

Project Dissertation Report on

**“THE DISGUISED INDUCEMENTS OF
ONLINE SOCIAL NETWORKING”**

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**“THE DISGUISED INDUCEMENTS OF
ONLINE SOCIAL NETWORKING”**

**DIVYA SWAMI
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CERTIFICATE FROM THE INSTITUTE

This is to certify that the Project Report titled “**THE DISGUISED INDUCEMENTS OF ONLINE SOCIAL NETWORKING**”, is a bonafide work carried out by Ms. Divya Swami of MBA 2019-21 and submitted to Delhi School of Management, Delhi Technological University, Bawana Road, Delhi-42 in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the Degree of Masters of Business Administration.

Dr. Meha Joshi

Prof. Archana Sigh

DECLARATION

This is to certify that I have completed the project titled “**THE DISGUISED INDUCEMENTS OF ONLINE SOCIAL NETWORKING**”. This work was done under the supervision and guidance of Dr. Meha Joshi, Assistant Professor, DSM, DTU in the partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the degree of “Master in Business Administration” from “Delhi School of Management, Delhi Technological University.” It is also certified that the project of mine is an original work and the same has not been submitted earlier elsewhere.

Divya Swami
2K19/DMBA/27

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

With immense pleasure, I am presenting the “**THE DISGUISED INDUCEMENTS OF ONLINE SOCIAL NETWORKING**” Project Report as a part of the curriculum of ‘Master of Business Administration’. I wish to express my gratitude to all the people who provided me unending support.

I express my profound gratitude to **Dr. Meha Joshi**, project guide who helped and guided me in the completion of this project.

I would also like to thank the staff and my colleagues at **Delhi school of Management, DTU**, who provided moral support, a conducive work environment, and the much-needed inspiration to conclude the project in time and a special thanks to my parents who have been a constant support throughout.

Thank You

Divya Swami

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The advent and spread of social media are unprecedented. It has taken the internet by storm, impacting our lives like never before. The origin of Social media can be traced back to the year 1997 when the first recognizable social media site, Six Degrees was created. It was the beginning of the online networking culture. And, today it has spread all over the world with millions of users. However, the utility of the platform is not yet completely explored, it has evolved over time, from a medium to connect with people, to a medium being used to spread information, authentic and forged. And yet, to become a platform for entertainment. There is a constant debate regarding the utility and efficacy of Social media as a Knowledge management tool. There is a constant debate regarding social media's utility and efficacy as a Knowledge Management (KM) tool. Research has been conducted to explore social media use to spread information in a time of need. This research, however, aims to understand the users' perception of the utility of social media as a KM tool. Other questions platform is not yet thoroughly explored. It has evolved from a medium to connect with people to a medium being used to spread information, authentic and forged. And yet, to become a paramount to the study are the extent of social media reliability and threats as a knowledge dissemination tool. A comprehensive review of journal articles (peer-reviewed), news, books, and research papers have been carried out in social media and Knowledge Management. After that, the authors have shortlisted seven social media networking sites. A survey with respondents (active users of social media) from various domains was conducted. The findings reveal that the penetration of Social Media Networking Sites has been increasing at a rapid pace with more and more people registering themselves on these platforms and actively using them for various purposes. The paper addresses the concerns regarding the excessive and inappropriate use of such platforms and various risks associated with them. Time has long gone when Social media was only about connecting with loved ones. Today, the use of Social media networking sites is unprecedented and evolving every single day. The paper explores the question of how users perceive Online Networking and

what impact it has on their day-to-day life. The majority of people who participated in the study have admitted that excessive use of Social media networking sites and the information explosion on these platforms harm their day-to-day functioning, productivity, and mental well-being. The paper explores the dilemma of staying online.

Keywords: Social Media, Social Networking, Knowledge Management, Crisis Management, COVID-19, Fake news, Misinformation.

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CHAPTER 1 : INTRODUCTION

To be aware of and understand something, such as a certain fact or an object is termed as possessing knowledge. We are surrounded by an infinite amount of knowledge, known and unknown. It is essential for an organization to handle the excessive amount of data in order to retrieve and use it effectively as and when required. And therefore, the concept of Knowledge Management comes into the picture. Knowledge management is a process that involves creation, sharing, using, as well as managing the available information in an effective manner. Over the years the discipline of knowledge management has evolved. Newer tools have been introduced time and again.

One such tool that has become of great relevance in recent times is Social Media. Social media can be defined as an online platform where people can connect, share, and collaborate with one another without being in physical contact. It has made the process of sharing knowledge extremely easy. Anything can be shared at the comfort of a click. The reach of the internet is beyond limits and therefore, Social media is the most effective tool when it comes to disseminating information. Organizations the world over have shifted their focus from offline to online modes of spreading information. The effectiveness of social media has been proven time and again. There is no doubt that connecting with the targeted audience online is much more feasible and profitable than connecting with them through offline modes such as Newspapers, pamphlets, etc.

However, the question arises of how effective social media is. How millions of users that use social media platforms for a significant duration each day, perceive it as a tool of information dissemination. It is also relevant to understand the impact the intended information has on the users. At the same time, It is important to understand the shortcomings and limitations of social media presents when used for broadcasting information.

This is the age of information overload. A tremendous amount of data is generated each minute in the world of the internet. In such a disruptive environment, it is difficult to reap the desired outcomes from the platform. The paper intends to determine the obstacles that prevent authentic information from reaching the intended audience with the right impact.

The foundation of modern society is knowledge and knowledge is used to acquire more knowledge (Sinha et al., 2012). To be aware of and understand something, such as a particular fact or an object, is deemed possessing knowledge. We are surrounded by immense knowledge, known and unknown. An organization needs to handle the excessive amount of data to retrieve and use it effectively as and when required. Therefore, the concept of KM comes into the picture. KM is a process that involves creation, sharing, using, as well as effectively managing the available information. Over the years, the discipline of KM has evolved and its linkage with other domains has also been unearthed. Newer tools have been introduced time and again.

One such tool that has become of great relevance in recent times is social media. It can be defined as an online platform where people can connect, share, and collaborate without physical contact. It has made the process of sharing knowledge extremely easy. The origin of social media can be traced back to the year 1997 when the first recognizable social media site, Six Degrees was created. It was the beginning of the online networking culture. And, today it has spread all over the world with millions of users.

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The paper intends to determine the obstacles that prevent authentic information from reaching the intended audience with the right impact. The data for the study is collected using interviews and surveys with the respondents. This, in turn, brings the content reading and its sharing, the pattern, usage to understand the utility, effectiveness, and limitations of social media.

1.1 The rationale for the Research

The Internet is a place of no bounds. It is limitless. It provides us the opportunity to share our opinions freely. It keeps us updated. However, It is much more than that. The Internet does provide us with all the facilities and benefits, however, there is a downside to it.

The information spread over the internet and especially on social networking sites lacks credibility. There are thousands of profiles and accounts that post content. However, the information provided is not always true. Social media has become a place of competition where everyone wants to gain followers. Everyone wants to influence the public with their content. However, with little or no regulation this spread can have a large and adverse impact on the general perception of the users and the public opinion in general.

The misinformation, propaganda, manipulation of users, etc all happen on the internet. The consumers are overloaded with all the content that one might or might not want to see. This is not the age of information, it is the age of information overload. To deal with information load we need to strategize and explore the internet. And therefore, this study aims to understand what users think of the Internet. How they perceive it.

There are countless questions staring at the face of the authorities.

- What is the scope of Social Media?
- How does it impact the perception of the users?
- How and to what extent should the content over Social Networking Sites be regulated?

These and a lot of other questions are to be answered in the near future. This study is a small attempt to understand the perception of the users of all these social networking sites.

1.2 The objective of the Study

1. To determine the utility of Social Networking sites as information broadcasting and knowledge management tools.
2. To determine the reliability level of social networking platforms as information broadcasting and knowledge management tools.
3. To determine the Limitations of using Social networking platforms for information broadcasting.
4. To determine the User's perception of Social networking sites used for broadcasting information.
5. Use of Social networking sites for Crisis Management and mobilisation of Medical emergency resources.

1.3 Scope of the Study

The paper has used different mediums of research to test the efficacy of various Social Networking websites and Mobile applications. It consists of multiple elements that enable us to determine the degree of efficacy and reliability of different platforms in terms of information sharing and broadcasting.

The paper is divided into three parts:

PART 1 - Study of utility of Social Media networking sites and Users' perception.

This part has tried to study the Social networking sites, their utility and effectiveness in terms of a tool for knowledge sharing and information broadcasting. Multiple social networking sites have been studied and compared, Survey is conducted in order to study how users perceive these applications. The behavioural patterns are also studied.

PART 2 - Social Media Networking sites for Crisis management and mobilisation of emergency resources.

This part studies the effectiveness of Social media networking sites in management of Health crises. The core of the study is the management of emergency health supplies during the COVID-19 pandemic. The geography taken in this study is limited to India.

PART 3 - Case Interviews highlighting the limitations associated with the use of Social media networking sites in the management of health crises.

Multiple interviews have been conducted of people who used the Covid-19 resources leads broadcasted by users on Social media platforms. Their experiences have been recorded and used to determine the usefulness and effectiveness of these platforms. The identity of the people interviews have been kept anonymous for the possible legal implications that might occur.

CHAPTER 2 : LITERATURE REVIEW

The process to create, store, retrieve, transfer, and apply knowledge can be defined as Knowledge Management (*Alavi and Leidner, 2001*). The stated components are integral to the process of knowledge management. The Knowledge processes are essentially social processes, and in order to gain any insights of Knowledge management one requires to have a fair understanding of Social Networks (*Davenport and Prusak, 1998; Brown and Duguid, 2000; Cross and Parker, 2004*).

Social networks are based on experiences. There is understanding, connection, a sense of trust as well as reciprocity. Social networks can be personal and professional. Earlier the scope was only offline. But with the advent of the Internet, Social Networks have become online and widespread. There are no barriers today. Online Social networks connect people from all over the world.

Knowledge is meaningful only with the context (Thompson & Walsham, 2004). If the context gets detached from the knowledge, it loses its meaning. Hence, it is important that the knowledge that is shared has context. Today, the Internet and Social networking sites have become the most important medium to disseminate information.

Social Media can be defined as a platform that enables people to connect and communicate with each other. However, the most important purpose that social media serves is the availability of information.

The authenticity of the information however is questionable over the Social Media sites for the reason that there is excessive information and more often misinformation. It is very easy for information to lose context and become something else. The different components of Social media are Blogs, wikis, and Social networking sites. Blogs are frequently updated. The content is provided in a reverse-chronological format. The reach over the blogs is very high. On social

media networking sites, however, content is shared rapidly with almost no check. There is a tendency for a post to get viral overnight.

Boyd and Ellison's definition of social network sites is that they are "web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system" It is extremely important to keep a check on the authenticity of the information being shared over the internet.

2.1 Knowledge Management

Experts propose that knowledge and its manipulation are the sources of lasting competitive advantage (Nonaka, 1991; Sinha et al., 2015). The process to create, store, retrieve, transfer, and apply knowledge can be defined as KM (Alavi and Leidner, 2001). The stated components are integral to the process of KM. The Knowledge processes are essentially social, and to gain any insights of knowledge, management one requires to have a fair understanding of Social Networks (Davenport and Prusak, 1998; Brown and Duguid, 2000; Cross and Parker, 2004).

KM is a universally used idea in business management considerations. It has been widely reviewed in different contexts (Miozzo et al., 2016), in various industries (Bigliardi, Galati & Petroni, 2014), and in multiple countries (Mertins et al., 2001; Gupta & Chopra, 2018).

2.2 Social Networks

Social networks are based on experiences. There is understanding, connection, a sense of trust as well as reciprocity. Social networks can be personal and professional. Earlier the scope was only offline. But with the advent of the internet, social networks have become online and widespread. There are no

barriers today. Online Social networks connect people from all over the world. At the comfort of a click, people can share their important moments with people across the globe. Online networking platforms are not only restricted to connecting with people. Social media sites have become a marketplace that not only provides a platform where people can buy things but also manages to influence and manipulate the choices that people make. It constantly monitors the activity of all the users and comes up with tailor-made responses for each user to influence them and increase their engagement on such platforms with the help of intricate algorithms.

2.3 Linking Knowledge and Social Media

Knowledge is meaningful only with the context (Thompson & Walsham, 2004). If the context gets detached from the knowledge, it loses its meaning. Hence, the knowledge that is shared must have context. Today, the internet and social networking sites have become the most important medium to disseminate information. Social media can be defined as a platform that enables people to connect and communicate with each other. However, the most important purpose that social media serves is the availability of information.

The authenticity of the information however is questionable over the social media sites for the reason that there is excessive information and more often misinformation. It is very easy for information to lose context and become something else. The different components of social media are Blogs, Wikis, and Social networking sites. Blogs are frequently updated. The content is provided in a reverse-chronological format. The reach over the blogs is very high. On social media networking sites, however, content is shared rapidly with almost no check. There is a tendency for a post to get viral overnight.

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connection, and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system.” It is extremely important to keep a check on the authenticity of the information being shared over the internet.

2.4 Social Media Channels

Social media channels consist of online communication channels whose main purposes are community-based input, interaction, content-sharing, and collaboration. With the rise of the internet, the number of social media channels has also rapidly increased. But it is not necessary for brands to be active on all social media channels, thereby making it important for brands to understand each channel, what it has to offer, and choose accordingly. The popular social media channels are:

- **Whatsapp**



WhatsApp Messenger is popularly known as WhatsApp by its wide base of users. It is owned by Facebook. It provides services such as instant messaging, Voice calls, and Video calls. It can be used to share media such as images, videos, links, contacts as well as location with other contacts. The service of WhatsApp is available on Mobile phones as well as on desktops provided the desktop is connected with the Mobile application with active internet.

The users can register themselves on the application with their cellular numbers. It has become the primary medium of communication for people the world over. The WhatsApp mobile messaging application is the most popular one and has the highest user base. The company is based in the United States and is owned by Facebook. By 2015, it became the most popular messaging app.

- **Instagram**



Instagram is a smartphone-based application that was initially introduced for the purpose of sharing photos. As of 2015, Instagram was one of the most popular social media sites as per a report released by Instagram.

Over the years, the features available on the platform have also increased, from short video sharing to longer video, hosting Insta lives, Ephemeral content like Insta Stories, and many more. Instagram also introduced an Instagram marketplace specifically designed to aid businesses on the platform. Instagram had 400 million monthly active users and more than 75 million of them are active daily in 2016. By June 2018, the platform had hit 1 billion monthly active users and it continues to grow among smartphone users.

Micro celebrities on a platform have a very large following and post on average 8.58 posts every day as it has developed itself into a platform where one can create a virtual image of themselves, unlike traditional celebrities. As per a study conducted by Medium .com, 82% of GenZ uses Instagram on a daily basis and 7% use it weekly. This clearly points to the fact that GenZ uses this platform a lot. Instagram is a great platform for brands to connect and engage with their customers using unique and creative ideas. Brands looking to increase their loyalty and engagement among younger audiences can benefit from this social media channel immensely.

- **Facebook**



Facebook is a social networking site launched in 2004 as a website based application. It is considered one of the biggest Social networking sites with over 1 billion people registered on the platform. Over the years, Facebook has launched its mobile application. Users can post photos, videos, and now ephemeral stories as well on the platform. Edison Research showed that the

% of people using the platform has gone down from 79% in 2017 and 67% in 2018 to 62% of U.S. GenZ using the platform in 2019.

Though, as per surveys conducted by Medium.com, overall penetration is still high, as 99% of the respondents have Facebook accounts. And most aren't abandoning the platform entirely — 59% are on Facebook every day, and another 32% are on weekly. Daily Facebook usage is much lower than. This makes it a difficult choice for marketers as the number of the younger generation using Facebook is radically decreasing making it not a favorable option for the near future.

- **Twitter**



Twitter is usually referred to as a microblogging site where users can post 140 characters at a time that are referred to as Tweets to the site. The character limit has been upgraded to 280. As per the social pilot, the platform has 134 million daily active users of which 29 million are GenZ.

Twitter is known for its political presence. So it can be tricky for brands to navigate in such a politically pressured environment. But engaging through Twitter can help in increasing Brand Loyalty as the majority feels positive when a brand answers through tweets.

- **Snapchat**



Snapchat is an ephemeral content-based platform where you can upload stories that disappear after 24 hours of uploading them. Users can click, share, and upload pictures of them using various filters in the app. The platform also has a messaging platform where messages also disappear immediately unless saved. The platform has over 210 million daily users with a growth rate of 13% per year.

Also, 90% of US Genz uses Snapchat with the majority of them interacting with brands on a daily basis. The platform has gained so much popularity among

GenZ as the platform provides a sense of privacy to users in a social media setting where everything is available for everyone to see at all times. Engaging with GenZ through Snapchat can be a great move as GenZ on Snapchat are more likely to explore and interact with brands.

- **YouTube**



YouTube is a video sharing based social media platform launched in the year 2005 with more than 1 billion unique users every month. It is the most popular app among GenZ and their major video consumption is through social media. So if marketers want to target GenZ, the most favorable platform is YouTube and video marketing being the most favorable social media content, targeting GenZ through video content can grab their attention easily.

- **Quora**



Quora was founded in the year 2009. It is headquartered in the United States. It was made available to the public in the year 2010. From then onwards it has only become popular and has been gaining the attention of more and more people. The platform is a question-answer based application which is available on smartphones as well as desktop. Users can ask questions based on different topics and domains. The other users answer the questions. The answer can be factual or opinion-based.

The platform has a concept of popular quora writers who have a high following on their profiles. It is popular among Indians. The platform is used by many famous personalities from diversified fields such as the entertainment industry, Politics, the Scientific community, etc who openly express their opinion on various topics.

PART 1

Studying the efficacy and utility of Social Media networking Sites based on Users' perception

CHAPTER 3: Methodology

The internet is a place of no bounds. It is limitless. It provides us with the opportunity to share our opinions freely. It keeps us updated. However, it is much more than that. The internet does provide us with all the facilities and benefits; however, there is a downside to it. The information spread over the internet and especially on social networking sites, lacks credibility. There are thousands of profiles and accounts that post content. However, the information provided is not always accurate. Social media has become a place of competition where everyone wants to gain followers. Everyone wants to influence the public with their content. However, with little or no regulation, this spread can have a large and adverse impact on the users' general perception and public opinion in general.

The misinformation, propaganda, manipulation of users, etc. all happen on the internet. The consumers are overloaded with all the content that they might or might not want to see. This is not the age of information but an age of information overload. To deal with information overload, we need to strategize and explore the internet. And therefore, this study aims to understand what users think of the internet and their perception of it.

Countless questions are staring at the face of the authorities. The issues range from the scope of social media, its impact on the perception of the users, and the regulation of the content. This is very pertinent today in the light of new regulations by the Indian government. These and a lot of other questions are to be answered shortly. This study is a small attempt to understand the perception of the users of all these social networking sites. The authors have tried to gauge the utility of social networking sites as information broadcasting and KM tools.

The reliability level of social networking platforms, their limitations, and the user's perception.

The research philosophy used in this research is Interpretivism. In this particular study, an abductive research method has been employed. Abduction is an anatomy of case normativity and depends on phronesis (not dependent on theory development). The method of abductive research has been chosen for this study.

The reason for this choice is that our findings can be considered standard, and the model is not followed. Another reason for choosing this research method is because this study aimed at finding practical results. In this particular study, a qualitative research method is used. Both primary and secondary sources were applied for this study. The research was started by collecting secondary data to support the purpose of the study and better understand the problem. The secondary data was in the form of existing literature, articles, research papers, news, blogs, and opinions, etc.

For the study, qualitative research was adopted based on its suitability. A primary research survey method was used. The respondents were asked questions related to social media to analyze their perceptions. The utility and effectiveness are also determined with the help of the survey and secondary sources. Self-administered questionnaires with 612 usable responses from active users of social media were gathered. To determine the limitations and reliability level of social media, various secondary sources such as reports, blogs, and news articles were taken for reference.

Chapter 4. Results and Findings

4.1 Background Information

The Primary research conducted was mainly based on the questions asked to the responders. The questions were designed to understand the behavior of social media users and how they perceive it. With the results obtained, the research has tried to determine the utility of social media as an Information broadcasting and knowledge Management tool.

All the respondents were active users of social media. Most of the respondents stated that social media has a vital role in their lives. They mentioned 2 ways of how they use social media platforms: first passively & second actively.

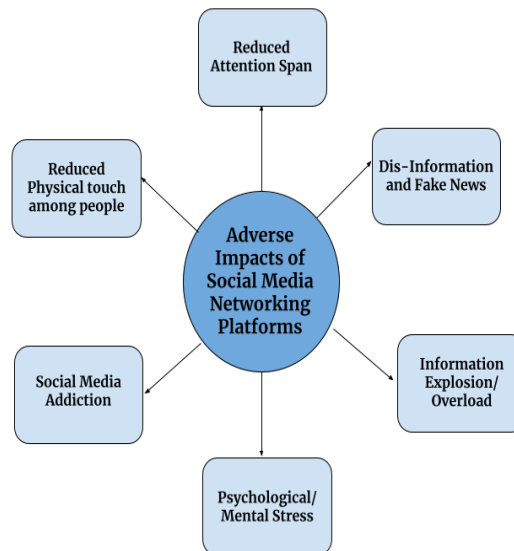
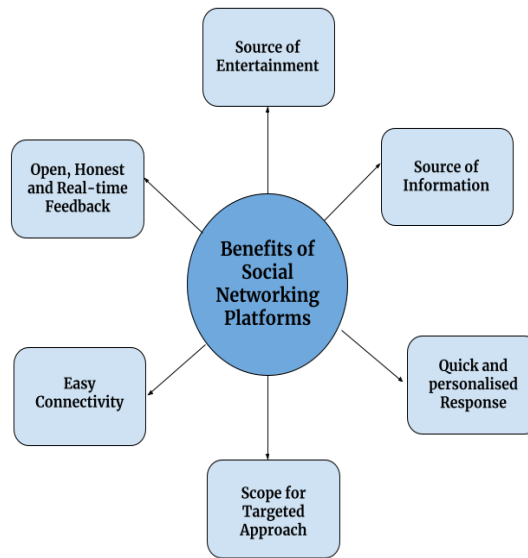
Most of the participants were active users of Snapchat, Instagram & Facebook. Respondents said the purpose of using Instagram is to get inspiration from other people, to follow celebrities and influencers to learn from them, and have fun, which is the simplest way to use Instagram, & stay connected with friends is an active way of using social networking sites.

The topics that are liked by the respondents are technology, fashion, education, food, restaurants, comedy, makeup, and science.

4.2 Findings

The benefits of using Social media networking platforms are well known. It not only allows people to connect with others but has emerged as an essential tool for businesses to promote their products, as well as, establish their presence and build brand value among potential customers. At the same time, there are many adverse impacts associated with these platforms that directly and directly affects the users.

The study has highlighted the following benefits and disadvantages associated with excessive use and penetration of Social media networking platforms :

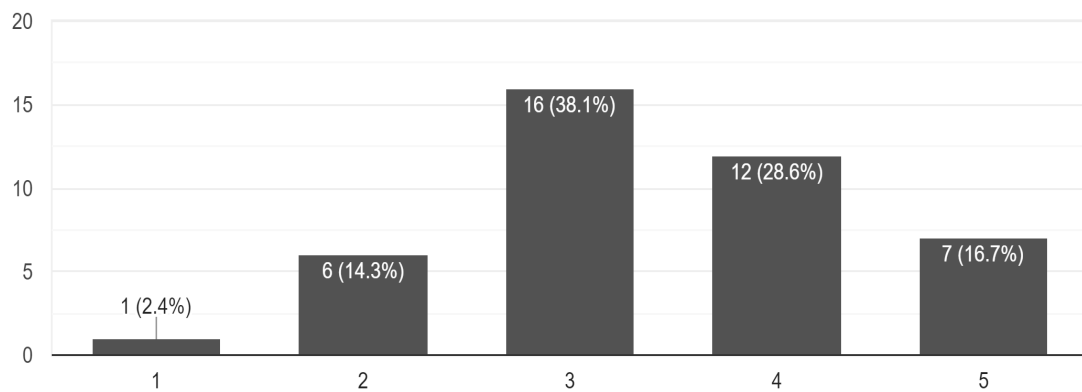


4.2.1 Importance of Social Networking in users' life

Of the total respondents, around 60% consider social media an integral part of their day to day life. For them, it is important that they actively engage in social media.

1. How important is social media in your day-to-day life?

42 responses

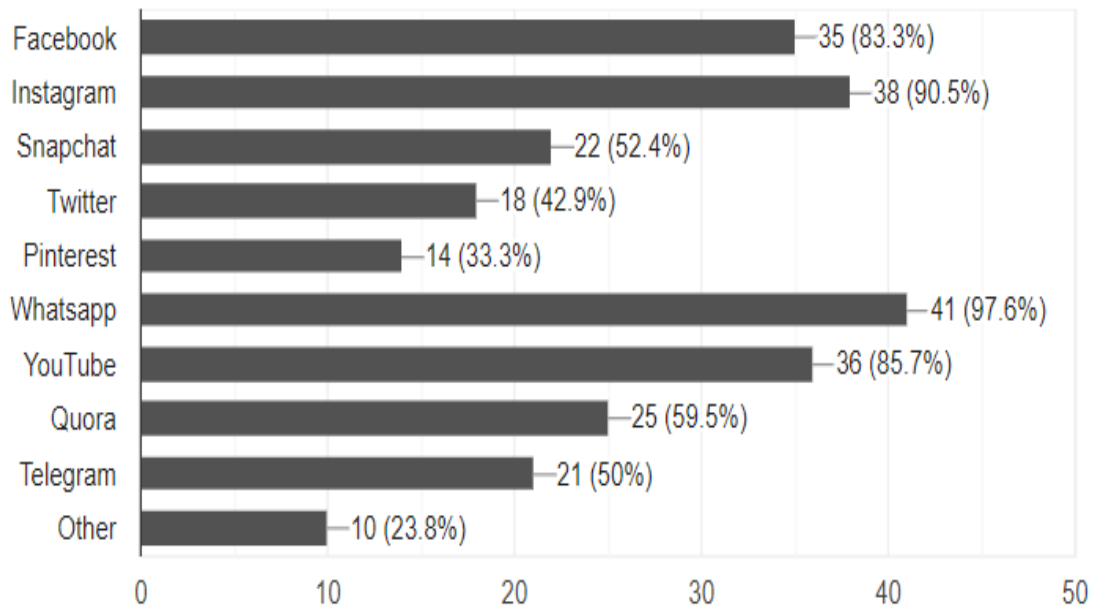


In the above bar graph, 1 represents the least importance whereas 5 represents the very important. 16.7% of the respondents consider Social networking sites to be an extremely important part of their day to day lives. While only 2.4% of people don't consider it to be not important at all.

38.1% of the respondents are neutral about the importance of online networking in their day to day life. With the estimates above, it can be concluded that an average person considers engaging on social networking sites to be an important element.

4.2.2 The popularity of Social Networking Platforms

100% of the respondents are active users of more than one social networking platform. A large proportion of the respondents have registered on over five platforms.

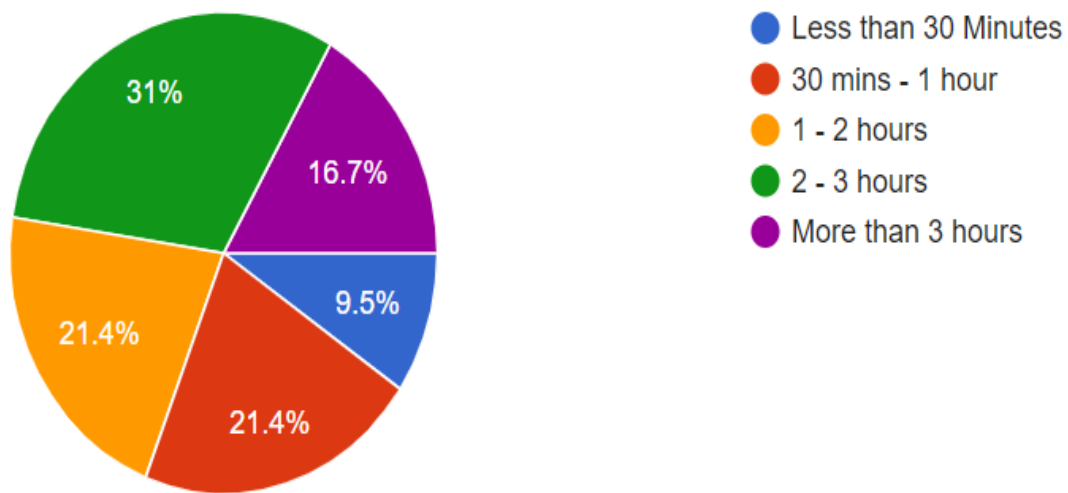


Users on Various Platforms

The most widely used service is Whatsapp 97.6% respondents as its users followed by Instagram with 90.5% respondents using the platform. The next in the list are Youtube and Facebook followed by others.

4.2.3 Average Time spent on Social Media

This study asked the respondents about the amount of time they spend on Social Media sites. The results are shown in the figure given below. 16.7% of the respondents spend more than three hours on social media every day, whereas 31 % of respondents spend more than 2-3 hours on an average in a day. 21.4 % of people spend 1-2 hours on average every day on various social media platforms.



Time spent in a day on Social Media

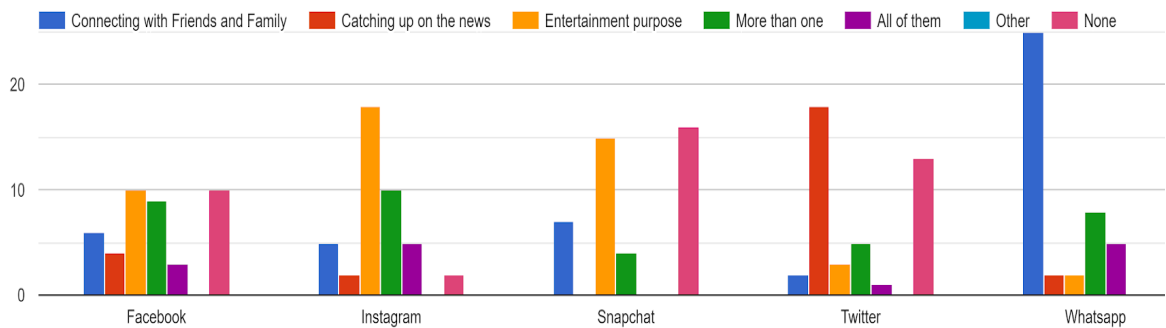
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Only 9.5 % of people spend less than thirty minutes a day on social media sites. Whereas 21.4 % spend around 30 minutes to 1 hour on various platforms.

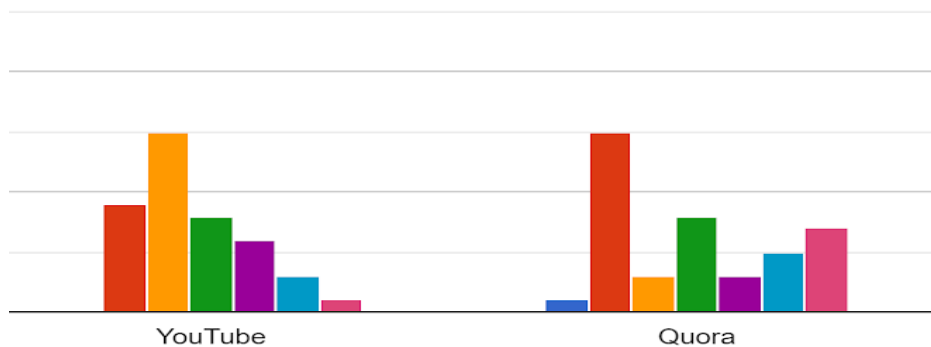
This indicates that people spend a considerable amount of time engaging with different kinds of content available on the internet. It has become a source of information as well as a source of entertainment for people. People use social media to kill the extra time they have in a day.

4.2.4 Purpose Served by Social Networking Sites

5. What do you use Social Media platforms for?



When asked about the purpose of using these Social media Platforms, the responders had different answers for different platforms. For Instagram, “entertainment” is the main purpose for which people use it. The results were the same for Youtube. A large number of people use it mainly for entertainment purposes followed by catching up on news. While Whatsapp is mainly used for Connecting with people, Quora is mainly used for getting information.



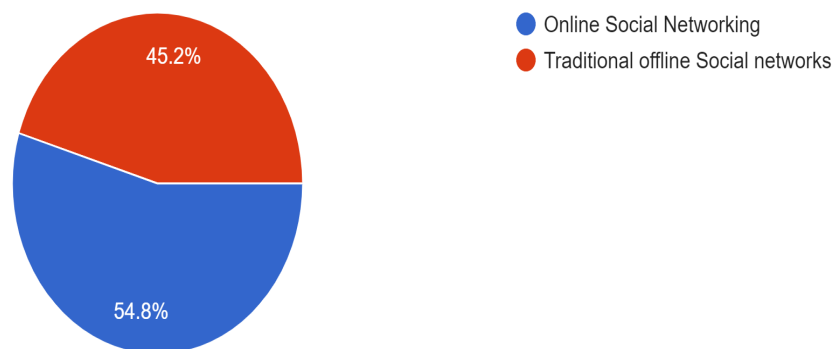
Twitter is mostly used for catching up on the news. People rely on it for getting the right information. For facebook results were rather balanced. Its popularity is declining and the purpose that it serves is entertainment and Connecting with

people. However, it should be noted here that Twitter has been extensively used for spreading misinformation according to various reports published by different agencies. In such a scenario, the belief of people that they get authentic information is problematic as well as thought-provoking.

4.2.5 Comparison of Traditional and Online Networking

6. What according to you is better for social interaction?

42 responses



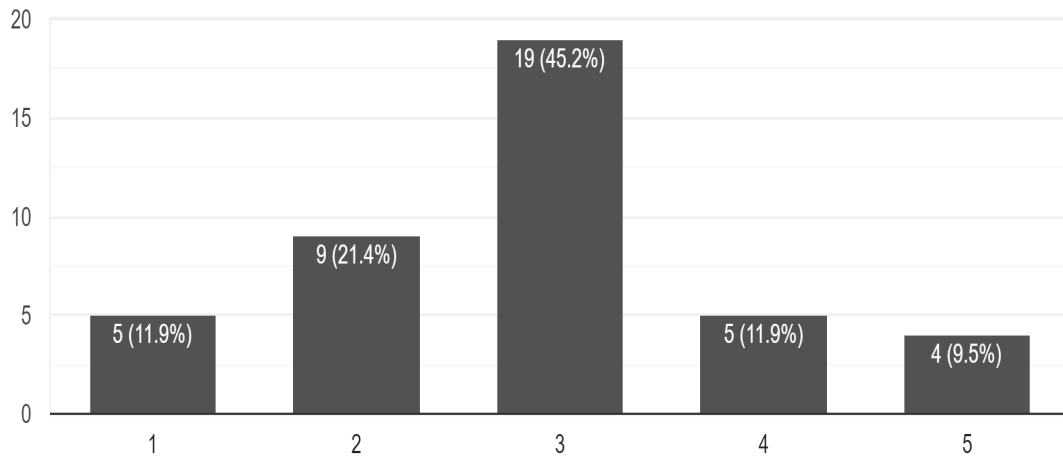
On being asked whether they prefer traditional Social Networks or Online Social Networks, 54.8% of respondents believe Online Social Networks are better for interaction.

The rest of the respondents said they prefer traditionally offline social networks for interacting. This finding is interesting because more people believe that it is better to interact online than offline.

4.2.6 Reliability of Social Networking Sites

7. How reliable is Social media in terms of broadcasting information

42 responses



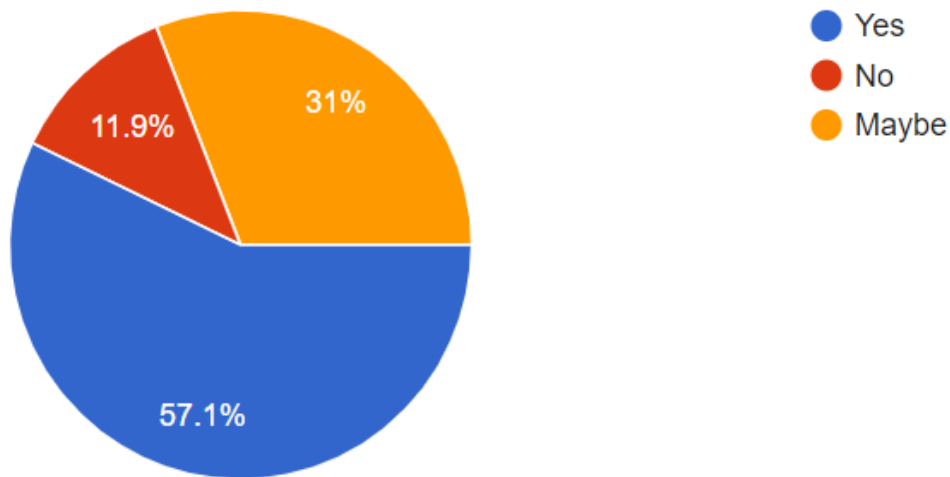
The question of the Reliability of Social Media is an important issue to deliberate upon.

When respondents were asked how reliable they think such platforms are in terms of providing information, around 45% of respondents were not sure about the reliability of the information that is broadcasted over the social media sites.

While around 9% believe that these are highly reliable and 9% saying not at all reliable.

4.2.7 Information Overload

57% of the respondents believed that there is information overload on these platforms.



Information overload on Social Networking Sites

There are widespread issues associated with the extent of information fed to people. Information overload has a harmful effect on people. The true intent of the information gets lost amid the redundant content which is spread over the channel.

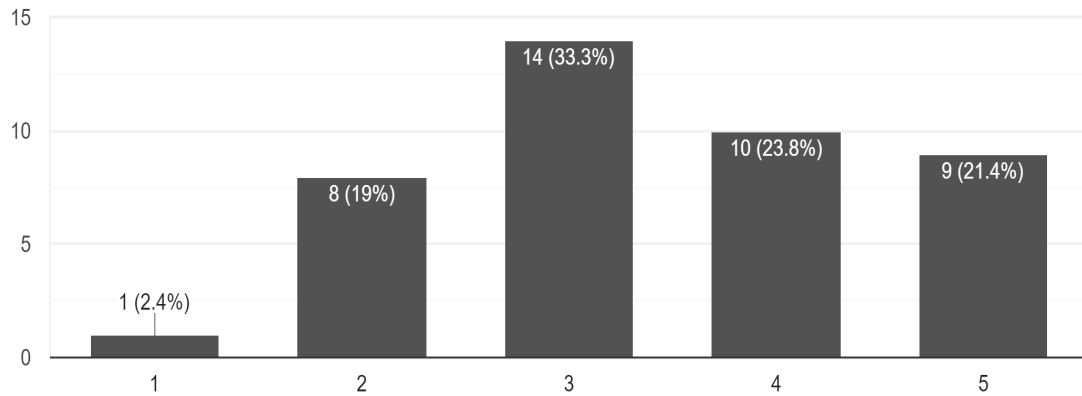
Moreover, It is difficult for people to receive the right information and understand it effectively when there is information overload. It also dilutes the impact a piece of information is supposed to have.

The misinformation and fake news are highly potent and severe consequences have been observed in the past. It continues to disrupt the Social environment and public order. It has a harmful effect on the general population of any country. Therefore, it needs to be kept in check.

4.2.8 Psychological Impact of information overload and Misinformation

10. Do excessive information and fake news have a psychological impact on you?

42 responses

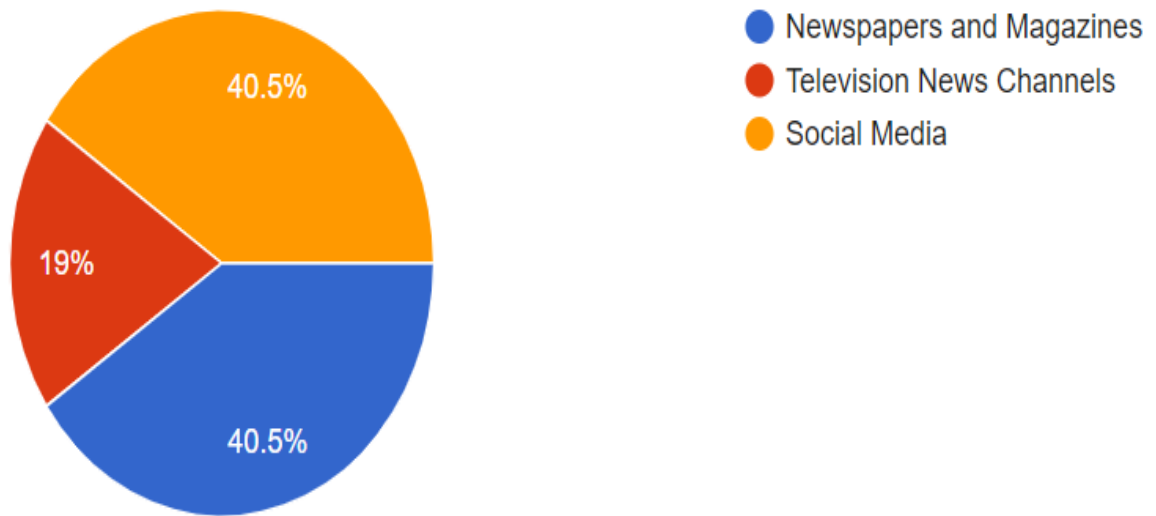


21% of the respondents agreed that excessive and inappropriate information has a psychological impact on them. While 33% of people were neutral about it.

The misinformation and fake news are highly potent and severe consequences have been observed in the past. It continues to disrupt the Social environment and public order. It has a harmful effect on the general population of any country. Therefore, it needs to be kept in check. A large number of people admit that Social media has impacted them in a negative manner.

4.2.9 Comparing different Channels of Information Broadcast

One interesting fact noted is that only 19% of respondents rely on TV news channels for staying updated. There is a visible trust deficit among people for the information spread on the traditional TV channels. People are moving away from the TV and switching to other sources to stay updated.

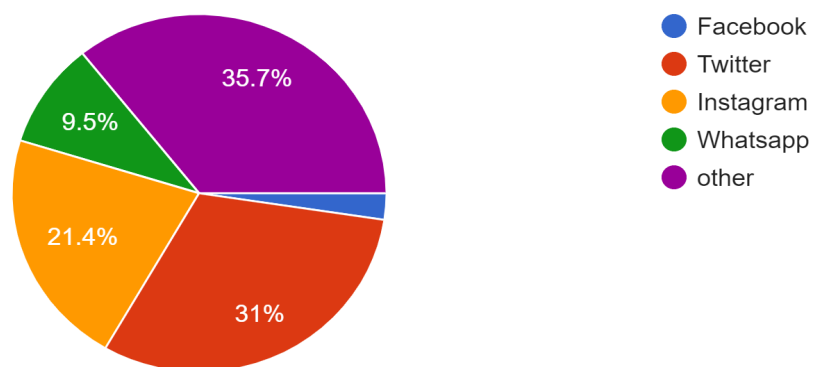


40% of people agreed that they rely on Social media for staying updated. The same percentage of respondents said they prefer other sources such as Newspapers and magazines.

4.2.10 Reliability of Different Social Networking Sites

12. Which one of the following is most reliable in order to stay updated?

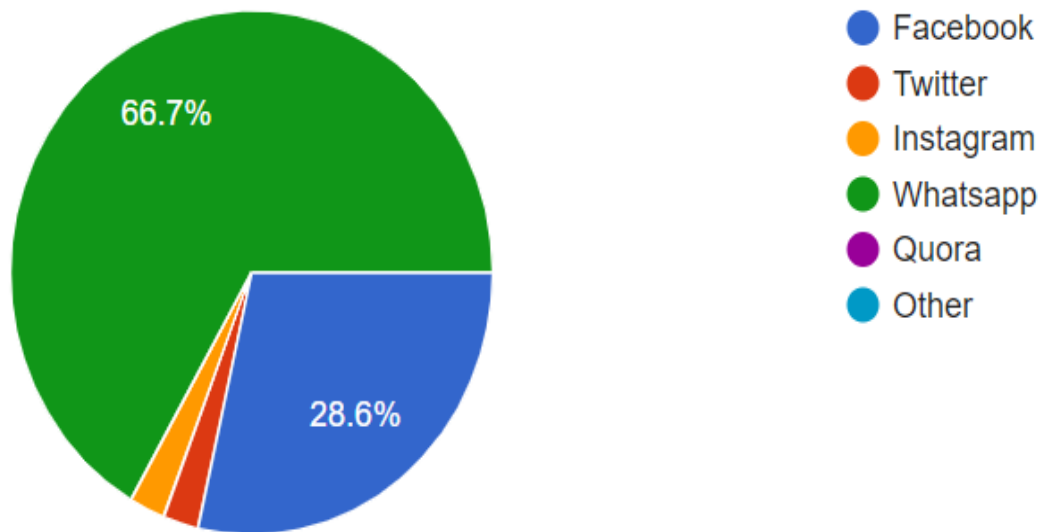
42 responses



Twitter is considered to be the most reliable of all the Social Networking sites for Information Broadcasting with 33% of respondents. 21.4% believe Instagram is the

most reliable. While 35.7% consider none of the platforms are reliable in terms of the authenticity of the information.

The problem of Fake news and information is most grave on Whatsapp followed by Facebook.



With the above results, it is safe to say that not a lot of people think that Social Media is an effective medium for broadcasting information. The main reason is the information overload, misinformation, and fake news which has deeply impacted its credibility. Therefore, it cannot be relied upon.

Over 50% of the respondents also believe that such platforms should be regulated in an effective manner by a competent authority so that the problem of misinformation can be dealt with in an effective manner.

PART 2

Social Media for Crisis Management

CHAPTER 5 : Social Media for Crisis Management

5.1 Background

Part two of this paper aims to study the effectiveness of Social media networking sites in managing medical emergencies and health crises. The crisis at hand in this particular study is the COVID 19. The geography taken for the study is India. The geography of the study is limited due to lack of time and resources.

The COVID 19 is an unprecedented health emergency. It has completely overwhelmed the health infrastructure of India. There is a shortage of hospital beds, Medical oxygen, Medicines and other medical instruments and equipment required to treat patients who have contracted the virus.

The various resources needed in the management of this health emergency are- Hospital Beds, Oxygen Cylinders, Oxygen concentrators, thermometer, medicines etc. Due to unavailability of these life saving essentials, black marketing is on the rise. Due to this, Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Whatsapp are being used to spread the leads to enable people to access these resources.

However, The dissemination of such information is highly unregulated on these platforms. At the same, there are other issues that make it difficult for people to access the necessary resources.

5.2 Methodology : Survey

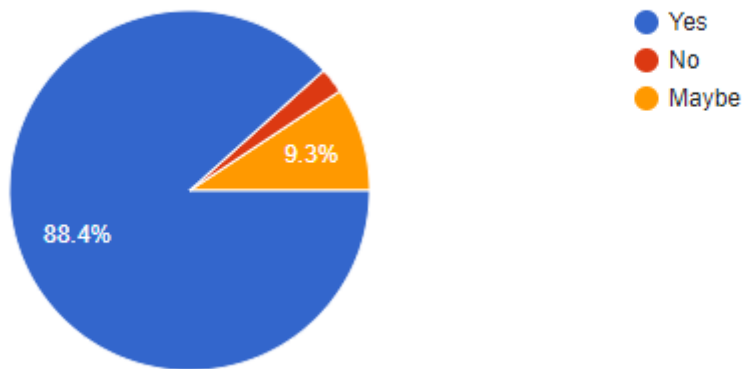
A survey was conducted to understand the difficulty people faced while they tried to find the emergency resources using the contact details and leads widely being shared on various Social media Platforms. The platforms included in the survey are Whatsapp, Instagram, Twitter and Facebook.

5.3 Findings

The people who participated in the study were asked to take a survey with multiple questions testing the efficacy of Social Networking sites for dissemination of information about the availability of emergency medical supplies. The study is relevant to establish how reliable social media is considering its unregulated nature. In the former part of the study, it is established that the disinformation over the internet and social networking sites has impacted peoples' lives to a great extent. Controlling the mis-information and fake news has become all the way more important today when the whole world is dealing with a health crisis in the form of Coronavirus Pandemic.

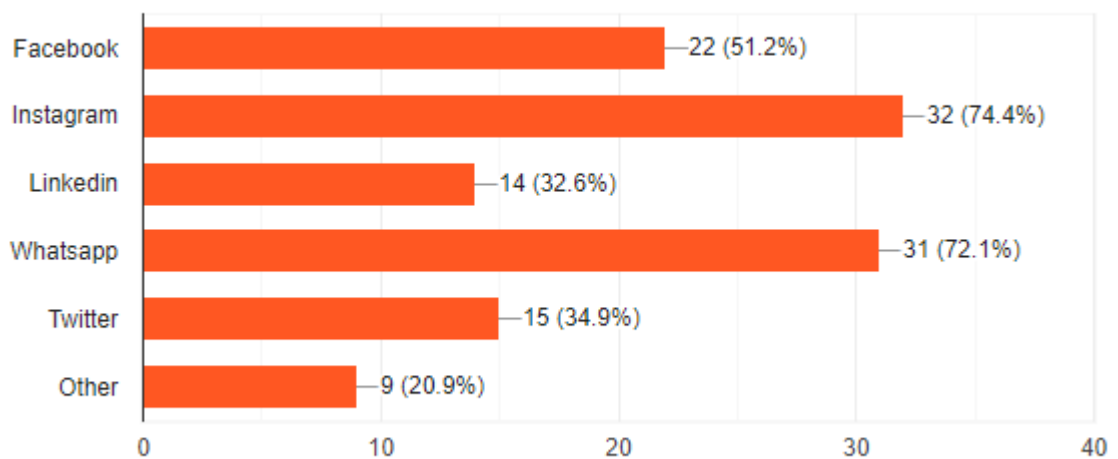
Social networking sites have helped thousands of people in finding emergency medical supplies and saving lives of their loved ones. However, it is important to study the effectiveness of using it for the purpose of sharing information in a critical time like this. Also, it is important to determine the limitations associated with it.

Of all the people who participated in the study, around 90% of people used the contact being shared on social media to find medical supplies. The platforms became the go to source for people to find out where the supplies are available considering the shortages.



Respondents who used Social Networking sites for medical supplies

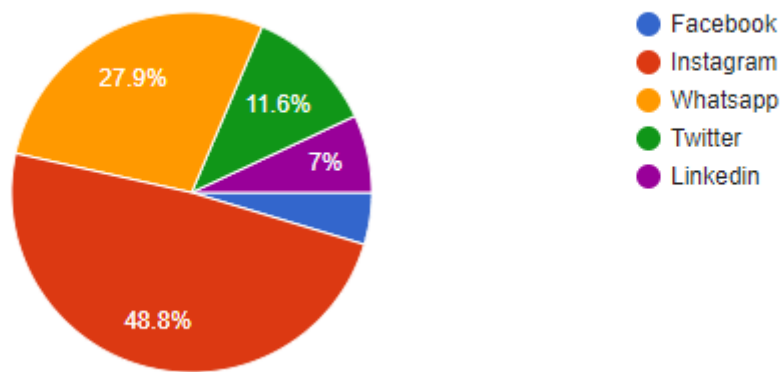
The major platforms used by people were the popular ones. Instagram, Whatsapp, Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter were mostly used by people to share information as well as to look for information when needed.



Social Networking platforms used by respondents

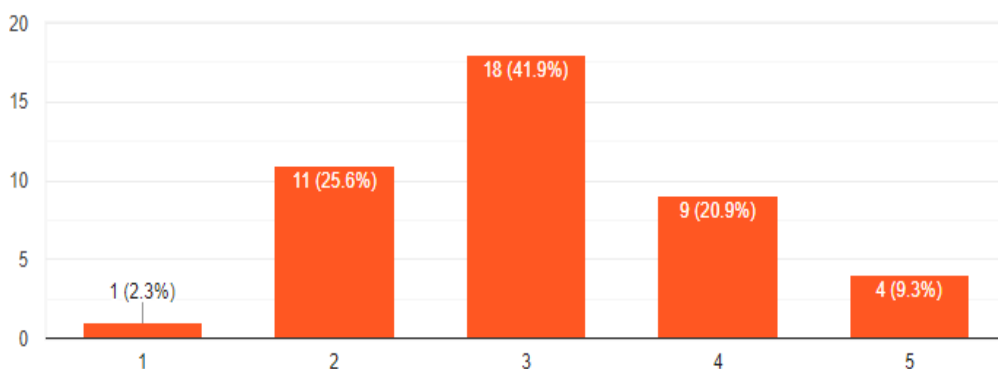
Of all the platforms Instagram and WhatsApp were mostly preferred by people looking for medical supplies.

The reliability of the information being shared on these platforms is the most important component in such critical times. In a situation where every second counts, it is important that people find the resources easily and in limited time. When asked about which platforms they considered to be most reliable, most people answered Instagram followed by Whatsapp.

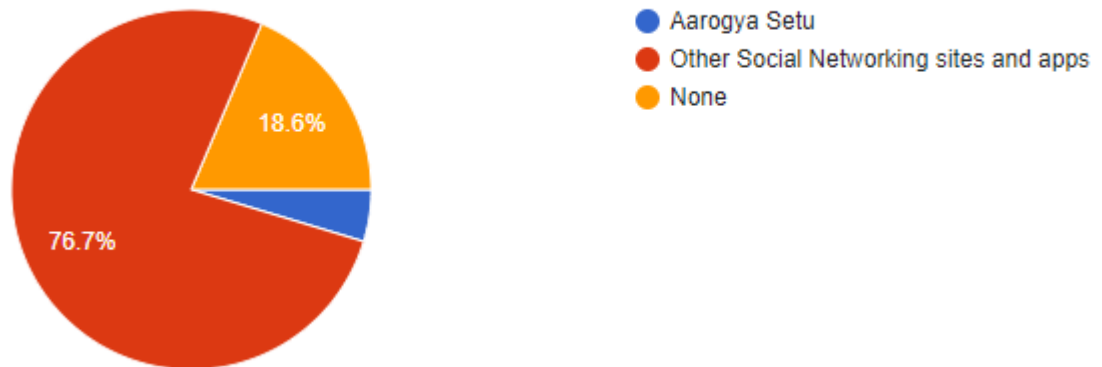


Most reliable platform

It is interesting to note that when asked about the official government application for managing the Pandemic, most people admitted that the application is not effective. It has failed the purpose that was intended to serve. People found it very difficult to find hospital beds with the help of arogya setu due to the unverified and outdated information in it.



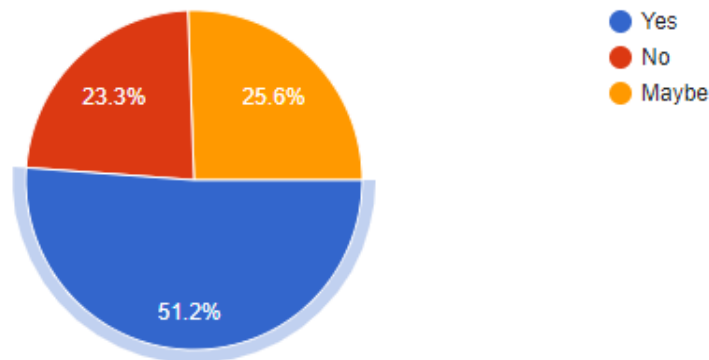
Most of the respondents believed that using other social networking platforms rather than Arogya Setu for finding the resources is much more effective however not convenient. These platforms served better purpose than the official application intended for managing the pandemic.



76.7% of the respondents preferred Social networking sites over Arogya Setu to look for the medical supplies such as Hospital and ICU Beds, Oxygen, Medicines etc.

However, finding the resources with the help of hundreds of contact numbers being shared on the internet is not easy. The process is inconvenient and time consuming since most of the contacts are outdated where supplies have already been exhausted considering the high demand. It was very difficult for people to connect with the right person.

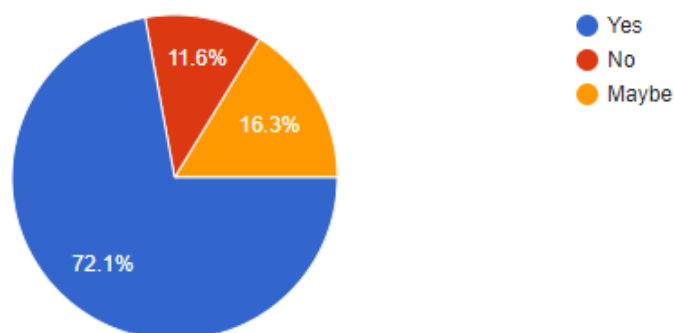
A lot of people also agreed that they came across people who indulged in illegal activities in lieu of providing the supplies. They exploited people for money.



People who came across illegal activities on Social media

51.2% of the people who participated in the survey said they came across illegal activities and scams while they were searching medical supplies.

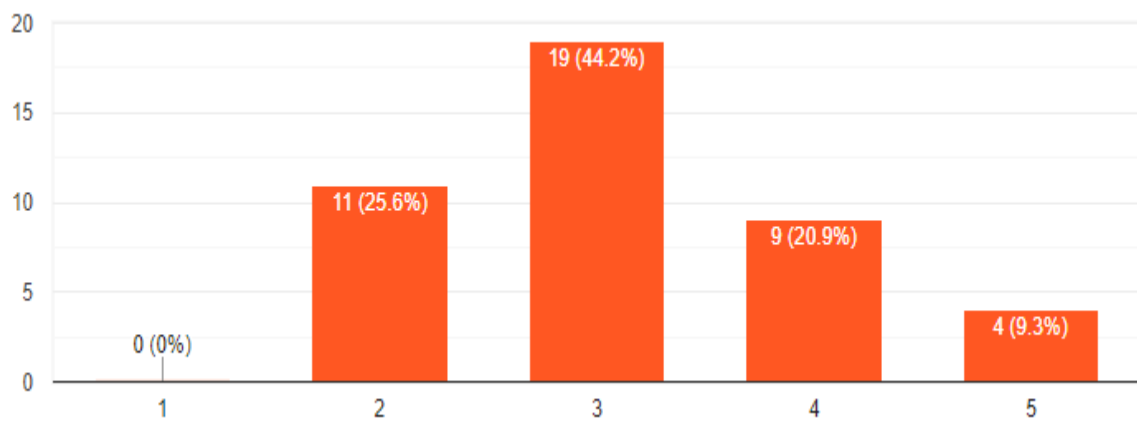
Another thing that has been observed is that most people had to pay prices over the prescribed rates and MRPs. There were a lot of people who sold medical supplies in black market. The black marketing became easier and widespread due to access to Social networking sites. They could reach people more easily and sold products at exorbitant prices.



People who paid more than MRP for Medical supplies

72% of the people who took the survey paid more than the MRP and prescribed rates for essential medical supplies. While only 11% of people said they did not pay more than the MRP.

When people were asked to rate the overall effectiveness of using Social Networking sites for the purpose of sharing spreading information about the availability of medical resources, the answer was not very positive. Although, Social networking sites have been a backbone in this time of crisis, there are a lot of limitations that come along with it. The people are more prone to get exploited at the hands of people involved in illegal activities. Also, the quality of supplies is also not verified which can cause serious harm to patients.



Overall effectiveness of Social Networking Sites in managing the information about medical supplies

The study and the findings of the survey has highlighted the fact that using Social networking sites for the purpose of spreading information about the essential medical supplies is not without limitations. It poses serious threats. It also enables people to spread the web of Black market and exploit people.

The problem lies in the barely regulated and unverified nature of these platforms which needs to be addressed as it can cause more harm than good to the people who are active users of these Social networking sites.

PART III

Case Study

CHAPTER 6 : Case Study based on Coronavirus Pandemic

6.1 Background

The deadly Second wave of Coronavirus Pandemic in India impacted each and every citizen of the country. People lost their loved ones to the virus. The death toll is extremely high. The case load increased to an extraordinary level with approximately four lakh ninety thousand cases reported in a single day. All this burdened the health infrastructure of the country, so much so, that the entire system collapsed. People couldn't find hospital beds for their family members and loved ones. The non availability of oxygen and other emergency medicines and medical supplies increased the fatality rate to a great extent.

In such a scenario, the people on social networking sites tried to do as much as possible to share information regarding the availability of emergency medical supplies such as Hospital beds, Oxygen cylinder and concentrator, Life saving drugs such as Remdesivir etc. The solidarity shown by people in this critical situation was heartwarming. People used Social networking sites such as Instagram, Facebook and Whatsapp etc to book food orders from people suffering from COVID-19. The internet became the rescuer. However, there is a downside to the use of Social media in this situation.

There is negligible relation on the social networking sites. Most of the information floating there is unverified which poses a great threat. A lot of People had to face hardships due to the unverified information on these sites.

Following are the two cases based on the interviews conducted for the purpose of this research. The names of the people have been changed upon their insistence.

CASE 1 - Blackmarkeeting of Critical life saving Drugs

It was a difficult day when Anuradha's father was admitted to a hospital after he felt breathless in the middle of the night. The situation aggravated soon when they couldn't find a hospital bed. After checking in four different hospitals, he was finally admitted to a small hospital in the Rohini region of Delhi. After the initial check up, the doctor immediately asked Anuradha to arrange 4 vials of Remdesivir. She ran from one drug store to another in search of the drug. She finally started to call on the numbers she found on Instagram. The first 10 numbers she called on were either Unreachable or didn't exist. After much effort she found one contact useful where remdesivir was available. But, to her surprise, the man on the other side of the call asked her to pay 35,000 for one vial. Her father required four vials which would amount to One lakh forty thousand rupees. She was shocked. However, in the critical time she had to buy the drug from the black market. She realised that a lot of people on instagram are indulging in black marketing of emergency medical supplies and asking people to pay exorbitant amounts of money for the supplies.

CASE 2 - Fake Drug

Mohit, a resident of Kamla Nagar, Delhi, lives with his family. On 4th April 2021, his mother, father and elder brother tested positive for COVID - 19. While his father and brother had mild symptoms and recovered by isolating at home, his mother's symptoms spiked and she started to feel difficulty in breathing. She was immediately shifted to a private hospital where she was treated for the next 10

days. The doctor asked mohit to arrange 2 vials of Remdesivir for his mother. Mohit was aware of the unavailability of the drug in the market. He started searching for leads on Instagram and different whatsapp groups. He called on multiple numbers before he reached a man named Sandeep. He was informed by Sandeep about the availability of the drug. Sandeep sold him two vials for fifteen thousand each which is much higher than the MRP of the drug. Mohit bought the drugs from Sandeep and immediately took them to the hospital. The doctor injected the drugs to his mother. However, a day later, her mother's condition worsened. She was breathless. The doctor shifted her to the ventilator. She died two hours later. Mohit was heartbroken upon hearing the news. It turned out that the Remdesivir that he bought from Sandeep was fake which led to worsening of his mother's health and demise. He filed an FIR against Sandeep. However, the contact number was unreachable now.

Chapter 7 : Conclusion

In Conclusion, the Internet and Social Media Networking sites are a blessing to us humans, for they allow us to stay updated and connected not only with our friends and family but also with the entire world. It gives us the opportunity to explore new things, and makes our life easier. It has countless benefits.

However, it is like two faces of a coin where one face presents a pleasant picture. On the other facet of the coin, there are problems grave enough to affect not only our daily lives but also can create problems for this world as a whole. Misinformation, fake News, Information overload, Manipulation through content are problems to name a few. It goes much deeper.

Due to all these issues, the users are not happy staying online, although they end up spending long hours over social networking sites every day. People are aware of the spread of misinformation but many times do not question the authenticity of fake news. It is problematic for the entire society.

The Study establishes that although it is the most convenient to disseminate information over the social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, it can be done in a rapid manner with a targeted approach as and when required. It is cheaper and spreads in no time. However, it requires additional measures from the authorities so that the right information reaches people. There is a trust deficit in people towards the information that is broadcasted over the Social networking sites which need to be addressed with effective policymaking.

The internet is capable of doing more harm than good. And therefore, this paper suggests that there should be some regulation of the content that is spread over the social networking sites to reduce the unwanted information overload to some extent. It should be done to stop people from getting misguided information.

The problems observed in the paper need to be addressed at the earliest possible. At the same time, there is a need to sensitize people about social networking sites. There should be guidelines for the right online conduct. It is a collective responsibility of the users, the social media platforms, and the governing authorities to reduce the harms that social networking brings along with all the benefits.

Chapter 8 : Future Scope

Social Media Networking sites have numerous advantages. These sites have made the life of users easier. However, there is much that is yet to be explored in the context of online networking. These platforms have evolved over the years, and have become relevant to not only individuals who wish to share important moments of their lives with people, but these platforms also have become a source of income for many people.

Another use of social networking sites is to influence people and their decisions. The study has highlighted the problems and concerns associated with the use of social media platforms. The study opens multiple windows for further investigation into the world of Social Media. There is a scope to conduct behavioral studies on users of Social Media and analyze the common patterns observed, and ultimately devise a set of guidelines or a Social Media Users' Charter to promote a culture of safe use of Social Media. Likewise, there is scope to delve deep into the question about how, and to what extent these platforms should be regulated. The question of regulating Social Media is rather controversial and has to be dealt with most sensitively, taking into consideration the concerns of all the stakeholders- Users, businesses, Social Networking platforms, and appropriate regulating authorities.

On the other hand, there is also a possibility to study the optimum interlinking of Social Media Networking sites and Knowledge management capabilities of businesses and organizations in order to enhance their operations, and effectively manage the plethora of data they generate by leveraging the power of Online Social Networks.

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