

THE IMPACT AND ROLE OF MASS MEDIA DURING PANDEMIC

Mass media has long been recognized as a powerful force shaping how we experience the world. Are various forms of media still able to convey a sense of unity reaching large audiences, or are messages lost in the noisy crowd of mass self-communication?

In the first few months of 2020, information and news reports about the COVID-19 were so rapidly published and shared in social media that it's referred to as the first social media "infodemic". Various news channels, newspapers and journalist saw this pandemic as an opportunity to gain popularity and hence began reporting of half baked stories in an overzealously depressing manner which further led to mass depression. We started building walls around us, feeling afraid, unsure and most importantly, we started fighting the sick and not the sickness. In the midst of all this there were a few responsible people and journalist who were in the pursuit of only spreading the truth, helping us through these unprecedented times. Amidst all the confusion, they helped spread awareness about the pandemic, even to the illiterate, clarifying people's doubts by explaining the government rules to us, making us understand the entire procedure and shift from pre-pandemic India to the various stages of lockdown and now finally, guiding us into the unlock phases. Media as a whole including social media also elucidated the genesis of the virus, how it spreads and how it mutates, by way of getting expert's advice from highly merited doctors. It has also spread hope through inspiring stories from both sides of the spectrum- from experience of the frontline medical aid workers to experience of recovered patients, spreading the much needed positivity in this dark hour.

Irrespective of it's previous ups and downs, Mass Media now serves as a peep hole for both the citizens and the Government authority, making both ends meet.