government and that only government agencies can post corona related information.

The analysis has revealed that there were certain false and misleading stories which showed dead bodies to depict deadly impact of coronavirus outbreak. A video showing piles of dead bodies from sci-fi miniseries was fraudulently decontextualised to claim that the scene was from Italy. In another case, an image depicting people lying on the road as part of an art project from Germany was fraudulently decontextualised to claim deadly outbreak of COVID-19 in China. The present study has found that some fake and misleading narratives were spreading communal hatred. These misleading and deceptive stories were found to be targeting Muslim community, sowing discord and thus undermining the peaceful co-existence of diverse communities. A fake viral message on social media claimed that Ayush ministry fired a Muslim doctor as he was sabotaging advertisement and sale of Coronil made by Patanjali. It was also claimed that such doctors were involved in defaming the Ayush Ministry and Ayurveda.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

The research question (RQ) of the present study was concerned with understanding the emergent digital ecosystem of misinformation and disinformation around COVID-19. With the qualitative content analysis of false and misleading stories around COVID-19 debunked by Alt News, the present study has attempted to describe varied themes of fake news, format types used for constructing the false and deceptive narrative, multimedia element and the platforms used for spreading misinformation and disinformation. The present study has deployed the nine themes and four format types identified in a UNESCO policy brief as the theoretical framework for understanding the research topic. In addition to nine themes of COVID-19 related disinfodemic (Origin and

spread of virus/disease, False and misleading statistics, Economic impacts, Discrediting of journalists and credible news outlets, Medical science, Impacts on society and environment, Politicisation, Content driven by fraudulent financial gain, and Celebrity-focused disinformation) as identified in the UNESCO policy brief, the present study has added another seven themes which include: 1) Criticizing the government and its policies, 2) Conspiracy theory, 3) Invoking support for lockdown, 4) Non-consumption of mutton and chicken, 5) Censorship for admins and members of online communities, 6), Deadly impact of Coronavirus outbreak (showing of dead bodies) and 7) Communal hatred (sowing discord, targeting Muslim community).

In respect of format types, the analysis has revealed the presence of another format type where data, human/technical error or press release/order was fraudulently altered, fabricated, or decontextualised by actors involved in publication and dissemination of fake news. Thus, the present study has added one more category to four format types (1. Emotive narrative constructs and memes; 2. Fabricated websites and authoritative identities; 3. Fraudulently altered, fabricated, or decontextualised images and videos; and 4. Disinformation infiltrators and orchestrated campaigns) as identified in the UNESCO policy brief. The analysis of qualitative data has revealed that out of 37 sampled fake stories, reconfiguration or decontextualisation of existing content for spreading fake news was found in at least 22 fake stories. Finding of this study with respect to decontextualisation of unrelated images and videos aligns with existing study. Brennen et al. (2020) found that most of the misinformation (59%) dealt with varied forms of reconfiguration. "Rather than being completely fabricated, much of the misinformation in our sample involves various forms of reconfiguration where existing and often true information is spun, twisted, recontextualised, or reworked", reported Brennen et al. (2020, p. 4).

In respect of multimedia elements, the present study has found that combinations of multimedia elements such as video, image, text, audio, map, infographic, news/newspaper clippings and screengrabs were used to make false, misleading and deceptive claims around COVID-19. Multimodal nature of fake news affects perception and leads people in believing the same as true. In a study on effects of multimodal disinformation and rebuttals, Hameleers et al. (2020) have also found that multimodal (text and visuals) disinformation was perceived as more credible than textual one. Further it is noteworthy that online ecosystem is progressively becoming more

multimodal in nature (Harcup & O'Neill, 2017). Both multimodal nature of online information and media landscape and perceived credibility of multimodal disinformation are a matter of concern for governments, public health organisations, communication professionals and international organisations who are working towards empowering the citizen with verifiable and reliable information and the establishment of knowledge society.

The qualitative content analysis of fake news in the present study has further solidified the concept of disinfodemic as described in the UNESCO policy brief authored by Posetti and Bontcheva (2020). Irrespective of the intentions, misinformation and disinformation pertaining to COVID-19 have damaging and negative impacts on health and well-being of citizens and peaceful co-existence of communities. Posetti and Bontcheva (2020) have reported that COVID-19 disinformation causes public distrust in medical science, undermines response to the global public health crisis and endangers people's lives. The main contribution of the present study is the categorisation and systematic description of infodemic and disinfodemic around COVID-19 which can help people understand and navigate online misinformation and disinformation.

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Communication Scenario During COVID-19 Pandemic: Issues and Challenges

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ABSTRACT

Communication is a human need. It is essential for survival and sustenance of human beings. Its significance becomes more important during natural and man-made crisis and conflicts. It is not only about disseminating information, knowledge and generating awareness but sharing right and relevant information in proper context and at appropriate time and place. Right communication at right time is the right of every individual.

With the outbreak of contagious COVID-19, lockdown and physical distancing were strictly practiced during the early part of the year (2020) and need for communication increased manifold. It was the only thing that bound people across the globe together. Though it was a challenging time for entire humanity but staying connected was crucial. Technology played an indispensable part to keep people connected. In fact, technology assisted communication became a buzz word during pandemic, but it did not come without a price. Relevant and reliable communication is crucial amidst fear, anxiety and panic created by the spread of the virus. Content, context and tone of messages is equally important.

In this backdrop, the research article tried to explore the communication scenario during COVID-19 pandemic using secondary data; understand role and significance of communication during pandemic and identify various communication practices adopted by people during this hour of need and explore challenges that it brought forth.

Keywords: COVID-19 pandemic, communication, virtual ecosystem, technology-assisted, Infodemic

1. Introduction

As COVID-19 spread its tentacles, everything across the globe came to an abrupt halt – markets and businesses shutdown, offices and educational institutions were closed, streets deserted and traffic was disrupted. Lockdown, physical distancing and financial instability instilled fear and anxiety among masses and they felt dejected, distressed and isolated. Everyone wished to stay connected with their near and dear ones. Importance of communication was felt more than ever before. The need was felt at multiple levels; people required to talk to each other both at personal (family, friends, relatives, neighbours and colleagues) and professional level (employee-employer and customer-company). Government, health professionals, essential service providers, media and relief agencies required to reach out to masses and communicate and coordinate with each other.

As severity of pandemic grew, countries across the globe intensified measures to contain and combat the spread of disease. Stay-at-home and work-from-home guidelines were strictly enforced, leaving limited scope for people to meet each other in-person. This paved way for technology-assisted communication to take over at a huge pace. Physical classrooms, boardrooms, newsrooms were replaced by virtual rooms; restaurants switched over to take-away mode; medicines, grocery items and other eatables too switched to online delivery mode. Consequently, communication processes driven by technology be it voice, video or text, assisted people to stay connected during these challenging times.

The manner people communicated during COVID-19 pandemic abruptly changed overnight. To minimize the spread of virus, many people altered their interactions with others including shifting from in-person conversations to online modes of communication (Lindberg, August 6, 2020). Even Gabbiadini et al (October 21, 2020)

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observed that the substantial difference between COVID-19 pandemic and previous epidemics is the amount of tech tools used today compared to that in the past. Technology available nowadays allows people to stay in contact with others in innovative ways, from virtual happy hours with friends to religious services. A joint statement by WHO, UN, UNICEF, UNDP, UNESCO, UNAIDS, ITU, UN Global Pulse and IFRC on September 23, 2020, observed that COVID-19 is the first pandemic in history wherein technology and social media are being used on a massive scale to keep people safe, informed, productive and connected.

With digital technology around, people across the globe could stay virtually connected through various social media platforms and online applications. But WHO on March 19, 2020 observed that COVID-19 outbreak challenges public health systems and their ability to effectively communicate with their populations? "Failure to communicate well lead to a loss of trust and reputation, economic impacts, and in the worst case – loss of lives. Risk Communication and Community engagement is an essential component of health emergency readiness and response activities. One of the most important and effective interventions in a public health response to any event is to proactively communicate what is known, what is unknown, and what is being done to get more information, with the objectives of saving lives and minimizing adverse consequences."

Thus, it is crucial to communicate effectively during a health emergency. Although WHO communicated about COVID-19 through their website and a Massive Open Online Course, but majority of countries directly affected by this disease are non-English speaking countries and the information provided would not necessarily be understood or shared by all. Local health authorities must ensure that information is delivered in native languages so that the messages are able to reach maximum number of people. Communication strategies such as using layman terms, simple infographics, storytelling and metaphors may also be used to explain terminologies and the latest scientific findings that would help to calm and assure the public that the relevant steps are being taken to curtail the disease. In health emergencies such as this one, close collaboration with journalists, social media influencers and content producers is needed to help bridge the gap between health officials and the public. Curating clear and persuasive messages consistently could help lessen the public's anxiety, reduce circulation of false information and promote correct health prevention behaviors (Mohamad & Azlan, March 2020).

In this context, it becomes imperative to study a broader perspective of communication scenario across the globe during COVID-19 pandemic to understand its role, significance and the challenges faced by communities with reference to communication process and approaches.

2. Review of Literature

Need for constant and coordinated communication efforts and approaches with various stakeholders during any crisis especially the one created by COVID-19 having huge severity and magnitude is crucial as it concerns one and all. A pandemic brings with itself uncertainty and fear that calls for valid and accurate information so that people are able to take right decisions at appropriate time. Certain topics related to communication during pandemic were analyzed to find out how communication perspective has been viewed, utilized and approached during the pandemic.

Everything in pandemic revolves around effective communication, both internal with employees, co-workers or team members and external with people, communities and nations. It is of utmost importance to avoid mistakes during communication. Some of them are mixed or late messages, ignoring rumours or myths, power struggles between governments, unrealistic expectations, scientific terms and acronyms, negative allegations, unclear, abstract, blame and others. Any communication in COVID-19 is crucial whether from government to people, from media to people, people to people, doctor to patient, within families and so on. Effective communication emphasizes the importance of content, accuracy, comprehensive signs, symbols, language, culture, and semiotic rules (Reddy & Gupta, August 2020).

When faced with uncertainty and unpredictability, early and transparent communication during a pandemic is critical to build trust and to ensure the credibility of public health advice. A common plan is needed to ensure consistent, coordinated and appropriate communication. During a pandemic, timely and transparent communication is critical in building public trust. At each stage of the pandemic, providing accurate, credible and timely information that can help protect public health, save lives and minimize social and economic disruption. A collaborative approach to developing, testing and evaluating messaging strategies would help inform the best approach during a pandemic (Henry, 2018).

COVID-19 pandemic caused a complementary infodemic, whereby various outlets and digital media portals shared false information and unsourced

recommendations on health. A mass of academic articles was published by journals and authors at a speed that suggested a non-existent or a non-rigorous peer review process. This has a tendency to promote false information and adoption of health policies based on misleading data. Reliable information is vital for designing and implementing preventive measures and promoting health awareness in the fight against COVID-19. In the age of social media, information travels fast, far and wide further emphasizing a need for accurate data to be corroborated and preventing misleading information from wide dissemination (Mheidly & Fares, August 2020).

Amidst rapidly evolving information and guidance, a focus must also be on proper and effective risk communication. A consequence of poor risk communication and heightened risk perception is hoarding behavior, which can lead to lack of medications and personal protective equipment. One potential way to ensure appropriate risk communication is using social media channels and ensuring an ongoing consistent media presence. Another important step is to include all stakeholders including members of the allergy community in broader public health messaging (Abrams & Greenhawt, June 2020).

Malecki, Keating & Safdar (June 2020) observed that the media has always played a critically important role in informing the public during crisis and emergencies; social media now plays a large and growing role in shaping outrage and thus the public's perception of risks and mitigation. Social media offers opportunities for both experts and general public to quickly spread information to a large number of individuals. It is therefore both an asset and barrier to developing effective risk communication strategies and response. Clinicians can play a critically important role as trusted sources on social media to support the spread of new information as it becomes available and address individual patient's concerns as they evolve, knowing that public perceptions of risk will vary greatly across individuals.

These studies helped to analyze and explore various attributes of effective communication and how communication approaches and strategies ought to be designed to reach out to maximum people. The article focuses on understanding the overall communication scenario during the pandemic, the communication practices adopted and identifying the loopholes that emerged during the process and rendered various communication strategies ineffective.

3. Objectives of the Study

1. Understand communication scenario during COVID-19 pandemic.
2. Explore communication practices used and adopted during pandemic.
3. Identify some communication gaps and measures that could be taken to avoid these pitfalls in the future.

4. Methodology

To explore and analyze the communication scenario that emerged during the situation arising out of COVID-19 pandemic and to understand various communication strategies and approaches that were designed and developed to reach out to the intended audience during these challenging times, a qualitative research method was adopted. Being exploratory in nature, the study mainly focused at identifying theme-based issues, gaining insights, understanding underlying reasons and drawing relevant inferences. The article examined secondary data in the form of various published reports, journal articles, research papers, online news websites, newspaper reports, official reports and non-government organization reports. Based on the approach, certain themes were identified, discussed and certain conclusions drawn.

5. Discussion

Life changed drastically after the outbreak of highly contagious disease COVID-19 and the ways to communicate with each other also witnessed tectonic changes. People mostly preferred to use technology to communicate - Mobile phones, fixed telephone lines and internet facilities in the form of audio call, audio-video call, email/texts, video-conferencing and online applications both at personal and professional level. In view of lockdown and physical distancing imposed to curb and control the spread of the virus, virtual communication prevailed.

The communication scenario during COVID-19 pandemic can be studied under the following broad themes:

5.1. Communication practices witness abrupt changes

As direct, person-to-person contact during the pandemic turned worrisome, e-mailing, telephonic calls, text messages, voicemails and video conferencing became the new norm. The pandemic not only restructured people's daily routine but transformed their interactions with each

other and the community at large. At a time when families could not visit each other, meet each other in person and enquire about each other's well-being, communication scenario changed to a large extent with people preferring to maintain a distance while following other protocols. Additionally, norms like Stay-at-home and Work-from-home provided strong impetus to technology-assisted communication that tried to bridge the gap. From simple telephonic call to texts/emails to instant messaging to social networking - methods of communication abruptly witnessed a change. Though these changes were not new altogether, but the pandemic accelerated their utilization to a large scale. Technology assisted communication means any sort of communication that is powered via networked devices such as computers and mobile phones in the form of audio, video, images or text or combination of all these forms. Virtual communication that assumed the centre-stage during the pandemic is supported by hi-speed internet and data-driven devices (smart phones, laptop/desktops and other gadgets). Virtual communication has been added to the list of written, verbal and non-verbal communication.

As COVID-19 accelerated digital connectivity trend and is expected to influence the growth of information technology market in near future, technology assisted communication has certain limitations as well. In the battle against the pandemic, digital technology, transformation and connectivity have become an essential medium or solution to enhance economic and societal resilience. Emerging technologies like artificial intelligence, machine learning, 3D printing, internet of things and robotics are being utilized. For example, artificial intelligence and machine learning were used for mapping and tracking COVID-19 cases in real time (Fortune Business Insights, May 2020). But technology mediated communication forums rely on text that can be challenging for illiterates or semi-literates or those who lack digital skills. Though with hi-speed internet connectivity, voice and video conference technology, this problem has been overcome to a large extent, but access and availability to data and device supporting virtual communication is the biggest challenge. Amidst economic crisis faced by several families/individuals, arranging for a required device or recharging mobile phones/internet too posed serious challenges to technology-aided communication process thus, deepening the digital divide within communities.

At times, facial expressions, body language and gestures help in broader understanding or clarifying certain things; in the absence of such possibilities, there is a huge risk of misunderstandings that can further aggravate problems.

Cheryl Dixon, a communications strategist and an adjunct professor at Columbia University and New York University, reminded that more than 90 per cent of communication is non-verbal and that it has been proven that non-verbal communication cues are trusted over verbal language. "We use nonverbal communication to convey meaning, to modify or complement our verbal messages, and to regulate the flow of our interaction. We are losing a lot of non-verbal cues, including proxemics (our spatial environment; how closely we position ourselves to others, the amount of space we take up) and kinesics (our body movements and gestures)," explained Dixon (Lindberg, August 2020).

5.2. Communication overload and its subsequent threats

As the pandemic posed several socio-economic concerns and challenges, it raised serious alarm bell with communication processes as well. Usually during crisis and conflicts, there is an increased need for constant communications with various agencies, stakeholders and community groups, media and the public. In the digital world lot of information pours in from various online platforms. Communication overload under such circumstances poses a serious threat to human society. Misinformation about the number of fatalities, diagnosis and treatment options, vaccines, medicines and government policies created more panic and anxiety among the population. This even resulted in widespread chaos, violence, hoarding of essential items, price rise, panic buying, discriminatory attitude, conspiracy theories and so on. Communicating right information at the right time requires a consistent and coordinated approach.

While logical explanations and scientific awareness were important to help combat the spread of the pandemic, role of communication in this entire perspective was pivotal for promoting community-level response. It requires translation of authentic scientific information and awareness into local language using local content and local context. Health and risk communication together with audio-visual, digital platforms, trained communicators is the need of the hour. A collaborative and coordinated effort of academic, research, media and voluntary organizations would go a long way to combat the spread of the contagious disease. Assessing public perceptions, encouraging public engagement and participation in risk-related reciprocal communication processes will open routes for building capacities, involving stakeholders and enabling communities to develop a sense of awareness, an analytical mind, change behaviours and take informed decisions regarding

healthcare and associated risks. This would facilitate in minimizing risks at various levels with the help of public communication and outreach activities, promoting public understanding of community care and health safety measures like personal sanitation and hygiene, physical distancing, maintaining desired collective behaviours and so on (Department of Science and Technology, 2020).

Even WHO noted that good communication helps manage individuals' expectations and fears, making it more likely that they will follow instructions during pandemic. Done poorly, it undermines trust; economic and financial impacts can follow and lives can be lost. While researchers race to find treatments and develop vaccines to combat the virus, practicing good communication is a critical component of worldwide efforts to enhance global health security (Fielding, March 2020).

5.3. Optimizing communication channels

As the world heavily relies on digital technology for communication, the less tech-savvy might be more in need of support than ever. People mostly rely on family and peer networks for digital support. Social distancing and stay-at-home guidelines may be making it more difficult, especially for those who rely mainly on face-to-face social connections, to receive digital support. Older people as well as those with lower internet skills, are more likely to reduce digital communication during the pandemic. While internet may also function as a digital support source (e.g., search engines, social network sites, forums), these sources are mostly used by those with greater internet experience and skills. The less tech-savvy may become increasingly disconnected from society, as they now have less access to sources of support for establishing new ways of communicating. At the same time, as in-person interactions are limited to a minimum, a different trend is taking place where people are now increasingly connecting through video chat apps and services for communication for the first time. Such an uptake might predominantly occur among the more tech-savvy. However, these new adopters may also include people who typically use digital technology less often and with less skill, but now experience a "push" to connect online. On a global scale "face-to-face" digital interaction via video-conferencing software has shown increasing uptake in the past months, and in countries where lockdown measures are strict, these numbers are even higher." (Nguyen et al, July-September 2020).

One of the great challenges is the ability to reach vulnerable groups in order to deliver updates and provide

guidance surrounding protective actions. When it comes to targeted prevention and public health education, vehicles such as community health fairs and other face-to-face consultations served the essential need for the uninsured, those with translation needs, or with other barriers to accessing health services. This type of outreach will be off the table for the foreseeable future. Also, vulnerable groups often lack access to technology including tablets, computers and smart phones in addition to high-speed internet. Yet, finding means of optimizing digital channels will be more important than ever before (Ginsberg & Sayers, July 2020).

Thus, efforts have to be made to ensure that high-speed internet connectivity reaches to a large population and wider geographical area and the data plans are affordable. Certain initiatives ought to be taken at community level to ensure that non-accessibility and non-availability of data does not become a reason for further divisions within societies/communities. Data facilitation centres or kiosks can be set up at certain pockets or remote areas for those who cannot afford or access the internet facility so that the communication flow is continuous and uninterrupted. Alternate channels of communication such as small media, folk media and community media too can be remodeled and reutilized during such emergencies to reach masses at a wider scale.

6. Conclusion

Communication is key for any crisis response plan. Access to accurate, right and relevant information through various channels of communication be it handouts, opinion leaders, small or mass media, community or social media and other online applications and platforms, personal or professional networks is an essential component of such response plan.

Effective communication during emergencies assumes critical significance. As such relevant and credible sources of information and reliable modes of communication ought to be an indispensable part of actionable and inclusive communication strategies. When planning a public health communication strategy, special attention should be given to vulnerable groups, including homeless people, people without adequate employment, immigrants, communities of color, people with disabilities and certain frontline workers. It is important to engage these groups and organizations that represent vulnerable and disabled people in decision-making to understand their needs and how best to communicate and disseminate information. Failure to respect their needs will seriously

undermine response efforts. Community engagement is important not just for formulating and communicating the messages but also on implementing these messages, as risk communication messages not only have personal implications but also have significant implications at community level (for example, closure of religious places, parks and shops). Engaging different audiences and understanding their specific circumstances and needs is critical in designing interventions that will be inclusive and address those needs (Porat et al, October 2020).

While consistent and coordinated communication efforts at various levels would go a long way in combating and controlling the spread of the contagious disease; communication policies that are culturally competent and address barriers to access during an emergency could be redesigned and promoted to reach maximum people with the aim to facilitate in countering misinformation and disinformation. There is an emerging need to build robust communication plan especially for crisis and conflict management that requires a multifaceted approach so that right and relevant message is delivered to the end users. This would also help to create meaningful engagements and linkages with local communities that would help to address myths, rumours and communication barriers, if any.

In all communication platforms, information in local language using local content and local examples should be prioritized. All online and offline communication channels should strictly adhere to ethical practices while designing and disseminating information via current and conventional communication platforms. Disseminating relevant and reliable information swiftly and widely among the public is the need of the hour.

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Role of Public Service Advertisement in Spreading Awareness Among Rural Mass during COVID Pandemic: A Case Study of Amaramudnooru Village

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ABSTRACT

One of the hard-hitting pandemics of all times, COVID-19 has forced all economies to their knees. Be it the superpowers or the developing nations, no one has been left untouched by the scathing affliction. And with no vaccine in the current fray of things, the only way to prevent the spread of this disease is to wear masks and maintain social distancing. Hence, spreading the message and reinforcing this in everyone's minds becomes the need of the hour and when it comes to India, it becomes more important to spread this type of message with perfection. The research is a quantitative study, where a questionnaire is being used as tool for collecting the data. Women respondents from 30 to 50 years of age were selected by using simple random sampling from Amaramudnoor village of Sullia Taluk, Karnataka. It attempts to find out the efficacy of Public service advertisements and public belief in bringing India back on the track from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Keywords: Public Service Advertisement, Covid-19, Pandemic, Karnataka

1. Introduction

Back in the days, there was this concept of a town crier. The royal court of the king would appoint a person who would be responsible for making announcements. So, we see, India has had mass media even in the early days. And though primitive, this was one of the earliest forms of mass media that we had. Fast-forwarding to the 21st century, we reap the benefit of a technological boom that has ushered the digital age of advertisement. Today's media is not only content-rich, but it is also a lucrative avenue for brands and organizations to advertise. In fact, there seems to be an increase in the frequency of advertisements made not just for commercial purposes but for the better of the society. These advertisements are called as public service ads where the government and as well as the non-government organizations participate.

The public service ads have the aim of persuading the citizens to engage in behaviors that actively promote civil conduct and are always designed by keeping in mind the benefit of the majority. For example, the government released a public service ad to curb the traveling intentions of people during these COVID times during the lockdown

and then to encourage people to go to work but not without masks. The ad aptly showcased the fear people had regarding COVID-19, and how if you take the necessary precautions, you will be saved from this pandemic.

Besides, there is more reason for the government to use public service ads to educate the populace about the pandemic. After all, during the lockdown, when people were giving utmost importance to COVID-19, most of them did not have much to do except to watch TV, surf the internet, or spend time on OTT apps like Prime Video and Netflix. In fact, PM Modi's address of March 24 had a viewership of 197 million, surpassing even that of the IPL finals, which got a viewership of 133 million, an astounding figure in itself. Even more important was the fact that news channels were clocking in a 298% rise in viewership.

1.1. Covid-19 Pandemic

The Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 or SARS-CoV-2 that causes the extremely infectious Coronavirus Disease 2019 was discovered in late 2019 in

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China's Wuhan province. Back then, no one knew about this new disease, and hence on December 31, 2019, it was reported as pneumonia of unknown cause to the World Health Organization. While COVID-19 ravaged across mainland China, it began to spread to neighbouring countries too.

As the rates of infection and mortality rose exponentially all over the globe, even the famed health systems struggled to cope with the sudden surge in cases of infections and deaths. The problems only worsened with global shortages of specific diagnostic equipment, kits for personal protection, ventilators, insufficient intensive care units, and mortuaries.

When it comes to India, as of September 29, 2020, we have 6.17 million infection cases, with fatalities a little shy of 0.1 million at 0.096 million. With no vaccine in the current fray of things, the only possible preventive measures were social distancing and always wearing masks. To help spread this message, the Government of India, through the Press Information Bureau, launched a PSA featuring Akshay Kumar. The advertisement goes on to show the veteran actor in a rural setting, conversing with a neighbour. In a taunting way, the neighbour comments that no sooner did the lockdown lift than he began to venture outdoors. And then, on a serious note, he asks, "Aren't you afraid, you'll catch the virus?" Akshay then responds that initially, he was, but then on learning that if one takes the stipulated precautions, catching the virus is a distant possibility, he feels better and believes it is time to resume work. This public service ad was timed with the Unlock 1.0, thus urging all to come to work by maintaining the necessary precautions. Akshay then also lists the precautions he is taking, including wearing a mask religiously, washing hands frequently, and maintaining social distance. Through the ad, the actor also suggests that even if someone does contract the illness, there is not much to worry as the government has enough hospitals ready to treat patients.

However, as the case is, this pandemic is not just a health crisis. It is also an unprecedented socio-economic crisis. With the potential to have devastating socio-economic and socio-political effects, it has stressed each and every country it has touched. If we take the Indian economy into consideration, it is expected that the economy lost close to Rs. 32,000 crore every day during the first lockdown. And on 1st September 2020, when the Ministry of Statistics released Q1 figures for the GDP of the financial year 2021, it showed a shrinkage of 24% compared to the same period in the previous year. Add to it the supply chain

and logistics woes, and there was the perfect recipe for the recession that we are currently in.

2. Literature Review

It is easy for people to believe in an enemy they can see. However, when the enemy is touted to be an invisible infinitesimal virus, many people begin to call foul and slam it as a diversion tactic. Through Public Opinion, Trust, and the COVID-19 Pandemic, a research article published under the Centre on International Cooperation, New York University, the authors Paul von Chamier, Nendirmwa Noel, and Elizabeth Angell go on to say that such thinking can prove to be a significant roadblock to the government's efforts to curb the spread of Covid-19. In fact, it is highly imperative for the government to have the trust of the people.

Even though this pandemic requires many strict measures to be kept in place, not everyone has taken the restrictions on mobility in the way it should have been. Stephen Thompson, in his research paper, COVID-19 emergency measures and the impending authoritarian pandemic published in Oxford University Press, says that though it is evident that restrictions are justified for the greater good, they do infringe upon the individual's rights, which get jeopardized in the tussle.

3. Objectives of the Study

This research work has been undertaken to understand the impact of public service advertisements in spreading awareness among rural mass during the COVID Pandemic.

The objectives are as follows:

- To find out the level of awareness about the pandemic generated by public service advertisements.
- To analyze the strengths and loopholes of public service advertisements made for creating awareness.
- To find whether public service advertisements have impacted the behavior of people regarding the pandemic.
- To provide recommendations based on the analysis of the public service advertisements.

4. Research Methodology

This research work is a purely quantitative study. The survey questionnaire method has been opted to collect data. Out of the research location population, fifty samples were picked through simple random sampling by

lottery method. The questionnaire sent to the respondents comprised both open and close-ended questions to elicit in-depth information. The collected data was then analyzed and has been presented via simple graphs. Note that data collected only from the primary research has been used for this study.

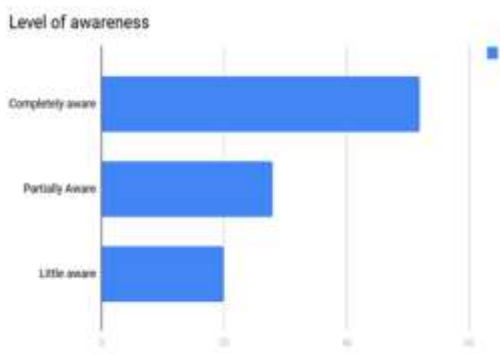
4.1. Geographical Location of the study

The Geographical location chosen for this research work is Amaramudnooru village of Sullia Taluk of Dakshina Kannada district, Karnataka. A significant portion of the population residing in this Taluk is dependent on agriculture, which is their primary source of income. However, the chosen respondents are resident female areca nut farmers of 30-50 years of age.

5. Data Analysis and Interpretation:

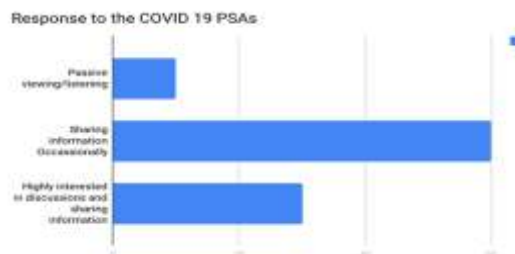
To present the data most comprehensively, bar diagrams have been used here.

Figure 6.1. Knowledge and understanding of COVID-19



52% of the people are entirely aware of COVID-19. They could tell the causes, symptoms, and preventive methods of this disease. And the satisfying fact was that the information they shared was accurate. 28% of the people were partially aware of COVID-19, and they knew about the preventive methods like avoiding crowds, maintaining a safe distance, and wearing masks. But they had several doubts and misunderstandings about the causes of this disease. 20% of the people were aware of the pandemic, but they did not know what it was exactly. However, they had been wearing masks and avoiding public gatherings since the arrival of COVID-19 as their families were serious about it and keenly observing them. There was no one among the respondents who was entirely unaware of COVID-19.

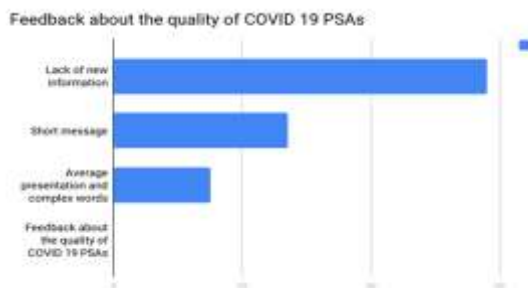
Figure 6.2. Response to the COVID-19 PSAs



60% of the respondents paid attention to the advertisement in the initial days of the pandemic. As of now, they are not keen on listening to PSAs as they feel that they are already aware of the information. These respondents have been exposed to the COVID-19 caller tune launched by the Government of India to create awareness among the masses. However, whenever they hear something new related to COVID-19, they discuss it with their families. 30% of the people have been sharing the details of COVID-19 PSAs with their family and friends. They strongly believe that their family/friends must be updated with the latest information released about the pandemic as it will help them stay better protected against the disease. These respondents have also been watching television and print advertisements related to COVID-19. They discuss this disease daily, and they said that such discussions have made them more informed and cautious.

10% have seen the PSAs about COVID-19 but did not show any interest in sharing the information with others because they feel that every person is aware of the disease now, and there is nothing new to share.

Figure 6.3. Feedback about the quality of COVID-19 PSAs

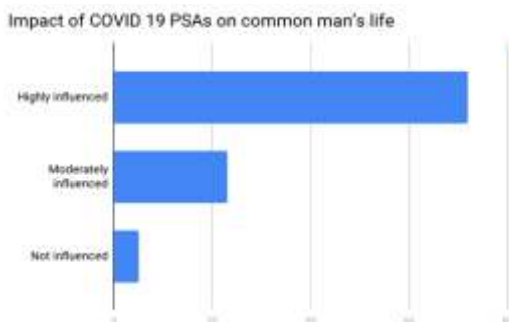


According to 58% of the respondents, COVID-19 PSAs were quite impressive in the initial days. Eventually, they became very familiar with the content as those PSAs were consistent in providing information. In their opinion, audio caller tunes of COVID-19 could be changed at least once in a week and should provide more information. When it comes to television and print advertisements related to COVID-19, they were satisfied with the content as

well as the presentation. As per their opinion, these advertisements have done a great job in spreading awareness.

27% of the respondents feel that advertisements are very short, and it was difficult to understand the core message. 15% of the respondents believe that more experiments could be done in terms of presentation, and the language could be even simpler. Such advertisements could also focus more on eradicating the wrong information related to the spread of COVID-19.

Figure 6.4. Impact of COVID-19 PSAs on common man's life



Almost 72% of the respondents have confessed that COVID-19 PSAs have been very beneficial to them. Because of these advertisements, they realized the need to maintain a safe distance and clean hands with sanitizers. More importantly, they are very strict about wearing masks when they step out. In their opinion, though these PSAs reached the television, phones, and social media at the right time, had they been broadcasted a bit earlier, perhaps, they could have saved themselves from fake information.

They also said that these advertisements had killed the unnecessary fear they had about COVID-19. 23% of the respondents made satisfactory changes in their lifestyle like avoiding public gathering as much as possible, having a travel plan only when it was very much needed, checking the quality of the mask before buying, and carrying hand sanitizers with them among other things. 5% of the respondents revealed that they cannot say that they are motivated. Still, they admitted the fact that they are better informed now, and that they are always conscious about the existence of COVID-19 when they go out; perhaps, never forgetting to wear masks.

6. Findings

- Due to the COVID-19 PSAs, many have come to know the concept of public service advertisements and their uses. Although they have seen/heard popular PSA campaigns of Swachh Bharat Andolan

and Pulse Polio, COVID-19 PSAs created a drastic change in their perception of public service advertisements.

- COVID-19 PSAs are largely successful in reaching the rural mass. The applaudable point is they reached the media platform at the right time.
- On social media, rural youth are exposed to fake information related to COVID-19. There are still many myths associated with the cure of this disease. And many feel that PSAs must carry the message to tackle such wrong information in a very effective manner.
- Wearing masks has become a part of daily life, and PSAs have done a tremendous job in making people realize the importance of masks.
- People prefer discussing the latest development of COVID-19 when they speak to their family/friends. And they are keen to share the information that they received from PSAs.
- COVID-19 PSAs could be more creative, especially audio call tunes. Many times, people avoid listening to this caller tune as they have already heard it several times. However, there is a strong opinion that the core message is communicated very effectively in the audio call tunes.

7. Recommendations

- COVID-19 PSAs will be more impactful if they can add in more elements of creativity.
- Social media can be used as a compelling media platform to spread awareness about COVID-19, because even in rural areas, people have access to smart phones as well as different social media platforms (mainly WhatsApp).
- A considerable quantity of wrong information is getting circulated through Word of Mouth, PSAs can focus on bursting such false information.
- Local government bodies can take up the initiative of spreading information about COVID-19 in a village/cluster level. This initiative may open the door for more innovation like using local language, cultural forms in the advertisements.
- Public service ads can have contests to check the knowledge and understanding of common people about COVID-19. Such initiatives will make them look out for more information and keep them

updated with the latest development.

8. Conclusion

It is said that rough seas make good sailors. However, when the sea is rearing to devour the sailors, it hardly makes any difference if the sailors learned anything from their harrowing experiences or not. With COVID-19, the case is not that dreadful but on similar lines. The only things that can protect us, is sticking strictly to the guidelines and well, people are getting bored of it. It was a great relief to find that people have taken to the PSAs released to spread awareness about COVID-19 in a positive way and that it has helped them to protect themselves from this dreaded pathogen. No one knows as to what the length of this period would be, where we would have to co-exist with the virus. However, the world with the virus is very different and difficult to live in. People depend on the government because they consider it to be the government's prerogative to guide them through the next several months of uncertainty. However, given our history of surviving waves of epidemics and pandemics, we know one thing for sure. This too shall pass away and the world will return to normalcy again. And if someone asks when, well, the answer would be-Soon.

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Awareness Through Social Media During the Corona Pandemic: Study on Role of the Odisha Government

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ABSTRACT

With the deadly outbreak of the Corona Virus, there has been a Global health crisis that has affected human lives. With the Lockdown imposed over the country, there has been a sudden increase in usage of Social media by the people. The social media is one of the major tools used by the Odisha government for communicating with the people for educating, sensitizing, informing and mobilizing. The paper examines the impact of social media in creating awareness during the pandemic and the role played by the Odisha Government. The research was carried out online by administering a questionnaire and conducted in Odisha and personal interviews were taken from a total of 300 social media users using the qualitative research methodology. 265 numbers of Social media users responded. It was found that there has been a sharp increase in the use of social media by the users and the usage was also for updating oneself with the latest news. There has been a positive impact as the Odisha Government has been very prompt and alert in sensitizing people about the Covid-19 current situations daily. It has been informative about the dos and don'ts along with the rise in number of cases and areas with containment zones. All the Departments of Odisha Government like Health and family Department, CMO, Information and Public relations department etc., have been very quick and updated all relevant news regarding Covid-19 on all their social media through Statistical data, posters, live streaming press meet, latest news, etc. The impact being positive on social media has become an effective tool to utilize effectively and appropriately for optimum awareness amongst the people.

Keywords: Social Media, Technology, Gadgets, Exposure, Impact, Covid-19, Corona Virus, Odisha, Government, Pandemi

1. Introduction

Covid-19 caused by the Novel Corona Virus is an infectious disease that started in China and has infected the people worldwide since January 2020. With the outbreak of the deadly virus creating global health crisis, the World health organization (WHO) has declared the disease as "Pandemic". There has been a Global health crisis that has affected human lives at large with Total cases of 29.2 million and claiming deaths around 9 lacs globally. India being one of the highly populated countries in the world has a total 5.1 million cases and deaths around 83,000 (till 17th September 2020) as reported by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare Department of

India. The pandemic has resulted in lockdowns and shutdown all over India for months now. It has affected the economy in almost every sector of the industry. The crisis has just not changed the way people live their lives but has also affected the Social media usage. During the pandemic, the media is playing a crucial role in educating, sensitizing, informing and spreading awareness to the public. According to a poll conducted by Hammerkopf Consumer Survey, there has been an increase by 87% in the usage of social media in the first week of the lockdown period. As per the survey, the average time spent by a person has increased by 2 hours to 4 hours per day spending more time on WhatsApp, Twitter and Facebook, during the lockdown.

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This paper examines the impact of social media in creating awareness during the pandemic and the role played by the Odisha Government. Odisha stands with 167,161 infected with the deadly virus losing 669 lives as reported by Department of Health and Family Welfare of Odisha as on 17th September 2020. At the time where there is no vaccine developed to combat the situation, social distancing, quarantine procedures and medical support system is the important awareness that could be done by the Government to the public. The Odisha government has been actively using their official social media handles like Health and family Department, CMO, Information and Public relations department etc., on Facebook, Twitter and websites for updating relevant and important information related to the Covid-19 situation. Daily and weekly updates on number of positive cases, recovery cases, quarantine guidelines, information regarding health care and availability of On-call Doctors, lockdown guideline and timeline, toll free numbers for people for transportation, migration from other states, etc. along with LIVE press meet on Social media every day is given on the official social media handles of Odisha Government. A study says with the outbreak of Covid-19 globally, there has been an outbreak of misleading rumors and conspiracy theories about the origin around the world with fear mongering, racism, mass purchase of face mask and sanitizers all closely linked to the new 'Infomedia' ecosystems of the 21st century marked by social media (Depoux et al., 2020). There have been spread fake rumors and information which was shared by the local public on the social media domain and the Odisha government has also been very prompt in catching hold of the people who were behind this fear mongering and rumors.

Some earlier research studies have also highlighted the outbreak of novel COVID-19 has opened up different issues for social media including the life-endangering consequences of supposed cures, misleading rumors, and conspiracy theories about the origin of Corona Virus (Radwan et al., 2020). This study will focus on the awareness created through the social media by the Odisha government. The research further delves into the social media usage habits of the people along the impact created.

2. Literature Review

A research report by PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry describes that " COVID-19 which has become a New Normal in the world of today has changed the pattern of consumption and absorption of social media apps in India " (PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2020).

It also states that according to a poll conducted by Hammerkopf Consumer Survey, there has been a rise by 87% in the usage of social media in the first week of the lock down period. As per the survey, the average time spent by a person has increased by 2 hours to 4 hours per day spending more time on WhatsApp, Twitter and Facebook, during the lockdown. The social media is also quoted as the forerunner in India's Fight against Covid-19, but it is even facing misinformation or issues of Fake News as well. Fear mongering has become a crucial issue today. It additionally says that though the government has been making an attempt its best to resolve the problem and take proactive steps to mitigate it the false info and faux rumors. During the times of COVID-19, social media has played a crucial role in serving to the mass audience to be hypersensitized, informed, entertained, and educate themselves in these times. It is also the responsibility of the people to consume social media information for reliable sources.

A study by Depoux et al. discusses that "With the outbreak of Covid-19 globally, there has been a outbreak of misleading rumors and conspiracy theories about the origin around the world with fear mongering, racism, mass purchase of face mask and sanitizers all closely linked to the new 'Infomedia' ecosystems of the 21st century marked by social media (Depoux et al., 2020). The social media news panic has travelled faster than the covid-19 spread." It also says that the real time information sharing system to be developed to keep the public by sharing the data and analysis from social media platforms. It has also been termed as "Infomedia" people are looking for news and information from social media.

A study by Ahmad and Murad elaborates that "During lockdown, people are using social media platforms to gain information about COVID-19. The nature of the impact of social media panic among people varies depending on an individual's gender, age, and level of education. Social media has played a key role in spreading anxiety about the COVID-19 outbreak in Iraqi Kurdistan (Ahmad et al., 2020)." This says that in Iraqi Kurdistan people have also used the social media as a resource for news and information related to Covid-19 which has led to spreading anxiety in the peoples mind about the pandemic situation. Another research by Adrija et al. says that "Strict lockdown rules movement restrictions and social distancing norms have resulted in increased screen time. Misinformation and rumours on social media resulting in a change in the state of panic and anxiety in people leading to depression." (Adrija et al., 2020)

A study by Cinelli et al. believes that “the understanding of social dynamics behind content consumption and social media is a crucial subject, since it may help to design more efficient epidemic models accounting for social behaviour and to implement more efficient communication ways in times of crisis.” (Cinelli et al., 2020)

Another study by Biswas et al. elucidates that the preventive measure for COVID-19 is different from the various other epidemics in the world even in India. Communicative leadership proved how the state enunciates lockdown prior to Central government obligation and stabilizes mass spread when the country transient through tragic phases of Covid-19. The state government of Odisha appointed Subroto Bagchi as the Chief Spokesperson on Covid-19 who came live everyday through different media sources to share the data concerning the covid-19 situation. However, serving information and changing people's behaviors relies upon strategic communication and sharing of ideas, dialogues and communicative action. The Odisha government has been relentlessly sending information through open dialogues, amalgamation of different media, public announcements, mobile communication and interpersonal communication at the doorsteps of every citizen, which help people to learn every tenet. (Biswas et al., 2020)

Thus, in light of the literature reviewed and analyzed, there arose a need for a study of the impact of social media awareness in the Odisha state.

3. Aim & Objectives

The study aims to ascertain the role of the Odisha Government in terms of the impact through Social media during the Corona Pandemic.

3.1 Objectives of the Study

1. To find out the penetration of Social media in society during the pandemic.
2. To analyze if children are being affected by the new media technologies during pandemic.
3. To map the significant changes in the cognitive, physical, mental and social growth of the people resulting due to the use of new media techniques during pandemic.

4. Methodology

Online questionnaires and interview schedules were used in two parts. First online questionnaire was shared through

Google forms via E-mails, WhatsApp and social media. Then few people were contacted and interviewed about the awareness and sensitization of Covid-19 done by the Odisha government through social media. A semi-structured interview schedule was administered on the sample with open ended questions along with an online questionnaire survey was also done through Google forms.

5. Data Collection

300 people from Odisha were identified for the study from which 232 responded through online questionnaires and 33 were interviewed personally over telephonic conversation. The online questionnaire was shared through Google forms via E-mails, WhatsApp and social media. It took over a period of 15 days for the data collection. The people were explained about the nature and scope of study before the interviews. They took a little more time to open and engage in a conversation. During the interviews, observation notes were made along with audio recording, in order to analyze the gathered data again later. Each interview interaction took place personally and lasted approximately 10 to 15 minutes.

6. Data Analysis

From the data collected, it was observed that people who responded to the online questionnaires are from age group 20 to 60 years. Almost 93% said that they have a social media presence. An average time spent 2 to 3 hrs. of time on social media. Parents spent more than 4 hrs on smart phones or laptops. As there is easy access to the internet on their phones and laptops, the people admitted having been looking for news and related content regarding COVID-19 through Social media during the pandemic times. Many people agreed on having their presence on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram and have been relying for news and Covid-19 related information from twitter and Facebook along with television.

Most of the people said that they are aware of the Official social media pages and handles of the Odisha government on different social media platforms. The people said they do follow/ like the Odisha government pages/profiles and the most common ones to be CMO Odisha, health and family welfare department, Odisha government. Few also follow the Information and Public relations department, Odisha Government page on different social media platforms.

When asked about, do you think that the Odisha Government has been able to sensitize and aware people of Odisha regarding the COVID situation? People have

responded very positively. They have strongly agreed that the state government has been very active from Day 1 whether about lockdown or awareness and sensitization of the situation. They have taken prompt decisions and connected strongly with the public through different media sources. One of the interviewees also pointed out a few major points like the state government came up with a mobile clinic for public awareness regarding the importance of mental health and has communicated to the public about it very well through social media. He also mentioned that there have been videos being uploaded by people pleading the Odisha government to help them get back to Odisha who are stuck in different parts of the world and the state government has been promptly acting on it. Daily and weekly updates on number of positive cases, recovery cases, quarantine guidelines, information regarding health care and availability of On-call Doctors, lockdown guideline and timeline, to toll free numbers for people for transportation, migration from other states, etc. along with LIVE press meet on Social media every day is given on the official social media handles of Odisha Government.

The results say the Odisha Government has been quick and responsive in creating awareness regarding the Lock down and shut down, rules and regulations, do's and don'ts through the social media. One of the female interviewees also mentioned that vegetable vendors list with time and location was provided on the official social media handles for public ease during the lockdown and shutdown. She also appreciated that no such area has been left by the Odisha Government to be taken care of during the crisis regarding public interest. Most of the people said they were aware of the daily press conference conducted by the state government. Few mentioned that they took television as a source for viewing it.

Lastly, when asked about the information related to Covid-19 which was shared by the Odisha Government through their social media handles, was it helpful and easy to understand? The people have responded positively. Almost 89% of people agreed that it has been helpful and informative.

7. Findings and Conclusion

The findings suggest that people have their social media presence on different platforms and spend on an average of 1 to 3 hrs. daily. They mostly rely on the social media platforms and television for the news source and daily

updates of the situation. The people have been following the social media profiles/pages created by the Odisha government. The Odisha state government has been giving daily and weekly updates on number of positive cases, recovery cases, quarantine guidelines, information regarding health care and availability of On-call Doctors, lockdown guideline and timeline, to toll free numbers for people for transportation, migration from other states, etc. along with LIVE press meet, etc. There has been a positive impact as the Odisha Government has been very prompt and alert in sensitizing people about the Covid-19 current situations daily. All the Odisha Government Departments like Health and family Department, CMO, Information and Public relations department etc., have been very quick and updated all relevant news regarding Covid-19 on all their social media handles.

In the end, the study can be concluded by stating that the Odisha government has been proactive in sensitizing, educating and informing people about the current pandemic situation with the usage of social media platforms. It has paid attention to every detail possible for public awareness and interest.

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A Study of Cognitive Effects of New Media Among the Ageing Population in Kolkata

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ABSTRACT

COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the lives of people regardless of the social demographics. It has unprecedentedly changed the daily routines of ageing people and has affected their caregiving support and their overall ability to stay connected socially. Older adults are inevitably being challenged by the requirements to spend maximum time at home devoid of much physical contact with their family, friends, or relatives. It thus becomes important for looking towards creating opportunities to foster healthy ageing during this pandemic situation. Thus, in the context of all these perspectives, this paper attempts to study some approaches that technology-based intervention might address the issues of social isolation and loneliness among the older adults in this present pandemic situation. The universe of the study is the city of Kolkata, West Bengal.

Keywords: New Media, Older adults, COVID-19, Ageing

1. Introduction

An older adult is more vulnerable comparatively because of several reasons – they have more chronic conditions than the younger people. Their ageing immune system makes it tougher to fight off diseases, infections, and other viruses. Recoveries become lower and more complex. The world is experiencing one historical moment with the unprecedented challenge of the COVID-19. The outbreak of the pandemic is inevitably going to have a long term and intense impact on the health and overall well-being of older adults. Increased loneliness and social isolation are likely to be one of the most affected health risk factors for them and both are associated with poor physical and psychological health status. The present paper through substantive study in Kolkata attempts to analytically study the approaches that can address the mental health issue of ageing population. The concerned approaches form encouraging social connection as well as mobilizing the resources within the family, community-based networks, and resources. It also includes developing an innovative technology-based intervention for improving social networks.

Considering the present pandemic situation, developing an engaging healthcare system for ageing people becomes essential that involves the process of developing methods towards identifying social isolation and loneliness

in their settings. An elderly person is more prone to social isolation even under normal circumstances, and this whole pandemic problem has further amplified their situation. Older adults have only a close circle of friends and family with whom they routinely interact. However, social interactions form a large part of their life post-retirement from professional lives, and this pattern has seen a drastic disorder with the government advisory on maintaining social distancing for controlling the further spread of the coronavirus. It is sadly a sign of our times that not visiting older relatives, with the intention of not unintentionally exposing them to infection, has now become a symbol of love in the new normal situation. So, needless to point out that the lack of social interaction outlets can worsen the mood and create anxiety issues among the elderly.

In these troubled and unpredictable times, people are worried for their loved ones especially the older relatives and family members who are highly vulnerable and in many cases, are living by themselves. They face anxiety because they live alone and are on a fixed income or pension, and with the lockdown and restrictions, they are no longer able to go out or take public transport. This entire process somehow affects their routine health check-ups. No one could predict that with such drastic changes, elderly people could also have an undiagnosed or poorly managed mental state and the present COVID-19

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pandemic has amplified their already-existing worries. The uncertainty and the constant stream of information related to the pandemic might lead to more stress and anxiety especially for the elderly. What is prominent in the media reports are the highlights of the increased mortality rates because of COVID-19. Regular exposure to news reports on rising numbers of deaths can trigger incidents of anxiety, depress or sleep deprivation among the elderly. This can have an overall damaging effect on the quality of life of older people. World Health Organization (WHO), along with its concerned partners, has also provided guidance and advice during the COVID-19 pandemic for the older adults and their households, health as well as for the social care workers, community groups, and local authorities for ageing caregiving. The present paper is an attempt to highlight the potential and scope of new media tools in addressing some of the common problems of ageing population like loneliness and depression especially in a crisis like COVID-19 pandemic.

2. Cognitive effects of New Media interventions

Models of ageing processes define vulnerable older people as those whose reserve ability does not cope successfully with the challenges; they face in life daily be it physical, psychological, and emotional. Compensatory supports might mediate to become an aid and ease the effects of challenges faced by the elderly. With the worldwide demographical changes, the number of older adults is increasing and elderly people need more care and medical attention comparatively. Interestingly, there is an element of social construction in the way ageing is defined. However, the major circulation of the meaning of the concept of ageing happens through interactions in the larger society. There has been a significant transformation around the world from the multigenerational family to the individual, the market, and the state, as the key positions of ageing care. Such transitions in modes of ageing involve quite notable shifts in understandings of the human condition. The substantive data collected from the field in Kolkata suggests that most of the older adults among the middle and upper-middle classes have their children settled abroad, which has resulted in these aged persons organizing life in different novel ways.

Unlike the young segment of the population efficiently equipped with modern technology and internet services, most of the older adults have limited access and knowledge of the internet and smart phones. A small fraction of older adults is found to be familiar with online services with a larger dependence on others. The impact of mental health on older adults varies and the factors

affecting mental health also differ. Further, aged people are a vulnerable section to online deceitfulness. However, with sufficient training and proper understanding, such treachery can be avoided making the online communication experience a pleasant and enriching one.

Social isolation and social disconnection themselves pose a serious health concern among older adults especially due to psycho social reasons and physiological health problems. While reviewing the literature covering new media and ageing people, the abstract specifically mentions the study is conducted in context of COVID-19 pandemic. Studies specific to new media intervention in the lives of older adults is somehow lacking. The new media offers them the first support and comfort on issues such as depression, dementia, anxiety, or diabetes within the convenience of their homes. Elderly use these tools to bridge the geographic gap between them and their loved ones living far away and to re-connect with friends from a far-off time. Previous research shows that the internet has become an important portal for reducing isolation, loneliness, and other depressive symptoms among older adults (Kamiel, 2016).

Technical designs, inaccessibility, a decline in memory, etc. are some of the common factors intimidating to the aged people for technology use (Finn, 2010). Computer-mediated communication increasingly plays a dynamic role in the lives of older adults by helping them with opportunities for social participation in the virtual community (Kanayama, 2003). As noted by Smith, (2014), once elderly people join the virtual world, digital technology becomes an integral part of their daily existence. While considering ageing and new media, there are several intersecting societal trends in place across the country and globe. For inclusive growth, what matters is addressing the multidimensional nature of inequalities and their impacts on different age groups. Learning a new skill or technology can be an unnerving task for adults of any age, but this is specifically true in the case of senior citizens. One of the vital elements seen among the aged people during the present study was the factor that determined the interest of using the new media; it was to find a reason to use the Internet and infuse it for social engagement and earning process.

3. Case Studies-Key Observations

Social isolation is described as the objective state of having few social relationships or infrequent social contact with others while loneliness is a subjective feeling of being isolated. Social isolation and loneliness are serious yet underrated public health risks that affect a sizeable portion

of the ageing population. Before the outbreak of this pandemic situation, most older adults were actively involved in various social activities and social events. While it is a fact that family members are the primary caregivers caring for older adults, family dynamics in the past few years have also undergone changes. India is perceived as a country with a strong tradition of a family that nurtures, protects, and respects its 'dependent members', including children, women, and older adults. With the new salient development of transnational living among the urban middle and upper classes in India, older adults are left to fend for themselves. It has become quite common for the youth of urban middle and upper classes not only to study abroad for a few years but also to settle permanently abroad, pursuing professional careers. Migration to countries for better job prospects is increasing among youth.

4. Methodology

Respondents above the age of 60 years from the city of Kolkata, West Bengal were interviewed for understanding their present situation and how are they coping up with the crisis. Purposive sampling has been adopted. Some of the accounts shared by the respondents have been presented as a case study for having a better understanding of their perspectives. This study is a small part of the larger research work involving ageing people and information communication technology. Many respondents revealed their present situations by talking about their hobbies, passions, interests, family structure, health issues, etc.

Overall, they all showed a glimpse of their daily lives amidst the entire lockdown and restrictions. Connecting with children, extracting news or informative pieces, movies, music, chatting with friends, sharing motivational lines, etc. are some of the reasons cited by the interviewees for their usage of new media especially in the isolation imposed by the lockdown. Though it is not that everyone is adapting to new media for all good or positive reasons, some of them have taken to new media as an escape from the misery and loneliness of being alone at this age. Following are some of the accounts shared by the respondents during discussions –

A man of 74 years of age, who lives alone, said that after his wife passed away, he has been very lonely. He expressed living a lonely life at this age is difficult. His two daughters are living in other places after they got married. He has a full-time caretaker. He has learned how to use a smart-phone and the internet. He chats with his daughters on WhatsApp. Interestingly, his grandchildren had opened

a Facebook account for him. He says, "My children are staying at my home now. Usually, my house is quiet because I live alone. But now, it is alive with my grandchildren's cheer. I feel happy being with my family. My three grandchildren follow me, calling 'grandpa, grandpa'. I am tired of playing with them, but also I am very happy."

Another lady of 72 years of age expresses how her sons surprised her on Mother's Day even in this pandemic situation all through new media technology. She says, "I have three sons, two of them live abroad. On the evening of Mother's Day, I received a beautiful surprise gift from all my children, which I was not expecting obviously. I was reconnected to all my family through the computer. This is nice. My one son lives with me and it was with his help I am learning to use the computer on my own."

Some respondents elaborately gave details of their everyday lives in personal essays and the role of new media in helping them in coping with the depressing state of this epidemic. These stories could help in understanding their sense of value to their family, friends, and themselves and positive intervention of new media technology in their lifestyles. Even though internet and mobile phones specifically are available and quite accessible in all households, it was worth realizing that the socio-economic realities of the respondents had an impact on the uses of technologies contradictory of what is being considered as their potential of becoming digital commons.

It is the absolute need of the hour that the mental health of the ageing people is being paid attention to by governments, researchers, and clinicians as compared to any earlier pandemics (Lancet Psychiatry, 2020). It is imperative to review the mental health effects of past pandemics and interventions that were effective. Unfortunately, research into the mental health of ageing people has not been reviewed from the social science perspective. Given that the impact of this pandemic may be prolonged, researchers will need to explore diverse ways for providing prompt interventions to improve the mental health of ageing citizens.

5. Conclusion

Appropriate measures to alleviate stress and anxiety need to be taught to vulnerable groups such as an ageing population, preferably through outlets offered by new media technology. There should be a check on the information overload about the pandemic as that could lead to further stress among the elderly. In the longer run, financial support might be extended to retired personnel

and pensioners, using subsidies. Putting simply, the impact of the current pandemic on the mental health of older adults is profound but easily overlooked. So, new media can hopefully be used as an aid to the needs of this vulnerable group. However, it needs to be noted that new media is just one aspect and larger remedial measures should be tried to be taken by authorities for ensuring that society can fulfil the psychological and other material needs of the elderly. Steps need to be taken for filling the gaps and alleviating the difficulties faced by the aged.

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Role of Community Radio in Health Communication: A Case Study of Suno Sharda 90.8 FM in Greater Noida

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ABSTRACT

Being an effective platform to reach the marginalised population, Community Radio (CR) is said to be a catalyst in achieving the sustainable development goals. CR is one of the best ways to communicate & awareness as it is for the people to the people & by the people. Among the 17 various SDGs, health awareness has always been one of the major concerns in developing countries like India. This paper aims at how effectively community radio can work in communicating health awareness programs. Being a case study of Suno Sharda 90.8 FM, the paper will also focus on different health-based programs produced by this CR Station & the extent of awareness it creates among the local community.

Keywords: Community radio, Local community, Sustainable development goals, Health awareness.

1. Introduction

1.1. Community Radio: With the aim of producing radio programs based on different issues related to the community, Community Radio is run by the community, about the community and for the community. It is a non-commercial broadcasting organisation which is limited upto specific range of areas where almost 50% of the programmes are made by the people from local community in their own language. The main objective of the community radio is to give voice to the voiceless, bring forward the hidden problems of the area & to act as a tool for its growth & development (Rabindranath, 2017). The policies drafted for Community Radio Station says that the emphasis of the programmes of the community radio should be on developmental, agricultural, health, educational, environmental, social welfare, community development and cultural programmes.

1.2. Health among 17 Sustainable Development Goals: As per the Brundtland Commission Report, the term Sustainable Development Goals are defined the “ability to make development sustainable—to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Robert, 2005). It's an integrated package of global aspirations that the world commits to achieve by the year 2030 which consists of 17 SDGs and 169 targets with 232 Global indicators.

1.3 SDG 3-Good Health & Well Being: According to World Health Organisation “Health is not only about the absence of any disease, but it refers to a state of complete physical, mental & social well-being” (WHO, 1948). SDG 3 not only commits to erase the epidemics of HIV, TB, Malaria and other communicable & non communicable diseases but it also aims at providing the access to safe & effective medicines & vaccines to everyone. The main target of SDG 3 focuses improving maternal health, preventable deaths under 5 years of age, to fight against communicable diseases, reduce mortality under non communicable diseases and to promote mental health, strengthen the prevention & treatment of narcotic drug abuse & harmful use of alcohol, reduce road injuries & deaths, to ensure the awareness & education related to sexual & reproductive care & family planning, reducing illness from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination (Chandran, 2020).

2. Aim & Objectives of the Study

This study is done with the aim of monitoring the role of community radio in achieving the Sustainable Development Goal 3 through Health Communication. The objectives of the study are:

- To find out the level of awareness of reproductive health among the respondents prior to media intervention.

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- To explore the effectiveness of health-based radio programmes among the local community after media intervention.
- To find out the modifications required to be done in the content of community radio programmes according to the need & understanding of the rural women.

In this study, media Intervention refers to the radio programs produced by Community Radio Station.

3. Review of Literature

3.1. Health Communication

“Health communication is the art and technique of informing, influencing, and motivating individual, institution, and public audiences about important health issues. The scope of health communication includes disease prevention, health promotion, health care policy, and the business of health care as well as enhancement of the quality of life and health of individuals within the community. This communication empowers individuals & population of the community to choose healthier lifewith an influential & motivational message broadcasted through various communication channels” (Chen, 2013).

For better understanding, Feeley & Chen (2014) explained Health Communication with the context of the following area of study: Patient-provider communication which involves the communication in interactions between the patients & their health providers, promoting health through mass communication campaigns which includes educating, or more often persuading people towards health related information through various mass communication channels and healthand medical facilities informatics which deals with the role of communication technology in communicating the message to the patients from the health care provider. (Chen, 2013)

Renata Schiavo in his book, Health Communication: From Theory to Practice states that the main objective of health communication is to influence the individuals & communities through a communication which aims to improve health outcomes by sharing health related information (Schiavo, 2007).

Among various social science theories, Diffusion of Innovation Theory plays an important role in Health Communication and is widely used by the researchers, practitioners & organisation. Diffusion of Innovation theory was developed by Everett Rogers (Rogers, 1962, 1983, 1995) which explains that how the communication of the innovation through certain channels over a time &

within a specific social system results into adopting news behaviours & social practices. On the basis of the audience's characteristic & the tendency to adopt changes, this theory defines five subgroups (innovators, early adapters, early majority, late majority & laggards) which was a major contribution in Health Communication that changes depend on the following stages: Awareness, Knowledge & Interest, Decision, Trial or Implementation and confirmation & rejection of the behaviour (Schiavo, 2007).

3.2. Role of community radio in Health Communication

As the Community radio stations have a smaller range of reach, it can effectively provide information, awareness and best practices to their community. They can easily communicate their local community through broadcasting & narrowcasting. CRs can engage their communities through awareness raising campaigns by motivating their local stakeholders for active participation through providing information, empowering the community to monitor the agendas, empowering people to involve in the implementation, building a sense of ownership of the agenda among the community people and engaging them with 2030 agenda (Chandran, 2020).

“Community Radio has the power to influence the people's opinion & perceptions around the maternal health, childcare & reproductive health”, (SDG toolkit for Community Radios). Showcasing success stories with a positive approach, a radio station can easily influence the people to adapt best practices & disseminates the myths & taboos associated especially to sexual & reproductive health.

4. Brief profile of Suno Sharda 90.8 FM- A Community Radio Station in Greater Noida

Community Radio Suno Sharda 90.8 MHz 'Greater Noida ka Apna Radio Station' was launched on 16th December 2015. As a radio station is located inside Sharda University, the students from different streams actively participate and contribute to various programs for an enriching experience for the community. The station encourages students and people from the nearby community to use multiple formats to produce radio programs, thus making it more interactive.

Students of not only the University but from across North India comes to the station for internships and contribution in content generation. A brief profile of Suno Sharda radio station is as follows:

1.	CR'S Name	Suno Sharda
2.	Frequency	90.8 FM
3.	Location	Place: Greater Noida District: Gautam Buddha Nagar State: Uttar Pradesh Country: India
4.	Date of Operationalization	16/12/2015
5.	Broadcast	12 hours
6.	Regular Timings	7 am -8pm
7.	Broadcast hours	12 hours
8.	Languages of Broadcast	Hindi/English
9.	Area Covered	Terrestrial transmission- 15 km radius from the Sharda University campus.
10.	Estimated Population Coverage:	Around 1.10 lakhs approximately through transmitter Additionally, available online through android app Suno Sharda

4.1. Programs of Suno Sharda Community Radio Station

Since its inception, Suno Sharda is broadcasting daily for 12 hours. Programming on Suno Sharda 90.8 MHz includes folk music, culture, health, law, local content, agriculture, women's empowerment, sanitation, social issues, legal education, and real-life inspirational stories among many others. Some of the signature programmes is as follows:

Some of the Signature programs of Suno Sharda 90.8 FM:S.

S. No.	Program	Details
1.	Radio OPD	Health Based Show
2.	MeriSakhi	Women centric programme where issues related to women are discussed.
3.	Qanooni Salah	Programme on legal awareness
4.	Padhega India Badhega India	Programme on career & counselling
5.	Zindagi Ka Safar	This show focuses on life Stories, Motivational talks, City Updates & Entertainment.
6.	Ek Mulaqat	Programme on Inspirational stories of people who have carved a name from themselves.

Among these signature programmes, health-based programmes is broadcasted in three segments of the programming of SunoSharda i.e. Radio OPD which is broadcasted twice in the & the female health oriented talk show/programme is broadcasted under the segment MeriSakhi.

5. Methodology

5.1. Research Design: This community based qualitative study was conducted in Lularli village of Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh. Total two groups of 10 respondents each, participated in the focus group discussion with two facilitators simultaneously. Total twenty women of the village with age ranging from 18 years to 45 years were selected through convenient sampling for the study.

5.2. Data Collection: Data was collected through focus group discussion with two groups of respondents. To remove data collector's bias in data collection and compilation, two different facilitators collected the data simultaneously. Data was collected ethically keeping the identity of the respondents anonymous (as per their request). The respondents were informed about the subject in advance and their proper consent was taken for the data collection. The collected data was further analysed through rhetorical analysis, described in the next section of the paper.

6. Coding & Analysis of the session

The sessions were conducted in three levels: Pre Media-Intervention, Media Intervention & Post Media Intervention.

6.1. Pre Media-Intervention: Both the Facilitators were trained specifically to handle these types of sessions. Facilitators created a comfort zone for the participants & tried to build a bond of trust with the respondents. Further the discussion started & each facilitator briefed their group members about the sessions & initiated talking on reproductive health & menstrual hygiene. In the initial 20 minutes the high level of hesitation was observed among the respondents. They were not actively participating in the discussion due to shyness and being uncomfortable while discussing the topic. After the discussion continues for few minutes, some of the responses we received were:

- **Respondent 1:** "I was strictly instructed by my mother not to discuss about menstruation with

anyone in or outside the family. It was very shameful for all the females if somebody knows that she is menstruating, especially the male members of the family. So, we always ignore coming before & talking to any elders of the family”.

- **Respondent 2:**“Having a menstruation period was like having curfew on your activity. I was not allowed to move outside my room. Neither I can take a bath nor can I change my clothes. Even I and my sisters were not allowed to enter the kitchen or our puja rooms. And yes, touching or eating pickles were also not allowed.”
- **Respondent 3:**“I generally used clothes when I menstruate. I cannot get new clothes every time, so I washed the used piece of cloth & let it dry in the sun when no one is at home. In my 30 years of life, I hardly used sanitary napkins twice or thrice. I have seen my mother, sisters, mother-in-law & sisters-in-law using this, so I am also following them”.

6.2. Media Intervention: After getting the above response, a radio talk with Dr. Shehla Jamal, Gynaecologist, Sharda Hospital on menstrual hygiene was narrow casted in both the groups. While media intervention, Facilitators were asked to explain few technical terms or to translate few of the English sentences used by the Interviewee in between the talks.

6.3. Post Media Intervention: During media intervention, all the respondents were attentively listening to the radio talk produced by Suno Sharda. But the moment medical terms or English sentences were used by the speaker, they got disturbed. To cope up with these issues, facilitators played an important role. They described all the medical/technical terms & had translated the English sentences as per their ease of understanding. After the media intervention, 12 out of 20 participants compared the information shared thorough radio talk show to their regular routines of hygiene. Majority of the respondents pointed out that using cloths are not hygienic as well as bad for health. They understood the worse outcomes and the ill effects using clothes during menstruation can have on their health.

Few of the statements given by them are:

- **Respondent 1:**“I am using the cloth since last I started menstruating. I never knew, in fact, nobody in my family is aware that infection caused due to

the usage of cloth during menstruation may lead to chronic diseases like cancer. We take menstruation so casually.”

- **Respondent 2:**“I was told by my mother that taking bath during the menstruation will make your bone week. While in the interview, Doctor Madam was suggesting taking bath regularly as cleanliness is the most important factor to keep you safe from any sort of infection. How contradictory the thoughts are”?
- **Respondent 3:**“My mother told me that the sanitary pads are too costly & it cannot be bear by the family on monthly basis.”

7. Discussion and Result

Uttar Pradesh has always been a state with low ranking when it comes to gender disparities, education and employment & health implications for girls & women. Special among the rural society, the thoughts are more conservative and the level of education & awareness especially health education is observed minimum. This study used Focus group discussion method to compare the level of awareness before & after the media intervention. In response to the topic related to sexual & reproductive health, a great extent of shyness has been observed among the respondents. They were not comfortable discussing about the menstruation. It took time for the facilitators to make them feel comfortable so that the discussion can start. Although after putting so many efforts 8 out of 20 respondents could not feel comfortable to discuss on the topic.

Secondly while media intervention, language and the medical terms used in the radio talk was a great barrier in communicating the messages. Facilitators performed the task as a translator and served as a medium to communicate the messages to the respondents in the easiest way they can understand. Since the participants, Facilitators & the speaker were females, the discussion followed in an easy way. During the discussion, participants were very much alert about the arrival or passing by of any male members. When asked about the convenient broadcast timings for this type of show, 100 % of the participant agreed to broadcast it during afternoon 12pm -1 pm when nobody (especially male members) remains at home.

8. Conclusion

The study shows that menstrual hygiene practice among the women of Luharli village was very poor. Baseless

restrictions like staying in a separate room during menstruation, no entry in the kitchen and puja ghar etc were practiced in almost every home of the village. So, health education is very much required among the women who can create awareness on maintaining menstrual hygiene, availability of low-cost sanitary pads & prevention of reproductive tract infections. Focus group discussion turned up as an amazing tool for qualitative research in the field of sexual & reproductive health. Narrowcasting of radio programme makes it more effective. At least the respondent started comparing the information shared through the radio talk with their regular practice. No doubt community radio plays a most important role in communicating the messages in a simpler & easiest way. Findings from this study also suggest that following the requirements & understanding of the respondents, the media content needs to be modified accordingly. The languages of the content should be easy & more appropriate as it is meant to communicate with rural women. All the medical terms shall be explained in the most possible simpler way, may be through examples. Rural women hesitate and feel shy while discussing the topic like menstrual hygiene or sexual health, so involvement of female health worker, female speaker & female facilitators will provide them a level of comfort.

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Effects of Virtual Education during COVID-19: A Content Analysis

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ABSTRACT

The advent of the World Wide Web has resulted in substantial growth of education and resulted in emergence of online learning. As a result, the physical brick and mortar classroom is losing its stand of being the only place of study. This has piqued the interest of many researchers and educators that can also enhance the students' learning and its outcome. The current pandemic has enforced a lockdown everywhere that has badly affected the educational institutes. This has caused educational institutes to abruptly use different modes of communication. They have adopted various technological innovations like virtual learning to keep a continuous flow of education. Many other aspects of telecommunication like Zoom, Skype, Google Classroom, etc. are being used by institutes to help reduce the distance of education. Therefore, it has been the need for every institute to grow their IT infrastructure and ensure the continuity of learning in this pandemic. The education sector has been a constant fight in this pandemic so as to ensure students are able to learn effectively. This paper highlights all the technological innovations available for use in the educational sector with a special focus on e-learning and what are the challenges faced by them in adopting it. It also identifies how engagement occurs during learning online and what steps are being taken by institutes for it. Using a qualitative study, the researcher has conducted content analysis by reviewing previous research papers focusing on the online learning environment. This study shows how educational institutes are adapting to the current situation by using technologies through online learning that is impacting education.

Keywords: Virtual Learning, Online Learning, Virtual Reality

1. Introduction

The current pandemic has resulted in a lockdown in major countries and an enforcement of its citizens to stay at home that has deeply impacted all the sectors. Thus, changed social interaction and education is not an exception to it (Subedi, et al, 2020). The lockdown has impacted the whole education system across the world and caused various educational institutes to cancel or postpone their classes and exams. This has compelled them to make use of the online modes. Initially many educators and students were quite confused and did not know how to cope with the situation and sudden crisis that compelled closure of all education activities (Jena, P.K. 2020). E-learning tools are considered to be a new method of teaching compared to the traditional face-to-face method and is playing an important role during these times. The aim of these tools is to ensure that there is learning taking place even during the lockdown.

Online learning has provided an effective way for teachers and students to continue with their activities despite not being able to physically meet up in classrooms. The pandemic has shown new methods of learning that will replace traditional individual classroom learning, from live broadcasts to "educational influencers" and experiences of virtual reality (Jadhav, V. R., et al, 2020). The E-learning platform is called the bridge to learning that gives the students the feeling of being present in the classroom. It results in the digital revolution of the education system through online lectures, tele-conferencing, digital open books, online examination and interaction at virtual environments (Strielkowski, 2020). Different tools are used for conducting classes online like Skype, Zoom, Google Meet, YouTube, etc. Creation of WhatsApp groups to effectively pass on any information is also being used. Associations of educational institutes with various stakeholders, including government, publishers, academic professionals, technology providers and telecommunications network operators can help provide a solution during this time of the crisis (Jadhav, V. R., et al, 2020).

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However, this online mode of learning is often discriminatory to the poor and marginalized students. It has been observed that even hearing-impaired students face challenges in online learning (Manzoor, 2020). There are many students who are from low-income families who are unable to afford the computerized way of learning in India, like high-speed internet and digital gadgets and as a result, are unable to study during these times of crisis. Even educational institutes in India are not capable of carrying out online classes as they are not equipped with the facilities required for it. Therefore, inequalities will arise between the students who live in the urban area and those living in rural areas and between the rich and poor who cannot afford to access the internet which will further increase the gap in continuing education with e-learning during the pandemic (Subedi, et al, 2020). Furthermore, these will also create mental health issues among students, which will need to be addressed. With this backdrop, the present study aims to identify how the education system is shifting due to the current pandemic.

2. Review of Literature

The current COVID 19 pandemic has had a global impact on education and its related institutes. Many educational institutes had shut down due to the lockdown imposed in different countries. In India, more than 32 crores of students have been affected by the various restrictions and nationwide lockdown for the COVID-19 (Jena, P. K. 2020). E-Learning has helped keep education on the move by indirectly limiting face-to-face classroom interactions. As per UNESCO, about 13 to 14 crores of secondary students have been affected with the lockdown (Jena, P. K. 2020). COVID 19 has facilitated the growth of digital media in education by putting a stop to the vigorous classroom teaching. This has caused teaching and students' assessments to move online on an untested and unprecedented scale are moving online with technology playing a major key role in educating the future generations (Shenoy, V, et al, 2020).

The outbreak of COVID-19 results in the digital revolution in the higher education system through online lectures, tele-conferencing, digital open books, online examination and interaction at virtual environments (Kumar, 2020). Technology has in fact been a boon for the education sector in this time of crisis by providing a platform for conducting online classes which see to the continuation of learning even during this lockdown period. Institutes have used different tools like teaching and learning like Zoom, Google Hangouts, Skype meetup, Google classrooms, YouTube, etc. Most of these systems are free which ensures

continuous learning during this pandemic. (Subedi, et al, 2020). But there is a need to train students and teachers to use virtual classrooms and technology to facilitate the exchange of information as this is a very important time for students. As the success of any system depends on how effectively the information is being transmitted.

The teachers have been assigning work to students using these online mediums and also created WhatsApp groups for effective communications along with parents, teachers and students. Many teachers have felt that there is not much difference between online and offline sessions as they can share PPT, play videos and use board and marker as regular classrooms. There were various initiatives from the Ministry of Human Resources Management (MHRD) like offering of free Swayam courses and also many institutions subscribing to online free courses for students during the lockdown period and providing them e-library sources and e-Books (Shenoy, V., et al, 2020).

But many children of today are not equally equipped for their technology-rich future (Livingstone & Helsper, 2007). There are various kinds of digital divides between those who have access to and ability to develop their skills related to digital technology, and those who do not (Pedró, F. 2012). Also, many schools may be lacking resources, skills, competencies or interest, and there would be a huge difference between schools (Godhe, et al, 2019). The current pandemic has compelled many schools and institutes to take up the online platform in order to continue the classes with the students. There is a strong digital divide in the current new COVID-19 normalcy as not all children are in an equal position to engage in their digitized basic education (Iiari, N., et al, 2020).

There are issues with technology access and use as both adults and children need to gain skills and competencies needed to integrate the digital tools into learning and teaching practices to gain benefits from them. India is currently not fully equipped in using digital platforms wherein it can provide education to each and every corner of the country (Jena, P. K. 2020). Thus, it is the need of the hour for all the educational institutes to grow their IT infrastructure and ensure that all children must have access to learning during these pandemic situations.

3. Theoretical Framework

Learning theory is used in the study. Learning theory describes how students receive, process, and retains knowledge during learning. Cognitive, emotional and environmental influences, as well as prior experience, all

play a part in how understanding, or a world view, is acquired or changed and knowledge and skills retained.

4. Objectives of the Study

- To identify the various innovations in technology that assist in overcoming the challenges in education during Covid-19 pandemic
- To highlight the major challenges that students and faculty face during online learning
- To analyse student engagement takes place in online learning

5. Methodology

To best evaluate how voyeuristic culture using virtual reality affects an individual, the researcher has used a qualitative method. Qualitative data collection allows collecting data that is non-numeric and helps us to explore how decisions are made and provide us with detailed insight. Qualitative research is the systematic reduction of content, analysed with special attention to the context in which it was created, to identify themes and extract meaningful interpretations of the data. Content analysis is the tool used for the study. Analysing documents incorporates coding content into themes similar to how focus group or interview transcripts are analysed (Bowen, 2009). The research analysed studies that are available on international journals and used a coding process to label organise and identify the relationship between the themes.

6. Analysis and Discussion

Table 1: Key themes derived after studying the various innovations in technology that assist in overcoming learning during pandemic

Concept	Description
Different Online Sites	Various research papers have shown that different inventions in technology are assisting learning during this pandemic. It was identified that similar to different blogging sites, e-learning platforms, etc are created to impart knowledge for the audience using different technologies in them that also enhances the learning of the audience.
Virtual Group Sessions and e-Conferences	Studies have identified how education institutes are using different mediums to keep a continuous flow of knowledge even during the pandemic by connecting different speakers and high-

profile instructors with students by conducting e-conferences and group discussions where students can interact with their speakers.

Chatting/ Communication

Previous research work has shown that staying connected with teachers and mentors through different modes of communication has helped learning among students. Live chatting or telecommunication using different technologies has helped students stay connected with their mentors and kept learning moving.

Using Virtual Reality

Another observation from the studies has identified how different technologies have enhanced learning. One such technology is Virtual Reality that provides an immersive environment for learning. For example, with medical students, Virtual Reality is helping them carry on with their studies during the pandemic.

The findings from Table 1 have shown how technology is being used to overcome the learning challenges during the pandemic. Due to the lockdown, educational institutes have had difficulties conducting offline classes and other learning events. This has caused many institutes to adapt and adapt to new norms and embrace technology. Using different technologies has enabled continuous learning during this period. Students of different subjects and different locations were able to utilize these resources to carry on their classes and exams. They even have face-to-face sessions with their teachers and mentors to solve their queries thus guiding each student to solve problems and move on with their studies. Table 1 shows how students are able to learn from experts by using technology to conduct seminars and group sessions. This has helped faculty and students to connect with experts from across the globe. Another use of technology identified is the use of live chatting platforms or communication applications that have helped students to get live responses to the queries and helped solve their queries quickly. Chatting has also assisted in the easy flow of communication from the faculty to the students. Table 1 also displayed another form of technology that provides an immersive environment which enhanced learning for students. This is called Virtual Reality. It has provided students with an immersive environment to study subjects which would have been

practically never possible to study without the worry of using any dangerous object. Even education institutes are conducting classes to session using this medium. Recently even IIT Bombay had conducted their graduation ceremony using Virtual Reality which became a success as it helped students to experience their graduation hands-on.

From Table 1, it was identified that technology has assisted students in learning during this pandemic time. Various lines and paragraphs have led to the above conclusion "websites, asynchronous text conferences, streaming audio/video and even synchronous collaboration tools such as shared whiteboards (Weller, M., et al, 2005). "Learners are provided with didactic material in the form of a pre-recorded video lecture that they can watch during any free time prior to the conference" (Chick, R. C., et al, 2020).

The second point on virtual group sessions and conferences showed how technology is being used to conduct different sessions of imparting knowledge from experts across the globe. "First, we are implementing a teleconference format for our weekday academic conferences, held at the same time as usual" (Chick, R. C., et al, 2020). "Unlike traditional classroom didactic programs, webinars can be offered either as live events or on-demand, that is, recorded for replay at the convenience of the consumer" (Shalini Shah, M., et al, 2020). This then assisted the researcher identify the point which is related to chatting and how communication takes place during conferences and also online classes. There are different tools developed to facilitate it. "It is also conducting webinars (live online class), communication with teachers via message and chat forum is also an option available to user" (Raheem, B. R., et al, 2020). "In many ways use of audio conferencing in distance education can be seen as building on the earlier use of telephone tutoring or telephone conferencing, but now within an integrated package with chat and whiteboard, concept mapping and resource sharing" (Weller, M., et al, 2005). Finally, the research paper identified how Virtual Reality is playing a role here by enhancing learning. "In the ongoing pandemic COVID-19 situation, the features and theories proposed by the virtual reality concept can be quite useful in healthcare-related applications and therefore can be effectively employed over to solve or confront many of the issues arising nowadays" (Singh, R. P., et al, 2020). Surgical virtual education studies can be extrapolated towards the development of e-learning platforms geared toward teaching technical proficiency to pain medicine fellows (Shah, M., et al, 2020).

Table 2: Key themes derived after going through different research papers regarding the major challenges that students and faculty face while online learning during pandemic

Concept	Description
Lack of knowledge and content	Various research papers have shown a major issue faced by students and teachers is the lack of knowledge in using the tools and software. There are no proper guidelines in place that can help them in solving their queries. In case any issues are encountered, they do not know how to troubleshoot it and are helpless in such scenarios.
Isolated Learning	Studies have identified how online learning has caused students to be isolated from other classmates. It has reduced the social interaction that students have with their peers. Even face-to-face interactions with their mentors have been reduced. It has decreased engagement of individuals and also sometimes student queries may go unnoticed due to numerous queries coming and technical issues.
Distractions	Previous research work has shown that another major challenge is distraction. This could be personal or technical distractions. Online learning does allow one to learn from the comfort of their homes, but this causes distractions as at home, family or children interrupt the flow of learning. Sometimes it is work or other responsibilities that hinder online learning. Even technical issues play a role here wherein bad internet connectivity and unable to access high speed internet and devices.
Technology and personal issue	Another observation from the studies have identified how technology and personal issues play a role in obstructing online learning. Many do not have access to high-speed internet and devices which results in difficulty in learning. Also, many students, especially in the rural areas do not

have access to the internet, which during this pandemic has hindered their learning. Some are unable to afford the high cost of internet and the devices which can be used to view thus resulting in difficulties in learning online.

The findings from Table 2 have shown the various issues that students and faculty face while taking online learning. The study identified that the first major concern was the lack of knowledge and content. Many students and faculty are not well-versed with using different gadgets and software and hence find it difficult to learn online and also provide training online. Many institutes do not have proper guidelines to troubleshoot issues faced while using the tools and hence when they encounter any problems, they are unable to solve and reaching out to an expert to solve it as sometimes a tedious and time-consuming task. Many educational institutes do not contain content that is user friendly or update content on their website. Hence, students are unable to study freely using online portals. Another issue identified was isolated learning for the students. Since they are unable to interact with their peers and mentors physically, it creates a sense of being alone and a decrease in participation. This reduces the interaction time and also de-prioritized engagement during online classes. The study further identified how distractions are affecting online learning. Since everyone is taking classes from home, there are various distractions that affect the flow of learning. Distractions such as childcare, family commitments or any additional work. This hampers the learning of the student and causes issues during online learning. The final finding is technology and personal issues wherein not many faculty or students have access to proper internet connection. Even if they do, it is too slow to stream online lectures. Moreover, the cost of the internet services and its devices is too high and as a result, not many are able to invest in it. This leads to challenges faced while learning online.

From Table 2, it has been identified that technology has caused major challenges while taking online classes. Numerous lines and paragraphs have led to the above conclusion "it is not simply the case of applying a "one size fits all approach," which is what teaching staff relatively unfamiliar with the online environment tend to do" (Gillett-Swan, J. 2017). According to Al-Hujran et al (2013), "Lack of awareness about e-learning tools is a common problem among students in developing countries". This shows how lack of knowledge is the major concern for using the tools.

Even if students are able to use the tools, another factor that is affecting it is being isolated. Some of the findings were "the online environment presents added challenges for the external or isolated learner, particularly through considerations around their engagement, access, community, and support (Gillett-Swan, J. 2017). Being isolated is a challenge as humans are social beings and need to interact, with online learning this has caused it to reduce. Being isolated and at home has caused even more concerns to arise in the form of distractions. Students and Faculty face various distractions. Most of the research done identified it is for example - "Majority of the respondents (62.5%) got disturbed during online class because of students leaving and joining in between their class." (Subedi, S., et al, 2020). However, the preferences may be different for those with limited choice in delivery mode because of additional work or the family commitments that may restrict their ability to engage in alternative and perhaps preferred face-to-face or blended enrolment modes (Stoessel, et al, 2015). The final major obstacle identified was technology and personal issues. "In Southeast Asia like in many other developing regions, a large segment of the population does not have access to the Internet and electronic devices" (Subedi, S., et al, 2020). Kapsasia (2020) argued that "the online mode of the teaching-learning process is often discriminatory to poor and marginalized students."

Table 3:Key themes derived after going through different research papers as to how engagement takes place in online learning

Concept	Description
Various Session	Various research papers have identified that conducting different sessions for students keeps them engaged. They can be engaged through forums or blogs or conducting online tests or even through games. This keeps them active and attentive to information being passed.
Interactive content	Studies have identified that in order to keep the students engaged, the content needs to be interactive. It must be user friendly and contain up to date information. This will keep the student engaged on the content.
Technology	Previous research work has shown how technology here can keep students engaged by using different mediums. Like posting or chatting or even interacting with the opposite

person on the call. Different tools can be used like Zoom, WhatsApp, etc.

Knowledge & attitude Another observation from the studies identified that having the knowledge of the tools helps in keeping the students engaged. Without proper knowledge, the students would lose interest and end being engaged with the content. Also another factor is the attitude of the individual, if the individual is open to learning online then they would be engaged with the content.

The findings from Table 3 have displayed how engagement takes place in online learning. The study identified different themes firstly through various sessions. Educational institutes are creating different sessions that will assist in keeping the students engaged during online sessions. These include creating web-based sessions, assignments, forum discussions, gamification of the content, etc. These are some of the methods implemented by institutes to keep students engaged and connected. During the current pandemic, since everyone is confined to their homes and taking online learning activities without any physical interactions, it tends to disengage the students and create such session help in keeping the students engaged. Conducting various sessions are beneficial but along with it the content should also be interactive. The study then identified that having an interactive content is important. This makes it easy for the students to engage with the content and also enhance their learning. The teachers must use different techniques to keep content interactive like videos, interviews, playing games, illustrations, role plays, etc. This will help in making learning fun and thus enable students to stay engaged during online learning.

From Table 3, the study shows that technology also helps in keeping the students engaged. The use of different technologies like WhatsApp, Zoom, Skype, etc. are facilitating learning during this time and also keeping the students engaged with continuous interactions of the students with their mentor. This is helping them stay up to date with the latest development of the subject matter and also guiding the students in getting their queries solved quickly. The final finding from Table 3 was regarding the knowledge and attitude of the students and faculty. If they have the right amount of knowledge in using the content, they would be definitely engaged during their online content and also if they have the right mindset towards learning online, it would keep the students and faculty engaged with their content.

From Table 3, it has been identified how engagement takes place in online learning. Numerous articles helped identify it. "After the adaption of technology; faculty are using virtual modes for meetings, guest sessions, faculty development programs" (Shenoy, V., et al, 2020). "This is because there are a wide set of technology engage in online learning, including computer-based learning, web-based learning, virtual classroom and digital collaborations" (Urdan and Weggen, 2000). This showed how various sessions are keeping students engaged in online learning. The next finding was interactive content, which was identified from the following papers "Behavioral engagement involves students participating in activities, such as course assignments" (Buelow, J. R., et al, 2018). "This led him to understand the ideas more thoroughly, which allowed him to participate more during face-to-face active-learning exercises (Nguyen, T. 2015). This shows how interactive content is required to keep engagement during online learning. The study then identified how technology plays a role in keeping students engaged in online learning. "Acknowledging e-mentoring used electronic communications, Stokes, Harris, and Hunt (2003) cited Perren's (2002) conclusion that the key feature of e-mentoring lies in internet, using e-mail and list servers and non-face to face method of interactions. "Technology has a key role in educating the future generations" (Shenoy, V., et al, 2020). Finally, these papers show how knowledge and attitude also play a role. "Additionally, there appears to be a relationship between technology use and learning and other gains (Chen, P. D., et al, 2009). "Nearly a decade later, Astin's research of college students identified student engagement as being significantly strengthened through academic involvement, involvement with faculty and involvement with student peer groups (Astin, 1993; Feldman, 1994).

7. Conclusion

From the above research, the researcher has concluded that how Virtual Reality is being used in online learning. Virtual Reality is an immersive environment that replicates the real environment and provides practical exercises of subjects, which would have not been possible in real life. The researcher identified how different technologies are being used during this pandemic to keep a continuous flow of education through online learning. Keeping the students engaged is an important aspect in online learning as the audience are all isolated and present at different locations and there is no physical interaction between them, this sometimes causes them to be disengaged with the online lectures and session taking place. This is where

different technologies like WhatsApp, Zoom, Hangouts, etc, are playing their role of keeping students connected with their mentors. Virtual Reality is another tool being used to teach subjects that would not be practically possible in real life and also in medical institutes in performing human anatomy. Another finding from the study is a downside of online learning, which can be taken care of by the local government and other officials in providing proper training and infrastructure for ease of use of online tools. Since many areas do not have proper access to the internet or devices, it becomes difficult for them to use e-learning platforms. Overall, technologies like Virtual Reality are transforming education and will enhance learning if made easy to incorporate it.

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Qualitative Study on Effective Health Communication During the Outbreak of COVID-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

The year 2020 was most challenging year for the working because a pneumonia-like virus that originated from China around December 2019 rapidly spread across the world in many countries and impacted the human life drastically. On February 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) announced an official name for this severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus, Novel Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). Being a new virus there was not much information available about it and almost everyday a new theory came up about the severity of the virus and its intensity that caused more fear and panic. To tackle the situation, health communication became the major key player in providing the real, factual information in saving lives during COVID-19 global pandemic. The paper aims to study the effective health communication during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is a qualitative study conducted through purposive sampling. Around 8 doctors and 10 COVID-19 recovered patients were interviewed and the data was further analysed through Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). The research also explored and addressed the communication hindrances faced by health workers and the patients.

Keywords: Health Communication, COVID 19, Crisis Communication, Interpretative phenomenological analysis, Pandemic.

1. Introduction

The whole world is still facing an unforeseen situation of the pandemic. Initiated from Wuhan, China in December 2019, this pneumonia-like acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus was given official name, Novel Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) on February 11, 2020. The virus was highly contagious that within few months of its occurrence, it spread widely across the globe infecting millions of people. As the pandemic increased the need to deliberate valid, honest and clear information about the situation to the general public also increased.

The U.S. Department of Health & Human services (2020), has defined health communication as "the study and use of communication strategies to inform and influence decisions and actions to improve health". Previous studies have proved that proper public health communication has always been the most effective measure during situation like the current one. When the health communication is used and applied effectively, it provides better solutions to health-related issues. Health communication has always been used to communicate the required information for the benefit of public health

care in the situations where the public needs to be communicated and informed and study its impact on individual's health belief, attitude and behaviour.

When social media was creating awareness, it was also spreading a lot of fake information simultaneously, that was creating panic and restlessness among common public. On February 15, 2020, while addressing the Munich Security Conference, WHO Director-General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said, "we're not just fighting an epidemic; we're fighting an infodemic." As the pandemic increased the need of true, honest and valid information become more and more important, thus health communication become the major key factor in providing real factual information and saving lives during COVID 19 pandemic. The paper aims to study the effective health communication during the COVID 19 pandemic. It is a qualitative study conducted through purposive sampling. Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) supported by descriptive and in-depth analysis. The research also explored and addressed the communication hindrances faced by health workers and the patients.

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2. Methodology

A qualitative approach was used in the study and it was conducted in Delhi & NCR. Purposive sampling technique was used to collect the data from respondents. Data was collected through in-depth interview technique; semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face at respondents' residences and through telephonic interviews where the respondents were not available. Interview guide was developed beforehand and each interview took place between 20 minutes to 50 minutes duration.

3. Data Analysis

All the transcripts were analysed through Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis is used in this study because IPA eases and brings out the subjective live experiences and feelings of people over a period. With permission from the respondents, each interview was recorded and transcribed and the data was further processed through coding. The summaries of the interviews were sent to the respondents to verify the interpretation done. IPA was conducted with the blend of descriptive analysis and the in-depth analysis. Descriptive analysis used to explore the experiences and feelings of the respondents while in-depth analysis helped in examining semantic aspect of the data focusing on the words, phrases and the context of the recorded conversation with the respondents.

3.1. Descriptive Analysis

3.1.1. Summary of the participants

Eighteen respondents were interviewed (n=18) for the study out of which 8 respondents were frontline health workers and 10 were recovered COVID-19 patients. The samples were aged between 19 years to 60 years. The summary of the participants is shown in table 1 below.

3.2. The Recovered COVID-19 Patients

The respondents were able to express their experiences clearly for example the fear, uncertainty, frustration, anxiety, sadness they felt when first diagnosed with the infection while the health workers experiences were not very different as sometimes, they didn't have clear answers to the patients queries, so they also faced somewhat the same feelings as the patients.

Remembering the reaction after being diagnosed with COVID-19, Mr. Pankaj (32 Male) said that he worried and frightened not only for himself but for both of his parents who were patients of high blood pressure and diabetes.

"I had a fair idea about what the disease can cause to my body and I was pretty confident about my immune system, but I got so worried about the health of my old parents as both of them are diabetic and have high BP, by god's grace they didn't get infected because of me and luckily my wife and my one-year-old son were visiting my in-laws and were not staying with us during the time I got infected. But it was scary; I was the first patient in my friend circle, among my relatives and even the first COVID-19 patient the society I live in. Now when I think of that time it seems like a nightmare."

While all the 8 recovered COVID 19 patients had almost similar reactions when they were diagnosed with the infection, Mrs. Suman Ahuja (27, Female) was in her 2nd trimester of pregnancy when she was diagnosed with COVID-19. Remembering the day, she got the call from the hospital about her positive report.

"The first thing that came to my mind was what if something bad happens to my baby. I had seen all those WhatsApp videos that show how deadly the infection is. I even thought that I might not survive and will not see my husband again. I thank god and the medical staff at the hospital who took

S. No	Category	Age Group	Gender	Total respondents (n)
1	Front-line Health Worker	29 - 54 Years	Female – 05 Male – 03	08
2	Recovered COVID 19 Patient	19 -60 years	Female – 04 Male – 06	10
				n = 18

Table1: Summary of the respondents

my intensive care and assured me that nothing bad will happen to me or my unborn child. For almost a month I was frightened, almost depressed not knowing what will happen to me but in a month, I was cured and tested negative and now everything is fine with me and the baby as well. I am hopeful that neither me nor my baby will have any further complications. I am taking extra care now."

Talking about the effective health communication, Samiullah Salimee (24, Male) said, "I am student from Afghanistan and staying away from my family, I work as a freelance photographer and I got infected during an outdoor shoot, my whole team got infected. Since I was asymptomatic, I was asked to be in home isolation with prescribed medicines. I can say that the communication during the entire incident was very helpful for me, staying away from my family, I was very scared and lonely but the continuous support and complete communication with the health workers and the police officials was very helpful."

3.3. The frontline health workers

While the patients experienced a great level of panic and anxiety, the frontline health workers also summarized their experience as uncertain and fearful. With tone of responsibility towards the patients, this pandemic increased their responsibility as they are the only bridge between the patient and their families. Under normal circumstances, the family members can visit and boost up the morals of the patient but because of the highly contagious nature of the virus, the patients cannot meet the family, so they only rely on doctors.

Talking about the experience Dr. Anita Rathore explains, "The disease is new and is still under experimentation, we

don't have clear answers to the questions raised by our patients related to COVID-19. Since for information and updates they only rely on us, we have to be more careful while dealing with their questions so that we don't let their hopes high and not destroy their hopes at the same time."

On the effectiveness of health communication, Dr. D. Roy, Dispensary In-charge points out that the health awareness campaigns has been running successfully, Asha workers has been properly trained and deployed for door-to-door communication and awareness. And people are also using the suggestive measures to be safe from the disease. So yes, health communication is proving to be very effective in this case as face-to-face communication with the health workers are decreasing the amount of panic created by the social media without checking the facts.

Talking about the responsibility, Dr. Roy said, "Since the vaccine is yet to be prepared and the nature of the virus is still not confirmed, and studies are in progress so almost every week a new development comes that needs to be communicated to the general public and here the health communication becomes more and more effective. A good part is that people are showing a great deal of trust on us, it feels like gone are the days when the patient enters with an open google search and argue about the course of treatment we offer them, these days they are relying on us more".

While talking about how the health communication can be improved to be more effective, a number of elements were pointed out by the respondents, mentioned in the table 2 below:

S. No.	Respondents	Elements of effective health communication
1	Front-line Health Workers	Honest, factual correct information, open truth. Continuous information and timely updates. Consistent & Specific information (avoid ambiguity) Information in common layman language Empathetic information demonstrating concern
2	Recovered COVID-19 Patients	Accurate & timely Communication at both individual and community level Shared responsibility Empathy with the patients

Table 2: Elements of effective health communication

3.4 In-depth Analysis

3.4.1. Effective Health Communication

All the 18 respondents agreed on the point that the public health communication has so far been very effective while COVID-19 pandemic is concerned. With numerous media outlets, the patients not only rely on the information or communication made by the competent government authority, but they also apply the suggested measure. The effective health communication not only helped the patients to get awareness about the disease but have also helped in overcoming the psychological stress.

3.4.2. Fake Information

The availability and the variety of news outlets and specifically with social media, the information spreads at a massive pace, thus the chances of spreading fake and unreliable information get equally high as the spreading of true and reliable information. Thus, to tackle this issue, fact check becomes the only solution. Talking about the fake news, Dr. R. Talwar, Senior Resident shares a case study of one of his patients, he remembers how his patient was adamant not to take medicines after watching video messages that talks about how the COVID-19 medicines can affect multiple body organ failure. Dr. Roy says, "It becomes so difficult to make them understand that fake information will only affect them adversely. Sometimes the patient even argues over the fake news."

3.4.3. Social Dilemma

Talking about the social dilemma, the patients have mixed social reactions. Mr. Prayank Sharma (26 Male) says, "First my father was diagnosed with COVID-19, I was certain that even I would be infected. My close friends extended their limitless support be it emotional, psychological, or even physical, but the neighbours behaved differently, they never offered any help or support rather made me feel that by getting infected I have done some crime and endangered their life as well. Though I do not blame them completely, as the lack of awareness about the disease may have caused them to behave this way. Thus, effective health communication is extremely needed in such cases."

3.4.4. Challenges for health workers

All the interviews discussed communication related issues in a great length pointing out the effective health communication as the need of the hour. When the front-line health workers were asked about the challenges, they encounter during seamless communication concerning the pandemic, Dr. Roy pointed out that the major obstacle

the health workers face during communication is the wrong information among the public which doesn't allow them to understand the reality. Thus, more awareness should be spread among the public related to real and fake information. Some other challenges that were pointed out by the respondents are:

1. Relatively new disease without much information that can be conveyed to the patients.
2. Dealing with the ill-informed patients.
3. Pressure from the officials as well the family members of the patient.
4. High responsibility of decision making on behalf of the family of the patient.
5. Low interest of the recovered COVID-19 patients for the follow up sessions.

4. Conclusion

The study concludes that effective health communication is the need of the hour and is most important during COVID - 19 pandemic. Effective health communication will not only help in informing or spreading awareness among the general public, but it will be helpful in maintaining psychological health and well being of the general public. The effective health communication can be achieved through proper and clear news coverage on the pandemic (neither glorifying the issue not demeaning it), timely press releases from the concerned government departments and healthy & proper debates over social media related to COVID-19 pandemic without spreading fake information and creating panic situations.

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A Comparative Analysis of English Dailies on Coverage of Ayodhya Verdict and Integration Between Religion and Politics

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ABSTRACT

This research study is based on the content analysis of top 3 Indian English newspapers. Sample of 213 news related to Ayodhya Verdict is analyzed. Recently Supreme Court ruled the verdict of decades long Ayodhya dispute which had resulted many violent riots and became the cause of communal differences between Hindus and Muslims in the past. Through this study, researcher would like to analyze to what extent print media covered the Ayodhya Verdict before and after days of issue. This study would reveal how religious issues are integrated with politics, how political parties uses the common man as weapon to do their party politics by crafting such incidents and dividing the communities for their own benefits. It has been observed that everybody has welcomed the Supreme Court's decision, but some communities are not happy with it.

Keywords: Ayodhya Verdict, Content Analysis, Religions, Political Parties, Newspaper Coverage, Babri Mosque, Ram Janambhoomi, Hindus, Muslims

1. Introduction

India is the only country in the world consisting of largest number of diverse religions. Hinduism is known to be the India's major religion which has existed for more than 4,000 years old. First Islamic dynasty in India was established in the early 13th century. (Ayodhya dispute: The complex legal history of India's holy site, 2019). The Ayodhya dispute is considered as one of the thorniest court cases of India and has covered a long-time journey of more than a century, "that goes to the heart of its identity politics".

There was a clash between both Muslims and Hindus. Hindus believe that Ayodhya, city of Uttar Pradesh, a northern state is the birthplace of "one of their most revered deities, Lord Ram". Muslims say at this place they have worshipped for generations. (Ayodhya dispute: The complex legal history of India's holy site, 2019). The Supreme Court has now ruled that "the site should be given to Hindus to build a temple there".

1.1. Historical Background of Ayodhya Dispute

The origin of this dispute dates back 500 years ago in 1528-29 when Mughal emperor Babur's commander Mir Baqi constructed the Babri Masjid on the site marking the spot of lord Rama birth. (Timeline: Ayodhya holy site crisis, 2012). This mosque was built by demolishing the Lord Rama ancient temple which stood at the birthplace to mark the spot. In this respect in 1822, an official claimed in Faizabad court but court dismissed the suit (Ayodhya verdict: 6 things to know before the crucial ruling, 2019).

In December 1949, some Hindu activists placed idols of Ram inside the disputed structure which lead to communal tension among Hindus and Muslims. Authorities seized the mosque as government declared it as disputed property. After that "court orders restrained people from removing the idols, and the structure's use as a mosque effectively ceased from that point" (ibid). In the following years, both Hindu and Muslim religious groups filed separate claims over the site and the structure. In 1986 after 37 years, Faizabad district judge ordered to open the gates of Babri mosque, in favour of Hindu parties and allowed to

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worship. Then Rajiv Gandhi govt allowed shilanyas at the site. Next to the Babri Masjid, VHP laid the foundation of a Ram Temple on the land. (Ayodhya verdict: 6 things to know before the crucial ruling, 2019)

1.2. Babri Mosque Demolition: In 1990-91, LK Advani began his rath yatra with kar sevaks for Ram temple. Then on December 6, 1992, kar sevaks demolished this mosque which is considered as "the fraught moment in the history of India, this incident leads upto the tense build-up, the storming and the bitter aftermath" (Ayodhya verdict: 6 things to know before the crucial ruling, 2019). "Riots break out across the country leading to the killing of about 2,000 people". "After the independence since 1947, the demolition of the Babri Mosque triggered some of the deadliest religious riots the country had seen. Muslims said they prayed at the medieval-era mosque for centuries while Hindus say their deity Ram was born at the site where the mosque stood before December 6, 1992" (Timeline: Babri mosque-Ram temple case, 1992). This incident emerged the communal and religious disputes to a large extent.

In Sep 2010, the Allahabad HC with 2:1 majority "ruled three-way division of disputed area between Sunni Waqf Board, the Nirmohi Akhara and Ram Lalla". All parties approached to Supreme Court and got stay. SC heard the appeals for 40 days from September-October 2019, and then reserved the judgment (Ayodhya verdict: 6 things to know before the crucial ruling, 2019). Then on November 9, 2019, Supreme Court ruled that the land must be handed over to a trust to oversee the construction of a Hindu temple, subject to conditions and ordered that a separate piece of land in Ayodhya would be given over to Muslim groups (ibid).

1.2. Politics over Ayodhya Dispute

The Ayodhya case is a land disagreement between two Hindu and Muslim groups, who both believe a 2.77 acre plot of land in Ayodhya should be designated as a holy site to their religion. It is observed that the Ayodhya case is more than a land dispute. It has been turned political more. And it goes to the heart of India's identity politics. (PERRIGO, 2019)

Babri mosque destruction shaped India in a different way. Veteran BJP leader LK Advani faced the charges of criminal conspiracy due to demolition of Babri mosque. The BJP had a hope that this act would consolidate votes of Hindus in their favour, but party did not get any success in forming their government in 3 states (UP and 2 others) where assembly elections were held in 1993 (How the Babri mosque destruction shaped India, 2017).

The former Congress PM, Rajiv Gandhi, was assassinated in 1991, when he left the party with no leader from Nehru-Gandhi dynasty which headed and held the party together since independence. Then in 1991, PV Narasimha Rao the elderly, long-serving minister in the central government was chosen to head a minority government. Failure of Rajiv Gandhi to protect the mosque, had undermined him by his rivals and they alleged that he was a Hindu rationalist, not a secular Congress man. At that time, the party divided into different parts and went in disarray in 1996 elections fight (How the Babri mosque destruction shaped India, 2017).

But in 1999, it was strange for the BJP when they formed a stable coalition. Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and Lal Krishna Advani could not imagine that Ayodhya had created their Hindu vote bank and they could implement their party's Hindu nationalist or Hindutva agenda and revive the Ayodhya temple issue (ibid).

Many BJP leaders have a belief that party would not have lost the 2004 elections if they had consolidated votes of Hindu under nationalism banner. Perhaps Ayodhya incident was a significant happening but did not create Hindu votes to change the political landscape of India (ibid).

1.3. Key points of verdict

The disputed site in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh will be given to the Centre to setup a trust within three months for construction of a temple. The trust will manage the temple's construction. The Muslim parties will be given five-acres of "suitable" plot in Ayodhya. This unanimous verdict was given by the five-judge Constitution Bench. SC said that Ram Lalla, as a deity, can be a juristic entity on the other hand 'Janmabhoomi' cannot be a juristic entity. The apex court dismissed the Single Leave Petition filed by Shia Waqf Board challenging 1946 Faizabad Court order. The Centre has been asked to grant representation in the trust to Nirmohi Akhara if appeared to be fit by the government (News, 2019).

Nirmohi Akhara suit claiming their rights has been time barred and hence dismissed, the SC ruled. The matter before the apex court was an appeal against the verdict delivered by the Allahabad High Court in 2010, where the high court divided the 2.77 acre disputed land in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh equally between the three primary parties - Ram Lalla Virajman, Nirmohi Akhara and Uttar Pradesh Sunni Central Waqf Board. Ahead of the judgement in the sensitive case, security had been beefed up and Section 144 was imposed (ibid).

This research consists of the coverage done by top Indian English dailies on five decade long Ayodhya dispute case verdict which was used as weapon by political leaders during Babri Mosque demolition and resulted into violent communal riots between Hindus and Muslims.

2. Review of Literature

Sundström, E. (2014) in a research study has observed that during the latter months of 1990's discourses on religious violence seemed to have been established part of discourse of Swedish daily press. This discourse has a tendency to portray religion and religiosity in a dichotomy with the secular. This secular state is described to have the hostile relationship with the "fanatical and violent religiosity" which always has a threat to tear a state. In the same way Ayodhya dispute has plagued India for centuries and often cited for typical violence between Hindu and Muslims. By observing the reporting of Swedish daily press on Ayodhya mosque, the author has, depicted that within a span of time this can be discoursed rather in a different way, these religious violence terms can be viewed as unchanging, but they are "in fact fluid, they shift".

Arunima (2010) in her article has concluded that to do subtle shifting of "devasthan (holy place)" to janmasthan (birthplace) within the legal cover by the Allahabad High Court on the dispute over Babri Masjid had the most damaging consequences. This decision also laid the legal ground to convert the imagined birthplace of deity into claims of property which trump the other claims to the same property. Researcher says that these things are more dangerous for the majoritarianism in India.

Fitzgerald (2008) in his book on "Discourse on Civility and Barbarity" has analysed the different meaning of the term religion. He described that with the different shifting concepts of politics, economics, and the secular this religion term has different meaning with different historical contexts. He has argued that religion as a category always finds itself in discursive relationships to other concepts, which is something that this paper finding itself agreeing with. Religion is defined by its relationship to other categories, it is defined as what it is by what it is not; religion is a historically bound concept, the meaning of the term is dependent on its context and is thus subject to change.

Shereen, R. (2004) has quoted that the main controversial centre of Ayodhya dispute is the Babri Mosque and it is still a subject of political debate and strong opinions of many to that day.

Ramaseshan (1990), Hans, B. (1991), Bernbeck (1996), Ratnagar (2004) et.al have concluded that researchers did "a fair bit of research" on religious violence in India and

Ayodhya dispute. A little could be seen how this issue was portrayed in media and related to global discussions regarding religion and violence.

Burlet, & Reid, (1995) in their research study revealed that policymakers should treat the issue of religion and cultural heritage very sensitively like ethnicity, gender and class as the simplistic views of both the Hindu and Muslim communities can be entirely separate. Even if the homogenous group are conflictual, at some places arguments must be avoided. There is need of appreciation to maintain the complexity of relationships between people especially if policymakers are willing to promote peace between South Asian diaspora communities in Europe.

Thakur, R. (1993) in discourse study concluded that in a spirit of to give and take to pray in a truly faithful way, Muslims of Ayodhya could build a mosque at the alternative site. Author has further said that Muslims should take extra care to respect the Hindu sensitivities and should make them feel safe to be involved in any emotional attachment to Pakistan. Fate of all the mohajirs who emigrated to Pakistan and Bihari Muslims from Bangladesh and Indian Muslims were not that joyful after the Ayodhya demolition event. It has been stated that it is far better to rebuild India as one nation, one society, and one people.

Abdullah, H. (1992) in an article has quoted that the 1986 Act captured the orthodox and fundamentalist support of Congress, but it doesn't address the economic and political marginalization of Muslims.

Ali, A. (1992) has viewed that any movement that promotes intolerance can be harmful for minority community and provides legitimacy to majority communalism.

Engineer, (1991) has revealed that in two reports of the Press Council of India on coverage of Ayodhya events of October 30 and November 2, harshly critical biased journalism has been observed in some newspapers. Author has also drawn attention towards the repressive editorial activism.

Nandy (1990) has viewed that in honest implementation of comical variety of secularism, tragedy is continuously appearing. He further says that it is very difficult to tell about the communal violence, about uprooted and de-cultured people to the ones who are anaemic academic secularists.

Das, V. (1989) has mentioned that by invoking the sentiments of Hindus and Muslims an appropriate cultural balance can be maintained about the sacred nature of these sites.

Madan, T.N. (1987) in his research article on Secularism in its Place has claimed that in India secularism would not work as there exists an alien cultural ideology, which is a gift of Christianity for which no conclusion and no solution can be suggested.

2.1. Research problem

How coverage on Ayodhya Verdict is undertaken by top English newspapers and role of the political parties on the issue?

3. Objectives of the Study

- To investigate coverage given to Ayodhya Verdict case.
- To analyze the content of the news of Ayodhya verdict.
- To identify the political factors of the issue.

4. Methodology

Content analysis of all the news of Ayodhya Verdict published in top Indian English newspapers – Times of India of Chandigarh edition, The Hindu and Hindustan Times of New Delhi edition (ABC, 2019) from November 1, 2019 to November 20, 2019, which is the period of before and after the Ayodhya verdict on which consists of 213 news in total consisting of 17 variables conducted. For this research paper, conducted all the content related to Ayodhya verdict in these newspapers has been analyzed manually and quantitative content analysis is done using SPSS, and data is collected using Excel spreadsheet.

5. Tabulation and Analysis:

Tabulation and analysis are the most important part of any research. All the data of variables are represented and analyzed in percentages. HT is used for Hindustan Times newspaper; TOI is used for Times of India and The Hindu is used for The Hindu newspaper.

5.1. Comparative Analysis of Newspapers Coverage

Table 1: Total no. of news published

Newspapers	HT	TOI	THE HINDU
Total	79.00	68.00	66.00

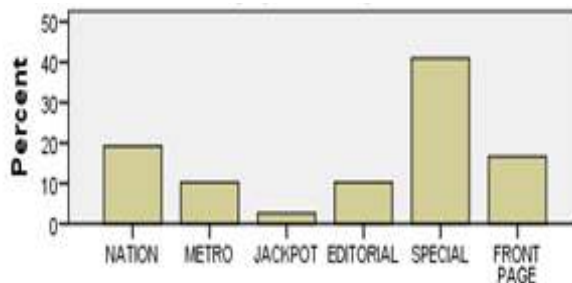
HT has published largest no. of 79 news on the issue in comparison to others out of 213 news. On the other hand, Times of India and The Hindu published 68 and 66 news respectively over Ayodhya verdict.

Table: 2 Section of newspaper for news placement

Section of pages	HT	TOI	THE HINDU
Front page	16.7%	7.4%	15.4%
Nation	19.2%	27.9%	0.0
Metro	10.3%	0.0	0.0
News	0.0	0.0	29.2%
Jackpot	2.6%	7.4%	0.0
Editorial	10.3%	11.8%	6.2%
Special section - (Ayodhya Verdict)	41.0%	35.3%	44.6%
Oped	0.0	0.0	3.1%
Others	0.0	10.3%	1.5%

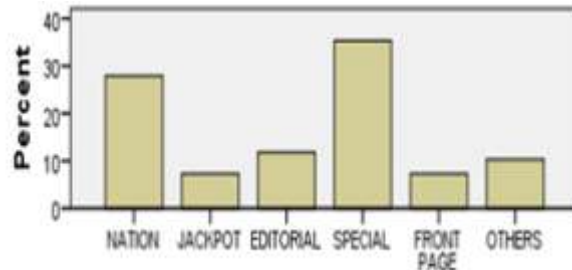
All 3 newspapers added special section in their newspapers to cover the entire Ayodhya verdict issue effectively and published maximum news during two days after the verdict i.e., 10-11-20219 & 11-11-2019. This table also reveals that HT and TOI used somewhat similar sections of newspaper to cover the issue. The Hindu consists of News section where 2nd highest no. of news published. In the similar way, HT consists of Metro section where leftover news of front page regarding Ayodhya verdict has been published. The Hindu consists least number of content on editorial page in comparison to other 2 newspapers. Both HT & TOI consists of Nation and Jackpot sections.

Section of Newspaper news placement HT



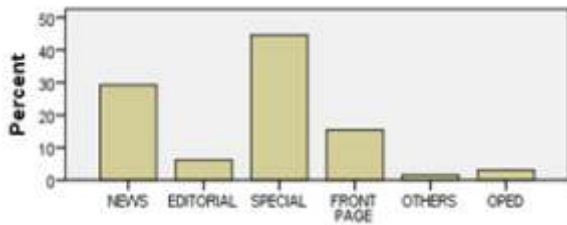
Section of Newspaper news placement HT

Section of Newspaper news placement TOI



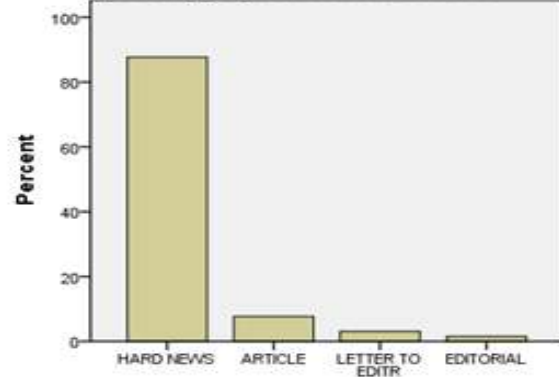
Section of Newspaper news placement TOI

Section of Newspaper news placement THE HINDU



Section of Newspaper news placement THE HINDU

Type/ category of news THE HINDU



Type/ category of news THE HINDU

Table:3 Category of news

Categories	HT	TOI	The Hindu
Hard news	80.8%	80.9%	87.7%
Article	15.4%	16.2%	7.7%
Editorial	3.8%	2.9%	1.5%
Letter to editor	0.0	0.0	3.1%

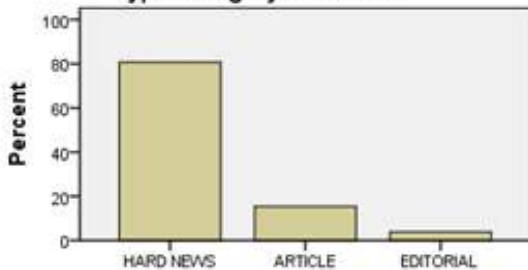
Table: 4 Photos availability

Type of photos	HT	TOI	The Hindu
No photo	51.9%	38.2%	35.4%
Black and white	8.9%	14.7%	7.7%
Colored	39.2%	47.1%	56.9%

Both HT & TOI published the hard news on Ayodhya verdict equally approx. 81% and The Hindu covered slightly 7% more in news. While article in The Hindu is less on Ayodhya issue in respect to HT and TOI. The Hindu also published the Letter to Editor on the issue. HT published the editorials in large.

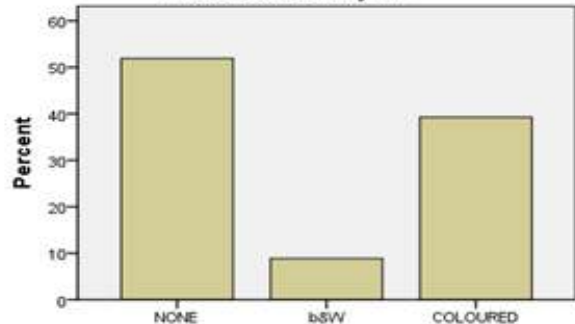
The Hindu has published large number of coloured photos on the Ayodhya issue while TOI has published highest number of monochrome photos on the issue. HT has not published many photos on the issue in comparison to TOI and The Hindu.

Type/ category of news HT



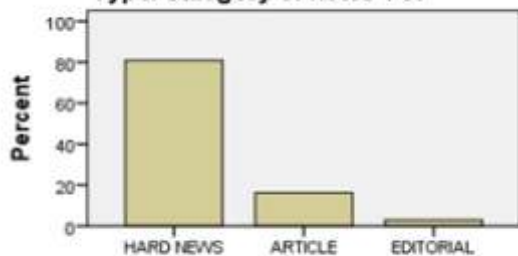
Type/ category of news HT

Photos availability HT



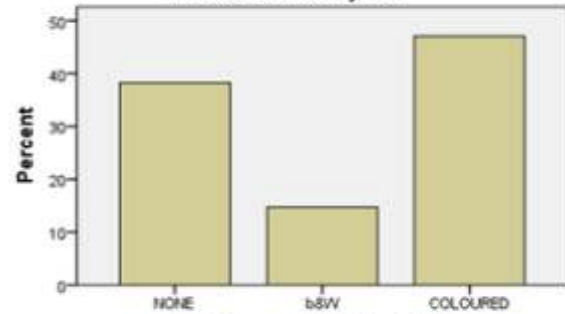
Photos availability HT

Type/ category of news TOI



Type/ category of news TOI

Photos availability TOI



Photos availability TOI

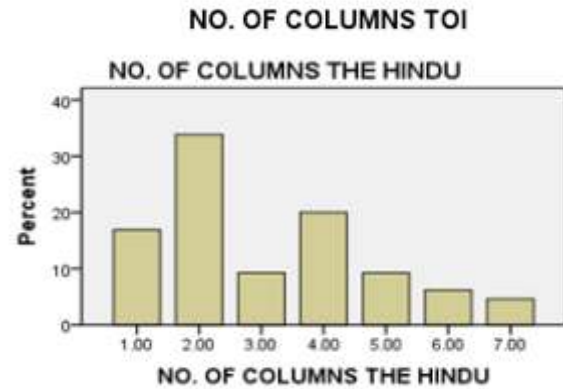
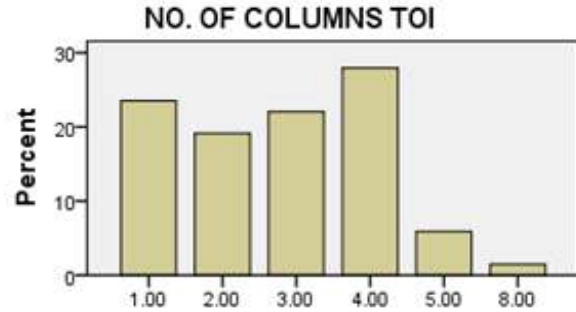
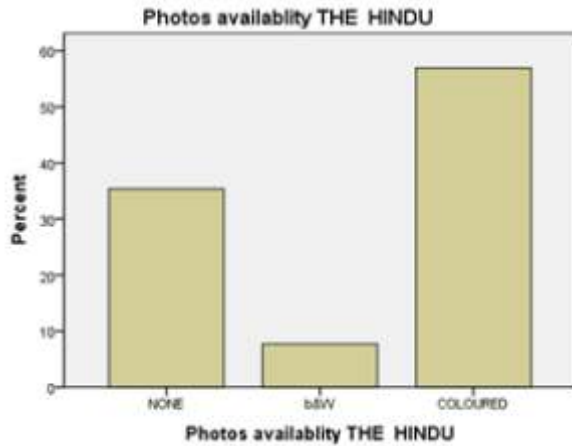


Table: 5 No. of columns used in news

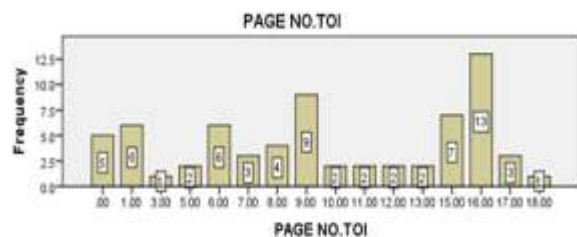
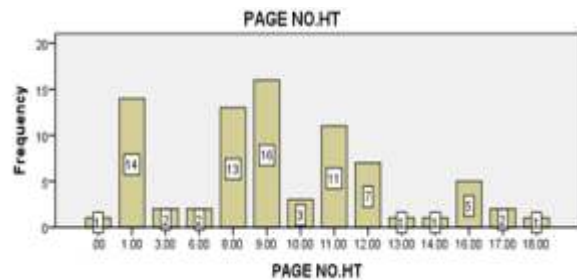
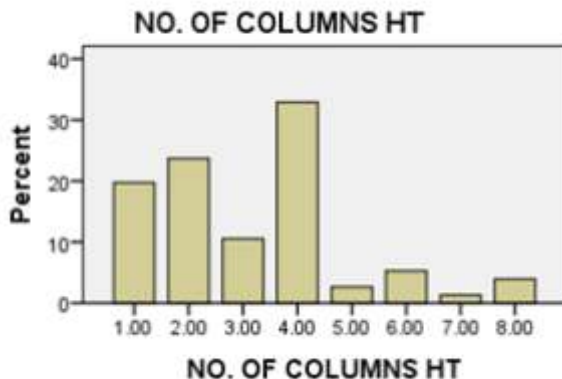
No. of Columns	HT	TOI	THE HINDU
1	19.7%	23.5%	16.9%
2	23.7%	19.1%	33.8%
3	10.5%	22.1%	9.2%
4	32.9%	27.9%	20.0%
5	2.6%	5.9%	9.2%
6	5.3%	0.0	6.2%
7	1.3%	1.5%	4.6%
8	3.9%	0.0	0.0
Mean	3.1579	2.8088	3.0769
Mode	4	4	2

Table:6 Placing of news on page no.

	HI	TOI	THE HINDU
Median	9.0000	9.0000	9.0000
Mode	9.00	16.00	10.00
Minimum	.00	.00	1.00
Maximum	18.00	18.00	14.00

HT and TOI have published the news on the issue mainly in 4 columns while The Hindu has published the news in 2 columns. Mean of the sample shows that all 3 newspapers have approx. 3 columns news. Large no. of news on the issue published from 1 to 4 columns.

News in all the newspapers published from 0 page i.e. jackpot page to page no. 18 and 14. In HT mostly news on page no. 9, in TOI is 16 and in The Hindu the page number is 10.



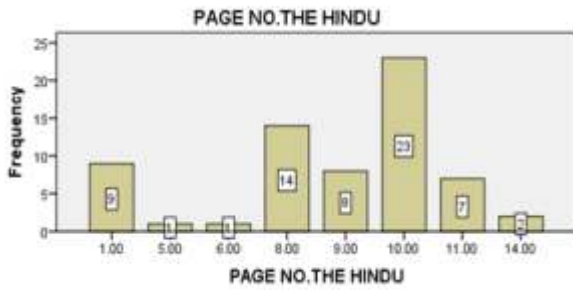


Table: 7 Total no. of paragraphs news published

NEWSPAPERS	HT	TOI	THE HINDU
Mean	9.3684	6.2941	6.7385
Mode	10.00	4.00	5.00
Minimum	1.00	1.0	1.00
Maximum	39.00	17.00	17.00

Most of the news in HT on the issue have been published in 10 columns, in TOI it is 4 and in The Hindu it is 5 paragraphs. In reference to highest no. of paras, HT has published a news of 39 paras consisting of only single article on page 1. In TOI and The Hindu issue has taken highest no. of 17 paragraphs for the news. Ayodhya verdict has also published in 1 paragraph too.

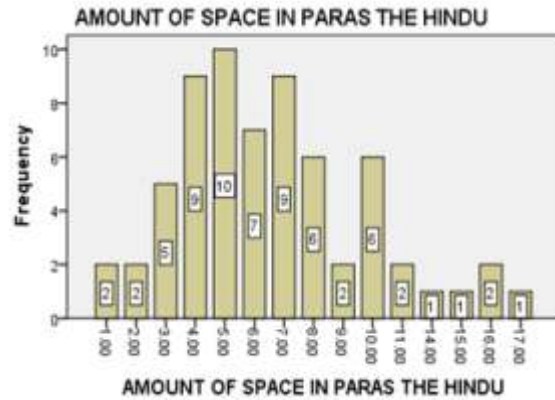


Table: 8 Issues placed in news

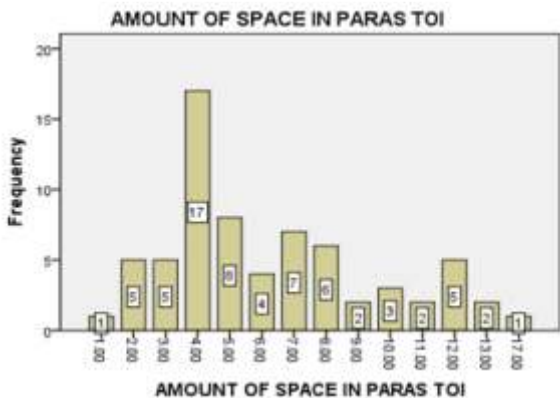
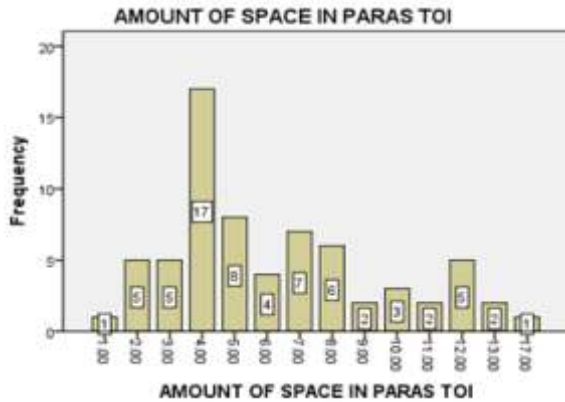
	HI	TOI	THE HINDU
Fully	100%	86.8%	89.2%
Partially	0.0%	13.2%	10.8%

HT covered 100% the Ayodhya verdict issue every time whereas TOI and The Hindu have published some 13.2% & 10.8% news, respectively, in which the same news has multiple issues within same news with the Ayodhya verdict.

Table: 9 Other details of newspaper coverage

Variables	HT	TOI	THE HINDU
News within news	15.7%	4.5%	6.2%
Jump to be continued	18.4%	1.5%	15.4%
International reaction	1.3%	2.9%	3.1%
Comments in oppose	28.6%	26.5%	29.2%
Comments in support	64.9%	57.4%	49.2%

This table talks about the coverage of Ayodhya verdict considering various variables which clearly represent that Hindustan Times English daily has placed the short news stories within large news stories. In Times of India, newspaper complete news has been available on the same page while in Hindustan Times and The Hindu, most of the news of front page contains to be continued or jump in news regarding Ayodhya verdict. This research presents that most of the news has been published in favor of Ayodhya verdict. Hindustan times published highly in comparison to other two newspapers. Although approximate 26% to 30% of the news was also published in opposition of verdict too.



5.2. Qualitative Content Analysis:

Table: 1 Creative News Headlines

HT	TOI	The Hindu
An anxious Ayodhya awaits SC verdict	Respect verdict: clerics & priests to people	Ayodhya security stepped up; RSS cautious
Peace and justice	Author of the verdict not named but it has chandrachud print	Ayodhya: Learning from the past
Long road to trial in babri demolition,	Lawyers slogged without a break	Land, faith, politics: Big SC rulingsup next week
Several positives for the Muslim plaintiffs	Rajiv opened lock, saffron got the key	Ayodhya: A call for restraint
A missed opportunity in Ayodhya	A new beginning	Verdict today
Secularism in the time of security	Chasing the golden dear	Understanding the sc judgment
Temple at disputed site, mosque within Ayodhya, rules SC	The majesty of justice	Temple set in stone
Ayodhya verdict echoes at literary fest	Momentous judgement on Ayodhya	Revisiting the past
Constitution can resolve knotty issues	CJI gogoi ensures name in history with Ayodhya verdict	What verdict says about india today
What the lawyers argued	Supreme closure for centuries-old dispute	In 116-page note, lone judge relies on faith
Ruling will strengthen secularism	No need to get rejected say Muslim leaders and scholars	Religion, history, violence
A temple, a mosque, and a dispute	BJP's three - decade long journey from the fringes	The Ayodhya verdict: Is this justice? I ask myself
How a religious issue became a political hot potato	Godse would have been called a patriot if he was tried today	
	Its Diwali for us, say killed karsevaks' kin	
	Violence has been rewarded and we should all worry	
	Ayodhya is settled but is verdict salve or salt?	

This table clearly presents that Times of India newspaper has used mostly creative news headlines for Ayodhya Verdict news e.g., 'chasing the golden dear', on the next day of verdict news headlines was used as: - supreme closure for centuries-old dispute. Most of the creative headlines are used on front page and for articles and editorials. 'A new Beginning', 'A majesty of justice', Rajiv opened lock, saffron got the key such headlines attract the

readers to read the news. In the similar way in The Hindu Newspaper various news has been published with such creative headlines as "Peace and justice", "The Ayodhya verdict: Is this justice? I ask myself", "Religion, history, violence", "Temple set in stone". Hindustan Times have used such creative headlines as "Peace and Justice", "what the lawyers argued", "a temple, a mosque and a dispute".

Table:2 No. of times Name of parties involved

Name of Parties	HT	TOI	The Hindu
RSS	8	4	3
VHP	9	4	7
BJP	22	9	10
JUH	7	3	4
AIMPLB	14	5	5
SCWF	6	2	3
CWC	6	1	9
AIMIM	3	1	1
CPI	4	0	2
RJD	1	0	0
SCWB	8	5	7
RJD	2	1	0
SAMAJWADI PARTY	2	1	0
BSP	1	0	0
DMK	2	0	0
TDP	1	0	0
TRINMOOL	1	0	0
PMO	5	1	1
OTHER MUSLIM	7	4	3
OTHER HINDU	3	4	2
JDU	0	1	1
SHIV SENA	0	0	1
PDP	0	0	1
HURRIYAT	0	0	1
NATIONAL CONFERENCE	0	0	1
INDIAN UNION MUSLIM LEAGUE	0	0	1

This table clearly shows that in most of the news BJP as political party and governing the nation too is used mostly in the news. This indicates that most of the comments on Ayodhya Verdict is from BJP side. After that in Hindustan Times from Muslimnon-governmental organisation All

India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) placed its position in news highly, in opposition to the Ayodhya verdict. But in Hindustan Times the Hindu Muslim organisation, Sunni Central Waqf Board (SCWB) posted 2nd highest no. of comments on Ayodhya Verdict.

Table:3 Controversial statements

HT	TOI	THE HINDU
Mansukh Vasava, the BJP MP: "The SC had to give a judgement in our favour because the BJP government is at the Centre,"	The country is ours- the law is ours -and SC is ours, be it Ram Lalla or Nirmohi Akhara, -they did not climb down and stuck to their stand- Mediation didnot succeed	Did not explicitly talked about temple construction, Congress could never win over BJP with soft Hindutva but could end up with supporters of no -Hindu belt, portraying congress as Muslim appeasers
The land of the mosque belongs to Allah and under the Sharia Islamic laws, it cannot be given to anybody," AIMPLB secretary	Task of construction of Ram temple should be entrusted to their existing trusts	Placing idols of lord Rama under dome of Babri Masjid by force was illegal - how such illegally placed idols considered deity - under Hindu dharmashastra they cannot be deity
The Vishwa Hindu Parishad, an affiliate of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, said the AIMPLB's decision was an "insult" to all Muslims who accepted the apex court's decision.	Yet many analysts fear that the forces turning India in a saffron direction are affecting the courts too	Panellist: India moving towards illiberal democracy
ABAP president Mahant Narendra Giri: Owaisi was acting like an agent of Pakistan'	5 acres land will neither balance equity nor repair the damage, land of mosque belongs to Allah and sharia it cannot be given to anybody	Surjewala: verdict permanently closed doors for BJP and others to enjoy power by playing politics with the country's faith
We don't need 5 acres land as donation. We should reject this 5-acre land offer, don't patronise us.	VHP: I think there is no need for review petition	Owaisi: While the Muslim community is indeed backward, it is capable of raising funds to procure a land parcel for constructing
Asaduddin Owaisi,		A mosque Gehlot: country could be saved from the ignominy of violence if BJP had shown some restraint. Who benefitted from it? They cannot take the credit for settlement of the issue.
		Non BJP's only criticised BJP for not fulfilling promise while in power and politicise the issue while in opposition

This table identifies that The Hindu newspaper reported most of the controversial statements in their news. These are mostly in opposition to the verdict done by Muslim leaders. Some headlines predict that political parties use the issue as their weapon to do party politics. Hindustan Times and Times of India coincidentally are on the same level to report the controversial statements in their news content. These statements tell that Muslim community and organizations welcomed the decision, but they are not happy with the result.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

When any kind of big incident occurs in the country and outside, Indian media always ready to report that issue in a very comprehensive manner. Newspaper is always known to be an economical and earliest media among all and cover the news stories and happenings in large extent to its readers. In the similar way, Ayodhya Verdict is also covered by the Indian media extensively and investigative reporting every aspect of the issue from a minute to major point. For this issue, news in the newspapers has been started publishing more than 10 days ago from the day of verdict that was November 9, 2019 and continuously follow up stories has been reported for more than 10 days of the verdict.

Almost every newspaper published separate sections of 2-3 pages on the incident for 3 to 4 days around the day of verdict. On November 10, all the 3 newspapers Hindustan Times, Times of India & The Hindu reported 37+28+37=100 news respectively in a single day which is 47% of the total news of 20 days from November 1 to November 20, 2019. This research study reveals that when the coverage of all 3 newspapers is compared, Hindustan Times published the maximum journalistic content on the issue. Hard news content of both Hindustan Times (HT) and Times of India (TOI) are coincidentally same in respect to their total news while TOI published the maximum number of articles on the issue in contrast to others which reveals that TOI believes in getting the expert opinion on the issue. On the other hand, HT published more editorial on the issue which indicates that HT editors are more interested in providing their opinions on the verdict. The Hindu also published Letter to Editor on the issue to get the review of masses on the dispute.

Except special section most of the news related to the incident is published on 'Nation' page of HT and Times of India while a similar page in The Hindu named as 'News' page published the news largely. On Editorial section and Front page, leading story was the Ayodhya verdict on these

days. To highlight maximum HT and TOI, placed this story on jackpot page (page before front page) too. Most of the news were published on the starting pages of the newspapers. These facts clarifies that this issue is reported prominently by most of the newspapers.

As the use of photos presents anything more lively and in a futuristic manner, The Hindu uses largest no. of coloured photos in the news that is 56.9%. On the other hand, Times of India uses Black and White photos largely (14.7%) in the news in comparison to colored photos. This study reveals that HT does not believe in presenting the news with many photos. Large amount of space has been provided to all the news of Ayodhya Verdict in newspapers. HT reported the issue fully in all the news whereas TOI and The Hindu also published some 11% to 13% news. Analysis of space given to news concludes that Hindustan Times provides more space to the news most of the times and is of 10 paragraphs in respect to TOI and The Hindu. HT also covers the maximum no. of columns to write the news of Ayodhya verdict. It published the news of 8 columns on Ayodhya verdict and published the maximum of 4 column news. On the other hand, The Hindu published most of the news in 2 columns. It construes that HT published mostly bigger news and The Hindu published smaller news and Times of India is in between two of these. It construes that HT is more conscious towards reporting the issue and providing the space to bigger news of Ayodhya verdict.

All the 3 newspapers similarly published the news in opposition to the verdict but in support of the verdict difference between all these 3 newspapers is around 7%. HT published the news highest with 65% in favor of the verdict, whereas The Hindu published 49.2% as lowest percentage. Smaller news within the largest news story or news in the box is published more by HTi.e., 15.7% whereas TOI follows less of such kind of layouts. Times of India believes to be present the complete news on the same page and very less use the word "to be continued" known as "Jump" in journalistic term, in the news on Ayodhya verdict. HT used this term highly in most of the news in the front page. These newspapers also got the views of international audience on the issue. This concludes that The Hindu reports the maximum international audience reaction in their news.

Most of the time it is said that media play a main role to set the agenda in its audience mind. It faces political pressure too and publishes the news considering the ruling party. It can be observed in the reporting of most of the news. This study indicates that in the news of Ayodhya, the Verdict was

that for the maximum time, name of the ruling party is used and comments from their side are reported more in comparison to other political parties and religious organisations. HT newspaper uses the word "BJP" in news related to Ayodhya Verdict in comparison to others. AIMPLB, SCWB, SCWF were also some of the organisations that gave their comments on verdict regarding "review of petition" but alternatively they also said they welcome the decision despite not being happy with the decision of the verdict to provide the 5 acres of land at the separate place for the mosque. This research also indicates that after "BJP", name of the Muslim organisation "AIMPLB" is mostly used by HT and TOI and The Hindu mostly used the name of the Muslim organisation "SCWB" in their news.

Headlines are the most important part of any newspaper. They are the mouthpiece of any news and when these are written very creatively, it attracts the readers to read the news. In most of the newspapers, Ayodhya Verdict news this given creative headlines, especially headlines given to leading news of front page. Sometimes only 2 to 3 word headlines were given story and these words explained the whole story. Some news headlines of Ayodhya verdict were "peace and justice", "a new beginning", "verdict today", "UNDERSTANDING THE SC JUDGMENT", "chasing the golden deer", "the majesty of justice", "REVISITING THE PAST", "TEMPLE SET IN STONE", "a temple, a mosque and a dispute", "RELIGION, HISTORY, VIOLENCE" which consist of just a few words only. This study tells that most of the creative headlines were given by Times of India for this issue which shows that Times of India likes to attract its readers more in every way, as according to the Audit Bureau of Circulation TOI has the highest circulation among English dailies, maybe creative headlines are also the reason behind this.

When any historic incident occurs, controversial statements are given. In the Ayodhya verdict case too, various political leaders and religious leaders gave the controversial statements. Mainly, these are used to show their anger. Various opposition political party leaders or religious leaders of opposition groups gave controversial statements on the decision of Ayodhya verdict of the Supreme Court showing their unhappiness. Most of the times, political party leaders gave these statements to set the agenda and play their party politics. Most of the times, AMIM national president Asaduddin Owaisi gave such controversial statements like "while the Muslim community is indeed backward, it is capable of raising funds to procure a land parcel for constructing a mosque", "WE DONT NEED 5 ACRE LAND AS

DONATION. WE SHOULD REJECT THIS 5-ACRE LAND OFFER, DON'T PATRONISE US" Some analysts also gave this statement that "yet many analysts fear that the forces turning India in a saffron direction are affecting the courts too" which indicates the fear of the analyst, turning India and its judiciary in the favour of RSS, VHP, BJP and biased as currently it is said that the court gave the decision in the favour of VHP only. During the Ayodhya verdict, Mansukh Vasava, the BJP MP said "The SC had to give a judgement in our favour because the BJP government is at the Centre," and one more BJP leader gave the statement that "the country is ours- the law is ours-and SC is ours, be it Ram Lalla or Nirmohi Akhara, they did not climb down and stuck to their stand- mediation did not succeed". Such statements only represent that political leaders are the cause of such violent incidents. Some statements were given by opposition Congress Party Leaders "Surjewala: verdict permanently closed doors for BJP and others to enjoy power by playing politics with the countries faith" and Ashok Gehlot: "country could be saved from the ignominy of violence if BJP had shown some restraint. Who benefitted from it? They cannot take the credit for settlement of the issue". All such statements depict that all these political leaders tried to break the social and communal bonds, divide the masses and use them as their weapon. This study also reveals that in The Hindu, maximum number of controversial statements have been published.

2.1. Analysis of important keywords and phrases in the news stories

In the present scenario, keywords and phrases play the most important role to understand anything in an easy and fast way. Most of the media houses use phrases and keywords to highlight their news. In print media, these phrases are many times used in the form of quoted words or for captioning. On TV news channels, such keywords or phrases are used to highlight important aspects of the news. For this research, from the news of the Ayodhya verdict, many important keywords are picked out and analysed, and these helped to define the whole case clearly in a better way and to present the crux of the whole event.

Many important keywords and phrases related to the SC verdict are "hearing, Ayodhya issue, "verdict", arguments in Allahabad High Court ended, respect court verdict, legally unsustainable, clear evidence, full faith in judiciary, unbiased decision, dispute, judgement, Ayodhya, SC verdict, long bitter dispute, Ayodhya title suit, eyes on top court, old dispute, shariat, next friend, demolition, SC

decision, communal motives, HC ORDER DEFIED LOGIC, SC offer, legal issues, legal system, article 370, ucc enactment, intractable religious dispute, egregious violation of rule of law, not victory for Hind & defeat for Muslim, supreme court judgement, a small piece of land where angels fear to tread, supreme court statements, constitution bench, 5 judges, CJI, mosque not build on vacant land, Hindu temple had been demolished to pave way to construction of mosque, statement, temple as centre of cultural heritage, spirituality,- harbingers of divine blessings, everyone must participate and devote adequate attention, 14 civil appeals, article 25, vindicated, unanimous verdict. All these words in the news represent the court proceedings of the case. One of the important aspects of the news was the security, a largeno. of security personnel were deputed at every level many days before the verdict. Some keywords like- "Section 144, arrests, advisory to news channel, listed 7 don'ts for channels, no celebration and protest no need of central assistance, identifying real associates of police, communal tensions, anti-riot, social media monitoring, additional troops, judges security, offensive, people arrests, social media posts & videos, totally peaceful, people displayed exemplary solidarity-respect-restraint, cooperation, Security personnel, law and order, not to celebrate SC verdict, security arrangement, judgement, security of judges, additional troops, victory, mourning processions, celebrations, no attempt to insult deities, banned hoarding, prohibitory order, law, order, provocative, suspension of internet service, police forces, Section 144, lockdown, internet blocked, high security, banned TV channels, blocked internet, policing, patrolling, checking, Muslim, Hindu, call on plot, security personal, elaborate police arrangements, precautionary measures, A man committees, school closures, alert in gb nagar-gjb, potential troublemakers, security, Kartik Purnima, security stepped upon these keywords and phrases completely expresses what kind of security measure were taken, even Section 144 was also imposed at various zones all over India and ban over posting any religious comment was also imposed.

Many keywords suggest that the Muslim community welcomed the decision, and just not completely happy with that decision. When the verdict came, most of the political parties appealed to all, to maintain peace and not to indulge in any violent activity. They pleaded to the masses to respect the decision of the SC. Words such as "appeal for harmony, Unity in diversity is our cultural commitment, Doval's meeting, maintain, calm and refrain, "fringe elements", despite differences of faith and

mindset; one must place the nation first, verdict accepted by all, peace and harmony, significant, historic, much awaited judgement, peace, harmony, unity, NSA Ajit Doval, interfaith dialogue, Hindu religious leaders, meeting point, Muslim clerics, communal harmony, turning point in history, unique moment, rashtrabhakti, faith, way for ram temple, govt. to form trust, alternative land, shut the door, no place of bitterness, firecrackers, celebration, victory of belief over facts, Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat, new dawn, new India, Berlin wall, a win or loss for anybody, bhakti, equanimity and magnanimity, welcome the decision, to heal hearts and minds, communal motives, text of verdict, closure, accept the verdict, no more fight, pledge for peace, respect the verdict, beneficial to the nation, review verdict, honour and abide by the court verdict, victory of faith over facts, Supreme Court is supreme...and final but not infallible, remarkable verdict, factual controversy, emotions, possession and worship, honour and respect the judgement, maintain peace, faith on constitution and judiciary, meeting with religious leaders, peace and order, join hands, new dawn, fear bitterness and negativity, historic judgement, new generation, priority to duty, Berlin Wall, 2 ideologies, peace and order, date is to unite in harmony and amity, no win or lose, express happiness with maryada, Ram Janambhoomi, embrace of communal concord and peace, ek Bharat-shreshtha Bharat, abide by secular values, peace and harmony, maintain age old tradition, agitation suspend by CWC, judgement, unjust, will take appropriate legal course, faith, minority, justice, harmony, peace in MP". These keywords represent how the judgement was welcomed with the appeal of peace and harmony.

But with the acceptance, there appears to be some unhappiness for the verdict somewhere. It also appears that some Muslim member want to file a review petition, while Hindus were very happy with the decision. Keywords and phrases like "both argumentative and convergent and consensual, Supreme Court is supreme but not infallible, questionable, natural sentiment, contradiction, review decision, review petition, complete justice in cause, handing over disputed property, prominent place in Ayodhya, reconciliation, fanning communal tension, no scope and ground to challenge, solve through talks, insult, Muslims, Ram temple, review petition, mosque, Ram Lalla, anti-nationals, questionable, questionable premises, generation, may seek review, shut the door, Bharat bandh, reaching out to minorities, churning of truth and justice, victory or, defeat, restraint, moderation and politeness, impunity for crimes, can destroy Muslim place, dissatisfied

with findings, legally unsustainable”, aggressor, report, Jo hona tha woh ho chuka, spaces, voice against Islamic terror not any religion, exploit the situation, mixed signals, disappointed, dissatisfaction, 5 acre plot, legal discourse, an egregious violation of the rule of law, namaz, legally unsustainable, murderer but also a patriot, please all is not justice, state must allay the fears of minorities, Waqf Board, board has no plan to challenge, AIMPLB TO FILE review plea, non BJP could not openly oppose”. Such keywords indicate that Muslims were not happy with the verdict, wanted to review petition but all their leaders were not in support to file review petition and they appeared helpless in such situation.

Some keywords evidenced that political parties politicised such incidents for their own benefits. These keywords “verdict left people divided, congress categorical assertion, religious leaders & intellectuals, please all is politics, Kar Sevaks, Rath Yatra, political face, Kar Seva, Somnath temple, politically sensitive issue, dispute into existence in SC in 1950, political parties' Indian politics, prominent leaders, chowkidar chor hai,” clearly evidenced that political parties use any communal or religious or social issue as a weapon for themselves.

Finally, this study construes that all the newspapers covered the story very well and in a very effective way. Times of India is very futuristic in nature. Hindustan Times covers the issue in a descriptive manner and provided more space to the issue. The Hindu covered more hard news on the issue. Content analysis of the issue concludes that media is somewhere influenced by the ruling party. It was also observed that political parties used to politicised various religious issues.

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