

ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN FLOOD MANAGEMENT IN KERALA PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract: *Over the last two decades, social media has been evolved into a powerful tool for communication. Recent Kerala floods could prove the potential of social media as a significant and accessible tool to get information across quickly to reach out to a large group of people. This research intends to study the far reaching impact of social media in dissemination of information during a disaster. It investigates the use of social media platforms by different stakeholders involved in emergency response activities during 2018 Kerala floods. According to the results social media is helpful in organizing and facilitating the rescue and relief actions. With its immediate and amplified reach, social media make sure that vital information reaches to right people at the right time. The strategic use of social media can effectively drive disaster management efforts.*

1. INTRODUCTION

This Tool describes the potential functions of media during the whole flood management cycle, from prevention and awareness-raising, to emergency warnings, to relief measures and restoration. The flooding of August 2018, the worst in Kerala in nearly a century, isolated people across different regions of the state. The government confirmed 387 deaths. The preliminary loss has been estimated by the state government at Rs 20,000 crore, which is around 15 percent of the state's GDP estimate for 2018-19. After defining the basic concepts of communication and risk perception, the publication shows how the intermediate position between decision-makers and the population occupied by media confers upon them the essential but delicate responsibility of bridging between the two parties.

It is therefore suggested that the actual relation between media and floods could be transformed into a more effective contribution to the flood management process through the building of a cooperative relation with policy-makers, on one side, and the development of a Communication Strategy, on the other side. Finally, some good practice examples are provided for the main kinds of mass media, both from official and unofficial sources. The traditional modes of communication were ineffective during the flooding as telephone and mobile networks failed. This made it difficult to deal with requests for help and coordinate rescue efforts. At this point, people from across the world turned to

volunteers with social media platforms and geared up rescue and relief operations instantly.

Objectives

The main objective of this study will be:

1. To analyse the role of media in this general framework.
2. To propose a communication framework for volunteer communities to enhance the use of social media during a crisis.
3. To determine the impact of social media during a disaster.
4. To ascertain the key areas where social media involved during the Kerala floods.

Hypotheses

- Social media can play a well role in disaster management actions during a disaster
- Social media interaction involving disaster management agencies and communities during the floods.
- Create a framework of safe and sustainable use of social media technologies during emergencies.

Research Questions

How Social Media help individual volunteers/ communities during a disaster?

- How can Social Media clear the impact of the disaster?
- Is there a community's systematic approach to use social media as an emergency management tool during a disaster?

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In many cases, even decision-makers get to know about floods from media outlets. During disasters journalists report on numerous aspects, ranging from technical through to social issues, thus providing valuable information to flood managers that enables them to adapt decisions to the actual situation.

During such a crisis, loss of life and property affects people mentally inflicting stress and leave them in a state of shock. Helping to overcome the stress and think rationally in such a situation can substantially reduce loss of life. Besides

contributing to the planning process, news received from various media could also be used to cross check facts and data obtained from official sources or to complement them with information about public perceptions and concerns that are not always caught by authorities. In this sense, a supplementary function that reporters could perform would be to act as a communication channel from communities to decision-makers, especially for those kinds of messages that hardly filter through the chain of command.

For almost 19 years social media has been used in crisis management. During the time of natural disasters like flood, earthquake or cyclone, when all the other modes of communications are found incapable, these social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube etc. are found to be the most efficient and beneficial. The present study discusses the role of social media during the Kerala Flood 2018. Results show that during the flood; Whatsapp, Facebook and Instagram are found to be used by majority of the respondents. Most of the respondents spend more than 3 hours on Whatsapp followed by Instagram and Facebook during the flood. For the information regarding the location status of friends and family, majority of respondents used Facebook followed by Whatsapp and Instagram. During the flood, majority of the respondents used the hashtag #Keralafloods, followed by #Keralafloodrelief, #cmdrf and #Keralaflood. People across the country are contributing towards Kerala Chief Minister's Distress Relief Fund and every responsible citizen are trying to do their bit to get the flood-ravaged state out of this dire state. These fund raising promotion focused mainly using with social media.

III. METHODOLOGY

This qualitative research methodology adopts a mixed approach. It includes review of secondary literature, content analysis of news reports and articles, social media and other web sites. Questionnaire method is used for collecting data from volunteer or rescue groups and individual volunteers, social servicers and social media influencers involved, it serves as a well useful tool for exploring social media usage during the floods.

An interview has been conducted with key volunteer management leaders who were actively involved in the response phase. Social network theory examines how people, organizations or groups interact with others inside their network. The theory analyses the social relationships in terms of nodes and ties. The rise of social media sites makes researchers and digital analysts much more thoughtful and curious about the its impact. Social network theory helps them analyze the functioning of social media networks as detailed maps of specific one-to-one relationships, instead of as a vague concept of a virtual community. This will explain

how a small change in one area can have a huge impact in the overall network.

Research Design

A qualitative analysis will be done by a detailed description of observation on the collected data. The study analyses secondary data like news, journals, books, periodicals etc. Data collected for key emergency management stakeholders involved in the recovery phase of Kerala floods, This study analyze how communities within the social networks work during a disaster. Here evaluate the different aspects of the research problem and analyze them to draw the final conclusion. This find out how social media platforms could facilitate the communication during the 2018 Kerala floods. The effectiveness of information using social media during the floods was heavily relied on how messages have been passed on by various online communities and social media influencers.

IV. FINDINGS

Use of Social Media in flood management

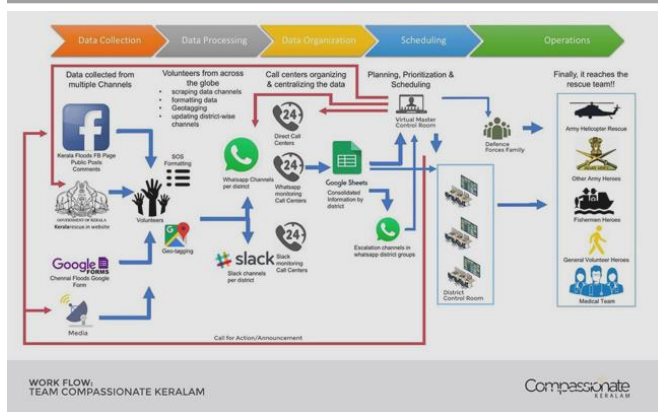
- Social Media Used to Get Information on Weather Conditions.
- Social Media Used For Information on Road/Traffic Conditions.
- Social Media Used For Eyewitness Photographs/Videos.
- Social Media Used For Location Status of Friends and Family.
- Social Media Used For Information on Safety Measures.
- Social Media Used For Expressing Gratitude.

V. PROPOSED FRAMEWORK

The population's response to a flood alert constitutes a particular situation. The alert in itself does not guarantee that people will react, because they go through a multi-step process that involves (a) listening, (b) understanding, (c) evaluating the level of risk conveyed, (d) taking the risk as their own or others', (e) confirming the alert and (f) responding to it (Complete recovery of flooded areas may take years, while, progressively, priority by the Government and foreign donors may decline.

The role of media in this waning landscape could be to keep track of what is going on at the field level, report to those who could practically solve problems and advocate for immediate action. This design would help volunteer communities to streamline volunteer efforts to support and supplement the government rescue.

Impact of Social Media in Dissemination of Information during a Disaster- a Case Study on Kerala Floods 2018



VI. CONCLUSION

Thus the study aims of the impact of social media and mass media in dissemination of information during a disaster. The researcher collected data from key volunteer groups and individual volunteers who were active participants during Kerala floods and they were used social media as a communication tool during the response phase. That social media was impactful as a tool for communication during the disaster. With its mass reach and ability to convey real-time information to the public. The findings from the study show that all the respondents made use of social media during the flood. Among these five social media networks, Among these five social media networks, Whatsapp, Facebook and Instagram are found to be most effectively used by majority of the respondents during the flood for various purposes.

Keywords: Flood, Media, Media management, and social media

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