

# A Review on the Rural Societal Trends towards Social Media during Covid-19 Pandemic in India

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## Abstract

Trend towards changes is an old phenomenon. Societal trends basically related to the course of development of civilization based on the environmental situation. The outbreak of covid-19 has brought about severe changes in the normal way of life. Due to this sudden attack, the rural people of India suffered a lot. It has spread its dark shadow over the every activity of human society but at the same time, it has created an opportunity towards digital transformation in India. It is very significant to learn that during the rule of pandemic covid-19, even the jobless family or the families from below poverty line are accessing social media with costly smart phones for interaction. This trend is growing rapidly among the rural people and the numbers of internet users are increasing day by day in comparison with the pre-pandemic era. Right from the children to the old aged persons including women and girls are quite at ease with mobile smart phone having internet connectivity. In fact, rural society of India is experiencing a new way of life with online interaction by accessing the electronic media. Gradually, it becomes a societal trend towards the digital systemisation of India. This paper deals with the growing tendency of the rural people towards digital system during this time; the root causes for such trend towards social changes and its positive and negative impact on the society.

**Keywords:** Society, Rural, People, Media, Phone

## Introduction

Social media play a very important role not only as a communicative agency for sharing news, views, knowledge etc. among ourselves, but also is a constructive agency of public debate towards developing the policies in different wings of the administration. During pandemic covid-19 media contributed a lot of positive role regarding health awareness etc. As the covid-19 kept us within the four walls throughout the 2020, the people had nothing but to get involved in social media to get in touch with the outer world. The rural mass showed not much interest in social media before the outbreak of the covid-19. Different social electronic media such as Facebook WhatsApp Twitter Instagram has emerged as the communicative tool and have become much more popular in recent times. Even the mass rural people have become efficient in operating the internet system in mobile phone, laptop etc.

## Pandemic covid-19 and the Rural India

With the advent of covid-19, the people were bound to avoid social gatherings and maintained physical distance. Covid pandemic forced the people to keep within four walls. There was no chance to go outside. Thereby the people are getting more involved in social media to get in touch with the outer world. By using mobile phone laptop with internet connectivity, the rural people are trying to search various information such as medical information, social support by using social media platforms. During pandemic the rural India is experiencing a severe threat towards its economy and livelihood. At the same time, the social interaction has also been disrupted. The monotony within home has been annoying the mental and social structure of the people. Thereby the e-media has become the source of entertainment as well as the source of sharing knowledge with the outer world.

## Pandemic and the Media

This current situation turned the mass eyes towards social media which was only the gateway to get rid of such monotony to being a home-

Prisoner, So, the social media took the advantages of this situation. The rural people lost their jobs and finding no way of passing time, they opened an account of Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter etc. The students had to carry on their studies on online digital platforms. Knowledge, news, views are being shared through online platform services such as Google meet, WebEx, Zoom. Facebook, WhatsApp Telegram, Twitter, Instagram etc. All these have brought about a dramatic change especially on the rural people of India which has caused a sudden societal trend towards digital environment.

#### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To understand the societal trends towards social media during Covid pandemic.
2. To find out the root cause for such trends
3. The Positive impact of it on society.

The negative aspects of such trend

#### **Methodology**

1. Information and data are collected from different journals, books and reports from websites
2. Governments order regarding covid-19
3. Interaction with the people over phone, mail, other social media.

#### **Rural People and the Social Media**

Social media is termed as the media related to society. Through the electronic media interaction is being done within the society. A maximum percentage of people in India are living in rural areas but unfortunately, different parts of the rural areas are out of reach of the digital benefit due to lack of internet connectivity. The network providers sometimes show less interest in providing network facilities in the rural areas. Still there have been a digital trend in rural areas and the number of internet users has increased over the years across India. During pandemic situation, the numbers of internet users have been increased significantly.

Since the outbreak of Corona virus, during lockdown period the rural mass got more involved in using mobile phone or laptop with internet connectivity to reach the outer world. As the Covid rule compelled the people to stay at home, the rural people showed more interest on using internet for interaction with friends, relatives via online video mode. The students used the smart phone for the continuation of the studies. Gradually the social media like Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Instagram etc. have become much more popular in due course after March 2020 and become significant tools for communication in relation to all spheres of life. Social media provide opportunities to hundreds of millions of users to keep updated and informed about medical information through post, comments, videos, pictures and others in everyday routine.

#### **Lockdown and the Rural Economy**

Covid-19 pandemic has brought about a great change in economy in India. People having lost their jobs have been struggling for the livelihood. As a result, to suppress the psychological pressure the people dive into the digital social media.

It is very important to know that the rural people of India though in deep trouble in economic crisis, they somehow managed to have a smart phone

or TV for laptop. Even the marginalized poor people are not out of having a mobile phone. Though the cost of using internet from different network providers is not so cheap, the rural people are also using so with having dire financial straits.

During lockdown, educational institutions have been closed since March 2020 the students have to continue their studies on online digital mode. The students use it for gaining knowledge. The teachers, researchers are also participating in different online platforms to share knowledge. All these are the root causes for rapid growth of usage of internet.

#### **Trend towards using Social Media**

Covid-19 pandemic suspended the normal way of life of the people. The working groups have been compelled to have remained with a low earning. Many of them have lost their jobs. The migrants have returned home by giving up the jobs. The poor has become tremendously sufferer from economic scarcity. The people on daily wages suffered most due to the sudden suspension of their earnings. But the growing need for communication, even the poor family has to buy a smart phone to stay updated with news and current events. It is also needed to spare time out of the monotonous life. Needless to say, the students have only the way to continue the studies on online platforms with internet. The family members are getting bored day after day which leads them to find funny or entertaining content. This situation has become the prominent factor in increasing the use of mobile phones and other tools. This has become a trend towards the internet access into social media.

#### **Social Impact of the growing Social Media in Rural India**

Basically during 2020 lockdown period and thereafter the rural people have increased the using of mobile phone, connected with internet, not only for entertainment but also for general information of the update report and accurate knowledge of the disease from different sources such as WHO, governments. No doubt it helped a lot to increase awareness regarding health structure and provide evidence based information to fight the rumours spreading through media. But sometimes, the media misled the society with wrong information and the people followed accordingly. The fast spreading of the fake news created more anxiety and depression. Sometimes the news delivered in such a way that no persons could be left out from the grip of the disease. It generated a tension among the people in the society.

The excessive involvement in social media sometimes is responsible for causing conflict among the family members leading to domestic violence. The day-long chatting with the outside world sometimes led to an unwanted situation. Behavioural attitude are getting changed among the families. Rural people especially women become the victim during online activities such as financial transaction etc. Young girls fall into trap by using social media. Cyber crimes are increased.

**Conclusion**

Due to pandemic covid-19 situation, the rural society of India suffered a lot. The cost of using internet created a financial pressure for maintaining the livelihood of the poor people. The cyber crimes are taken place. Still, societal trend to use internet among the rural people has become prominent. Significantly it is seen that even the poor family with less earning is having the smartphones with them and they are using it with the high cost internet. This habit may create another problem at the time of the new normal situation. It may be a boon to the rural people to deal with the digital online system. The rural students make get benefit with the blended system of education though social media. This may lead the society towards the digital system.

**Suggestions**

1. Government should enforce the strict rules to stop cyber crimes.
2. Internet facilities should be given to the rural areas which are still out of reach.
3. Network providers should be encouraged to setup system with low cost internet facilities.

4. Training programs should be arranged in the rural areas to make the people learn the use of internet at present in India.
5. The permanent awareness programs should be taken up for the interior rural people towards the digital system.

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