

POL 101: Introduction to Political Science

Section: 14

Group- 2

Topic: The use of social media to deal the crisis of COVID-19

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RESEARCH ON SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

In the face of COVID-19, social media is a great way for individuals and communities to stay connected even while physically separated. In comparison with the previous decades, people didn’t have the same sources of communication we now have in the 21st century to quickly share news and information. With the advent of social media, not only are we learning the latest news updates, but we’re also using platforms like Facebook and Twitter to provide information and help to the other people.

Never have we had more real-time information available at our fingertips in the face of a worldwide event. Such information can help keep us safe, providing us with a better understanding of what is occurring and how it might impact us. Finding trusted sources of information regarding COVID-19 is extremely important. Until a few weeks ago, many of us hadn’t even heard of “social distancing,” which refers to staying at least 6 feet away from others to help prevent the spread of infection. Now, social media users, from friends and family to celebrities and governments, are regularly calling for social distancing. Popular hash tags popping up related to social distancing and quarantining include #socialdistancing, #quarantineandchill, and #mypandemicsurvivalplan and etc. There’s also been an abundance of vital, lifesaving information, connection with others, and global unity. The ability to share experiences with family and friends helps to combat both literal and emotional isolation while also reminding us that we’re all in this together. COVID-19 has put many people, especially the elderly, those with disabilities, working parents who are losing childcare, and those who are losing their jobs, in challenging situations. Communities are rallying together to support organizations and individuals by sharing fundraisers with large audiences on social media.

People are also taking to social media to offer support in any way they can, such as picking up groceries for individuals who are unable to leave home or sharing information on how to support local businesses who are struggling to pay their employees. Social media is great platform to share experiences. It is found that people are sharing their own quarantine experiences and also some people who are affected with the virus are describing their journey and helping other people in every possible ways through social media. The most significant role of social media is regarding the healthcare sector which is praiseworthy. There are many facebook groups which are helping people to manage blood and plasma donors, assistance regarding the ICU booking related issues, delivering healthcare related equipments to home, cash help and many more. These are just a couple of the millions of examples where people have shown their support and empathy on social media.

## LIMITATIONS OF SOCIAL MEDIA: POTENTIAL FOR MISINFORMATION

No platform is perfect. As information is widely accessible and immediately available in social media, it may also not be immediately reliable. Information constructs based on flawed hypotheses can easily find their way to a naive audience through an unregulated maze, resulting in the establishment of many myths before facts can be presented. There are some limitations in the process. One of them is lack of sincerity in people regarding the pandemic. Mostly rural people are highly unconscious as well as ignorant of the situation since they are not exposed to social media platforms. They also possess some taboo in their society that keeps them off such events. So targeting them and creating awareness among them is difficult. Social media is considered as a media of entertainment by a handful number of people. They do not consider using social media as a source for information. Also social media shows or displays the contents in which the users are interested. So it also pulls the process back significantly. Still COVID-19 issue has moved the entire world in such a way that it made everybody to show some concern about it. There has been misinformation and fear on social media, so people sometimes cannot fully rely on the help of social media. The motive of social media to help other people in this pandemic situation is commendable but there is group of people, who have a bad intension to harass other people in many ways. On the other hand fake news is becoming more common in social media. So it is clearly seen that to some extend the activities of social media regarding this pandemic situation are unsuccessful.

THERE IS STILL A LOT TO DO

This has now become a global responsibility to work as a team and make a safe and better environment. Social media can play the most important as well as resourceful role to help the cause. A few do’s and don’ts are given below that can prove to be helpful to fight the crisis of COVID-19 situation.

* Make the entire message more informative but in an interesting and creative way like through short film or Marketing campaign.
* Using the celebrity personnel who use social media to ask their followers help preventing the pandemic by maintaining the health issues.
* Politicians can ask the people to abide by the social and personal safety measures through social media.
* Doctors and health workers can provide online advice and measures to maintain a safe health.
* Government sites can include a particular tag about the COVID-19 related do’s and don’ts for the employees to follow. Governments and healthcare authorities should use social media to spread updates, news, and scientific discoveries about COVID-19.
* All sort of organizations can come up with any kind of advertisement to make their workers aware as well as conscious about the pandemic. It can be a video message or poster or banner in the organization social media platform.
* Educational institutions are connecting with the students through social media. So they can also provide students with advice on the situation. Also individual work can be assigned as assignment like making a video telling the safety measures to fight the COVID-19 pandemic and post it in social media platform from their profile.

Finally, it is not easy also not that much difficult to make people listen to a message which concerns about life saving. Social media could just be the extract to make people listen and create an impact on them. Collective effort can help us get through this nightmare and see a safe and healthy life.