

EDITORIAL

Role of Mass media & Academia in Disaster ResilienceManish Chaturvedi¹, Dheeraj Shah²¹Department of Community Medicine and Planning & Evaluation, National Institute of Health & Family Welfare, New Delhi;²Director, National Institute of Health & Family Welfare, New Delhi

Abstract	Introduction	Methodology	Results	Conclusion	References	Citation	Tables / Figures
--------------------------	------------------------------	-----------------------------	-------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	--------------------------	----------------------------------

Corresponding Author

Dr Manish Chaturvedi, Professor of Community Medicine and Planning & Evaluation, National Institute of Health & Family Welfare, New Delhi 110067

E Mail ID: manish@nihfw.org**Citation**Chaturvedi M, Shah D. Role of Mass media & Academia in Disaster Resilience. Indian J Comm Health. 2023;35(3):255-257. <https://doi.org/10.47203/IJCH.2023.v35i03.001>

Source of Funding: Nil Conflict of Interest: None declared

Article Cycle

Received: 06/07/2023; Revision: 18/07/2023; Accepted: 06/08/2023; Published: 30/09/2023

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). ©The Author(s). 2023 Open Access**Introduction**

Mass media campaign is an oft-used strategy to raise knowledge and awareness about common health issues among the public. With advancements in technology and an increase in the accessibility of the internet to the citizens, public awareness increases manifold, thus urging better adherence to essential public health measures. (1) Media and communication plays a crucial role in disaster management by disseminating information about the disasters, educating public about disaster, highlighting vulnerable zones, timely warnings and alerts, reporting of disaster events, gathering and transmitting information about affected areas, assisting in rescue and relief operations, disseminating information about public safety, informing and alerting the concern authorities and government officials, assisting volunteers, relief organizations etc.(2).

Mass media encompasses traditional and social media. Social media includes mobile groups, web groups, twitter, Instagram etc. while traditional media includes newspapers, magazines, radio and television. Another form of traditional media mostly utilized in disaster situations is ham radio and community radio. These plays a vital role during natural disasters as well during terror attacks. Volunteers from community radio and amateur radio can become frontline reporters as they have close relationship with the community and understand the local existing environmental conditions and the reality faced by victims better than journalists from the mainstream media.(2) However, the level of awareness of these radio communications in India is still low. Nowadays large population have access to social media through their smartphone devices with internet access, surpassing time spent on traditional media. Therefore, social media

applications should be included for developing an integrated crisis management platform for effective crisis management.(3)

Prime Minister's 10 Point Agenda for Disaster Risk Reduction

Social media as part of mass media was also emphasized in the 10-point agenda for disaster risk reduction by Honorable Prime Minister of India in the second Asian ministerial conference in November 2016. The acronym REDUCTIONS summarizes these points highlighted in the agenda – Risk coverage for all; Empower women for disaster risk management; Development sectors inclusion; Uniformity in response globally; Capacity building locally and Encourage best practices/initiatives; Technology to enhance the efficiency of efforts; Invest in risk mapping globally; Opportunity to learn from every incident; Network of national & international universities to work on disaster issues; and, Social media and mobile technology utilization.(4)

Community Outreach through Social Media Platform

To effectively use mass media for advocacy, Honorable Prime Minister of India Shi Narendra Modi started a series of mass interactions through radio communications under the heading of “ Mann Ki Baat”. It is broadcast on All India Radio and Doordarshan and is also live streamed on the internet. Since the first episode on 3rd October 2014, there have been 102 episodes till June 2023(5). In almost fifty percent of the episodes, the issues related with disasters – global warming, plantation, water conservation, waste management, climate change,

disaster management, National Disaster Response Force – were highlighted. In addition, Honorable Prime Minister expressed gratitude to doctors of the country, which was followed by observance of Doctor's Day nationwide in public and private sector.(6) As a leader, he builds the rapport with the audience in a manner that the activities and entitlements are considered less in civic terms and more in terms of duty and service to each other.(7) Recently Honorable Prime Minister shared his contentment in relation to disaster resilience shown by Kutch community and stated that "the strength of disaster management which India has developed over the years is becoming an example today. Cyclone Biparjoy wreaked up so much havoc in Kutch but the people of Kutch faced it with full courage and preparedness."(8)

Capacity Building for Self Reliance involving Academia

To strengthen communities as first responder, the academia as highlighted at point 6 in the 10-point agenda on disaster risk reduction, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) approached central training institute including National Institute of Health and Family Welfare (NIHFW), New Delhi; National Institute of Public Health Training and Research (NIPHTR), Mumbai; and All India Institute of Hygiene & Public Health (AIH&PH), Kolkata. The NIHFW deployed public health teams to the Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Punjab, with high COVID-19 case load to assess the situation as well as for appropriate actions to control the surge of cases, in May 2020. The institute informed public about various health initiatives of government of India through Mann Ki Baat platform for wellbeing of general population. The interaction was broadcasted in June 2021 highlighting activities of the Institute as well as ministry of Health. This activity was followed by observance of Doctor's Day nationwide in public and private sectors.

In continuation to his multiple social media initiatives for disaster risk reduction, Honorable PM launched low-cost high intensity campaign "Jan Andolan for COVID-19 Appropriate Behavior" on 8th October 2020 organized by National Academy of Broadcasting and Multimedia, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting for their officers. The NIHFW, as part of technical network, served as a change agent, to disseminate fundamental information to society members about wearing mask, following physical distancing, and maintaining hand hygiene.

To enhance the local capabilities and best practices during COVID-19 pandemic, as part of agenda number 8, academia organized multiple training programs. The institutes planned many capacity building exercises for program managers and field workers through content designed and developed under guidance of experts from various specialties involved in disaster management. The NIHFW trained around 1000 senior medical officers on

Public Health Emergencies Management, Epidemiology and rapid response for managing pandemics through multiple projects, including the MoHFW project entitled 'Capacity Building for Public Health Emergencies Management', and US Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) project entitled 'Public Health Systems Capacity Building in India (PHSCBI)'.

The NIHFW organized workshop on public health emergencies management in collaboration with center of community medicine (CCM) All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Delhi under the banner of Indian Public Health Association Conference in February 2020 with participation of around 200 professionals across the country. In addition, to allay anxiety of healthcare workforce during COVID-19 pandemic, the NIHFW organized multiple webinars involving experts from NCDC, WHO, AIIMS, PGIMER Chandigarh and CDC India to build the capacity of health care workforce. Around 2000 professionals were reached through the online platform. Similarly, NIPHTR Mumbai organized webinars during COVID pandemic for NGO coordinators and teachers in association of International Agencies and covered almost thousand people.

As a part of local self-reliance, AIH&PH Kolkata started developing nursing institutions in remote districts of West Bengal, school of public health, public health museum and integrated public health laboratories. To standardize the public health curriculum, to enhance the quality of education and for accreditation of courses, especially during disasters, central training institutes may be considered for the designation of public health universities.

"Mann ki Baat", a social media campaign to reach masses to resolve their common problems as well as to communicate initiatives by GOI, played an important role in disaster resilience. This has been an innovative and important tool in strengthening communities for disaster response for promoting awareness, encouraging public participation, and promoting initiatives aimed at combating the pandemic.

Conclusion

Concurrent availability and access to key services and products are crucial to persuade individuals motivated by media messages to act on them(6). Academia supported the initiatives of honorable PM through various highlighted activities to ensure availability of services. The technical activities played role in back drop for mainstreaming thoughts shared through mass media campaigns.

Public relations or media advocacy campaigns that shape the treatment of a public health issue by news and entertainment media also represent a promising complementary strategy to conventional media campaigns.(9) Furthermore, it is suggested that a model should be created to evaluate the media response at the

end of each epidemic and pandemic which will help in developing the effective strategies for outbreak response. Ultimately, social media is a tool, and the same tool that can cause a negative impact, can also bring about positive outcomes by facilitating and accelerating the speed and breadth of communication, if properly utilized.(3) It is realized that the success of all disaster management efforts depends on media relations; therefore, the model should emphasize on inclusiveness and collaborations. Communities may become resilient through leveraging social media technologies for disaster management, simultaneously following guidelines prepared by academia.

References

1. Al-Dmour H, Masa'deh R, Salman A, Al-Dmour R, Abuhashesh M. The Role of Mass Media Interventions on Promoting Public Health Knowledge and Behavioral Social Change Against COVID-19 Pandemic in Jordan. *SAGE Open*. 2022;12(1):215824402210821.
2. National Conference on Media in Disaster Management – 2020: A pre-event for 3rd National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (NPDRR). Accessed on 25/09/2023. Available from: http://164.100.213.80/pdf/pre_events/PE11/Media_Conference.PDF.
3. Chan JC. The role of social media in crisis response and recovery. *Vanguard*. Product of RAHS program office. Accessed on 25/09/2023. Available from: <https://www.oecd.org/governance/risk/The%20role%20of%20Social%20media%20in%20crisis%20preparedness,%20response%20and%20recovery.pdf>
4. Aapda Samvad. Monthly Newsletter Of NDMA. October 2020. Accessed on 25/09/2023. Available from: <https://ndma.gov.in/sites/default/files/PDF/Newsletters/Aapda%20Samvaad%20Issue%20October%202020.pdf>.
5. "Modi goes on AIR". *The Hindu*. 2014 Oct 3. Accessed on 25/09/2023. Available from: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/modis-first-radio-interaction-mann-ki-baat-on-all-india-radio/article11056264.ece>;
6. Wikipedia contributors, "Mann Ki Baat," *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Accessed on 25/09/2023. Available from: https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mann_Ki_Baat&oldid=1176570932
7. Sambaraju R. 'My countrymen have never disappointed me': Politics of service in Modi's speeches during Covid-19. *Discourse, Context & Media*. 2022;47:100594.
8. Mann Ki Baat: Strength of disaster management that India has developed is becoming an example, PM Modi says. Accessed on 25/09/2023. Available from: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/mann-ki-baat-strength-of-disaster-management-that-india-has-developed-is-becoming-an-example-pm-modi-says/articleshow/101080632.cms>.
9. Wallack L, Dorfman L. Media Advocacy: A Strategy for Advancing Policy and Promoting Health. *Health Education Quarterly*. 1996;23(3):293–317.