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## Role Of social media and Government During the Pandemic

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### **Abstract-**

*COVID-19 is a pandemic that has hit the entire world when no one anticipated it. When the disease was first identified in late 2019, it was considered to be existent in only one country. Soon after, the disease was all around the world and the second wave of Covid is terrifying the universe. Historically, crisis and disaster communications have heavily relied on mass media. However, research has well documented how social media now plays a critical role in disaster communication, specifically by breaking the traditional dynamics between sender and receiver and enabling real time peer-to-peer information exchanges. The Governance GP is providing a stream of work in support of institutional reforms for a successful response to COVID-19. This includes the creation of database of country actions, two umbrella papers, and a series of subsidiary papers*

*on various aspects of the response (e.g., treasury management; anti-corruption measures).*

**Keywords:** *Covid, communicate, Social media, Pandemic etc.*

## **INTRODUCTION-**

***COVID-19 also reveals the positive social role of social media and the way it has become increasingly central to the public dissemination and discussion of vital information about the pandemic.***

COVID-19 is a pandemic that has hit the entire world when no one anticipated it. When the disease was first identified in late 2019, it was considered to be existent in only one country. Soon after, the disease was all around the world and the second wave of Covid is terrifying the universe. Social media has always been applauded and criticized for various reasons, but the fact is that we cannot communicate with each other effectively without social media today. During a pandemic like COVID, the social media platforms play a vital role than the normal days.

## **ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGICAL TOOLS FOR EDUCATING PROVISION**

Information technology has significantly affected multiple aspects of human lives in recent times; however, technology has played an indispensable role in education provision at levels, including primary, secondary, and higher education worldwide. The use of educational technology has gained popularity increasingly in the education industry. There was tremendous global growth in education provision at all levels during the last few decades. However, the spread of the COVID-19 has developed a big challenge for national education systems in providing education. Governments in numerous countries have ordered educational institutions to suspend face-to-face academic learning, instruction for their students until the global situation gets better and the corona virus spread comes under control. This

emergency compelled universities and educational institutes to switch their education mode overnight, and educational institutes adopted online teaching and virtual learning through technology usage. However, learning and teaching mode by using virtual technology is not a new phenomenon for education provision. During the last decades, several educational institutes have incorporated the face-to-face method of teaching. In the COVID-19 health crisis, other assessment options help use online training through educational technology have to consider problems in unique educational settings to tackle the health emergency. Educational institutions adopted the required online education provision features and continued delivering online teaching and learning.

- **SOCIAL MEDIA AND PARTICIPATORY NEWS CONSUMPTION**

Historically, crisis and disaster communications have heavily relied on mass media. However, research has well documented how social media now plays a critical role in disaster communication, specifically by breaking the traditional dynamics between sender and receiver and enabling real time peer-to-peer information exchanges. This in turn allows communities to self-organize and respond to local issues. For example, increased community resilience and organization was captured in social media communication during the aftermath of hurricane Sandy, as citizen journalism and user generated content provided a detailed roadmap for those responding to the crisis.

- **SOCIAL MEDIA AND GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY**

As governments around the world failed to contain COVID-19, social media has also served as a medium to voice criticism of governments. For

example, many videos and social posts have emerged from the epicentre of the virus spread area in China with hash tags such as *#IWantFreedomOfSpeech*; the entire world has criticised president Trump's interpretation of the current downturn saying *#TrumpLiesAboutCoronavirus*, while people in the UK questioned the conservative government's initial passive response to the crisis asking *#WhereisBoris*. As public gatherings and normal government processes have been suspended, such hashtags have provided a semblance of public accountability.

- **SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNITIES AND INFLUENCERS**

A sense of community leadership has also prevailed on social media as users emphasised the importance of *#social distancing* and *#stay home* messages as an important part of crisis recovery plans. Our previous studies on swine flu, Ebola and the Zika Virus show similar patterns in social awareness, as humour is used to ensure fast dissemination and easy comprehension of critical messages in ways that traditional authoritative sources of information struggle to do. Our research on the 5G and COVID-19 conspiracy theory also found that social media influencers play an important role in countering misinformation.

- **THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA DURING A PANDEMIC**

During COVID-19, the world discovered that social media is a great way for individuals and communities to stay connected even while physically separated.

With the advent of social media in the 21st century, not only are we learning the latest news updates, but we're also using platforms like Face book and Twitter to

provide personal and business updates. For businesses, this means leveraging social media to support employees and customers like never before. For the government, it means doing its best to efficiently share factual and up-to-date information.

## **HERE ARE FOUR PRIMARY ROLES OF SOCIAL MEDIA DURING A PANDEMIC:**

### **A SOURCE OF INFORMATION (AND MISINFORMATION)**

COVID-19 marked the first global pandemic in the age of social media. Governments and brands used social media to provide people with a better understanding of events and their impacts. Unfortunately, some people used social media to spread falsehoods, including miracle preventative measures, false claims about the implementation of martial law, conspiracy theories, and more.

At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, people were grappling for as much information as possible and the public became more susceptible to false and sometimes hazardous claims, which were then passed on to others. According to a PEW Research Center report that came out near the beginning of America's lockdown, about half of Americans said they've seen made-up news about COVID-19.

Distinguishing between trustworthy and untrustworthy sources on social media became more important than ever

During a pandemic, the best rule of thumb for making sure information on social media is accurate is to check original sources and make sure that (a) those sources are indeed trustworthy, and (b) the information was relayed accurately. Just because someone claims to have learned something from a reliable source doesn't mean they're relaying that information accurately.

### **AN INFLUENCE ON PUBLIC RESPONSE TO THE OUTBREAK**

Billions of people are free to publicly share their opinions regarding a pandemic through various social media platforms. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we saw

individuals, organizations, and businesses use social media to spread awareness of the virus, as well as the public actions that can be taken.

Here are a few of the most distinct ways social media influenced the public throughout the COVID-19 pandemic:

#### **SOCIAL DISTANCING AND HOME QUARANTINE BECAME TRENDS**

Until COVID-19, 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. Soon after the world went into lockdown, social media users, from friends and family to celebrities and governments called for social distancing and encouraged people to stay strong during their home quarantines. One of the benefits of social media during a pandemic is that it enables this type of helpful and supportive information to easily be shared to a wide audience.

#### **PEOPLE BOASTED AND SHAMED PANIC BUYING**

At the start of the lockdown, many people excessively purchased household goods, sanitization products, and food in fear that necessities would no longer be accessible — just like they do when there is a hurricane or some other natural disaster. This over-purchasing became so commonplace that social media users coined a phrase to describe it: panic buying.

#### **A MARKETING PLATFORM**

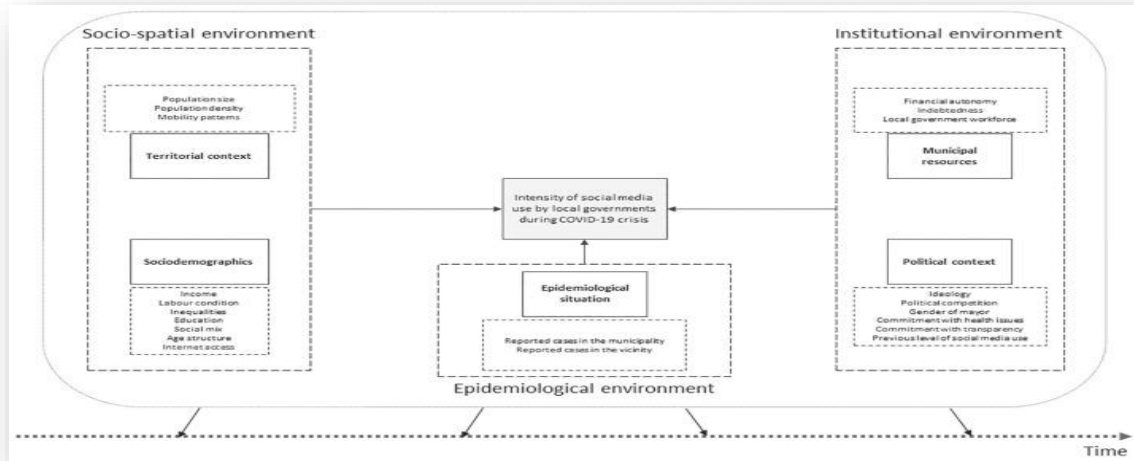
The COVID-19 outbreak presented a defining moment for many brands in how they chose to market their product.

Some people took advantage of the fear during the pandemic by selling snake oil-type products (think essential oils claiming to provide immunity). We also saw businesses pay extra attention to emerging trends, such as the increased search volume for things like face masks and hand sanitizer.

#### **A POWERFUL WAY TO BRING POSITIVITY TO A SCARY TIME**

No platform is perfect. But while we saw misinformation and fear on social media, there was also an abundance of lifesaving information, connection with others, and

global unity. Social media gave us the ability to share experiences with family and friends to help combat both literal and emotional isolation while also reminding us that we're all in this together.



## ROLE OF GOVERNMENT-

### GOVERNANCE & INSTITUTIONS COVID-19 RESPONSE RESOURCES

The Governance GP is providing a stream of work in support of institutional reforms for a successful response to COVID-19. This includes the creation of database of country actions, two umbrella papers, and a series of subsidiary papers on various aspects of the response (e.g. treasury management; anti-corruption measures). These are getting posted as they become available.

### GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES IN COVID-19 VACCINATION

Success in the roll out of the Corona virus (COVID-19) vaccination program requires that large numbers of people get the vaccine, quickly, equitably, and effectively. Importantly, this involves both the willing participation of the population and well-functioning government administration of the program. In this environment, the overall government vaccine program efficiency and effectiveness will depend on citizens' trust in the vaccine efficacy as well as in government's approach to vaccination. The purpose of this note is to summarize some of the key governance and institutional issues surrounding rapid universal vaccination.

## GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONS EMERGENCY MEASURES FOR STATE CONTINUITY DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

This policy note from the Governance GP identifies emergency measures for public sector continuity at national and sub national levels of government during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. The note focuses on institutional and governance measures the central government can take that will make possible and complement initiatives in sectors, agencies and lower levels of government. The focus of the note is not on specific policy responses such as approaches to testing, quarantining or fiscal stimulus, but on actions that can be taken by adjusting institutions and governance arrangements in support of such policies.

### AGILE TREASURY OPERATIONS DURING COVID-19

Agile treasury operations are critical and essential to support responses to the spread and treatment of corona virus disease 2019 (COVID-19). In many cases, this approach requires open and new ways of thinking ranging from making cash available to pay for public services, to processing and disbursing payments with minimum bureaucratic layers, to reporting in a timely and accurate manner to ensure transparency. Organized around three core areas of treasury operations, this note provides suggestions and guidance in three action areas: Ensure business continuity for treasury operations. Operationalize emergency arrangements. Manage the post-pandemic environment – recovery, reconstruction, and resilience.

### ENSURING INTEGRITY IN GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Governments around the world are designing and implementing rapid responses to the COVID-19 (corona virus) pandemic. In this effort, they are faced with three extraordinary challenges:

- (1) A public health emergency to contain the virus including identifying and treating infected populations;
- (2) Widespread food and livelihood insecurity due to mandated stoppage of economic activity and the resulting disruption of food supplies; and



(3) Adoption of emergency powers to address the crises and maintain public safety. Corruption risks, present in government responses to all these challenges and heightened by the scale and speed of the emergency, undermine the effectiveness of responses. The note identifies the broad areas of government response where corruption risks are present and heightened in the context of a pandemic emergency, describes the types of risks that are likely to arise, and provides recommendations for addressing and mitigating them.

### COVID-19 ROLE OF SUPREME AUDIT INSTITUTIONS (SAIS) IN GOVERNMENTS' RESPONSE TO COVID-19: EMERGENCY AND POST EMERGENCY PHASES

Corona virus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is an unprecedented public health emergency, with associated significant economic impact, affecting all developing and developed countries. As it unfolds and countries respond, the role of Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) is being recognized as crucial to supporting the government response mechanisms through maintaining public financial management discipline and ensuring transparency and accountability. Past experience from SAIs' engagement in government responses to natural and human-made disasters, including health emergencies like Ebola, provides good lessons for SAIs confronted with the COVID-19 pandemic. This note seeks to propose ideas on how SAIs can respond to the crisis now and during the recovery phase. During the emergency stage, the primary focus of governments is on safeguarding livelihoods and public health. Auditors are themselves constrained both by their physical access limitations and the imperative to avoid impeding government's speedy responses to the pandemic. Under these circumstances, crucial oversight and key controls may suffer, especially as public financial management systems are adapted to be responsive and flexible.

### ENSURING STATE CONTINUITY DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

In this blog post, Ed Olowo-Okere, Director of the Governance GP, highlights that the COVID-19 pandemic calls for effective, inclusive, and accountable governments. To drive the response, governments will need to be fast, creative, flexible, effective, transparent and accountable.

#### COVID-19 CHALLENGES AND RESPONSE: HOW PROCUREMENT UNDERPINS THE WORLD BANK'S RESPONSE TO THE PANDEMIC

Vinay Sharma, Global Director of Solutions and Innovations in Procurement, Governance GP, write how the World Bank's procurement practice is adapting and responding to the global demand for goods and services to combat COVID-19.

#### COMING TOGETHER WHILE STAYING APART: FACILITATING COLLECTIVE ACTION THROUGH TRUST AND SOCIAL CONNECTION IN THE AGE OF COVID-19

Facing the COVID-19 pandemic requires an unprecedented degree of cooperation between governments and citizens and across all facets of society to implement spatial distancing and other policy measures. This paper proposes to think about handling the pandemic as a collective action problem that can be alleviated by policies that foster trust and social connection. Policy and institutional recommendations are presented according to a three-layered pandemic response generally corresponding to short-, medium-, and long-term needs. This paper focuses on building connection and cooperation as means to bring about better health and socioeconomic outcomes. Many factors outside the paper's scope, such as health policy choices, will greatly affect the outcomes. As such, the paper explores the role of trust, communication, and collaboration conditional on sound health and economic policy choices.

#### MANAGING THE PUBLIC SECTOR WAGE BILL DURING COVID-19

The Corona virus 2019 (COVID-19) crisis is unique and requires tough policy choices for managing the public sector wage bill to best achieve the difficult balance between fiscal consolidation, protection of lives and livelihoods, service delivery, and job restoration. In the emergency phase, the priority should be on protecting

lives and livelihoods. Short-term measures will likely increase the wage bill. As a result, in the recovery and resilience phase, priority must be given to fiscal consolidation, the reduction of labor market distortions that may hurt private sector job creation, and an increase in the productivity of the public sector so that more outputs are produced per worker. To these ends, the note provides suggestions that countries can adapt based on their circumstances.

#### DRIVING THE COVID-19 RESPONSE FROM THE CENTER: INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS TO ENSURE WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT COORDINATION

Facing the COVID-19 (corona virus) pandemic, governments around the world have set up various coordination mechanisms at the center of government (COG) to facilitate pandemic response. The broader COG literature provides some important lessons for the coordination during COVID-19 pandemic. This working paper is part of the Governance and Institutions COVID-19 Rapid Response series spearheaded by the Governance Global Practice, World Bank. The paper presents initial thinking and uses immediately available data, as it aims to document the emerging knowledge, provide the grounds for just-in-time policy and institutional advice to governments, and suggest avenues for further research.

#### BUILDING SOE CRISIS MANAGEMENT AND RESILIENCE: EMERGING PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED DURING THE COVID-19

The World Bank's Governance Global Practice prepared a note on *Building SOE Crisis Management and Resilience: Emerging Practices and Lessons Learned during the COVID-19*. Addressed to central governments and the management of individual SOEs, this Note examines the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic for the public sector and provides guidance on how governments and SOEs could use these lessons to build or strengthen their crisis response systems. Suggested measures involve calibrating risks and introducing proper risk management systems, ensuring business continuity and resilience in emergency situations, as well as

supporting the ability of public enterprises to bounce back in the post-crisis environment.

## CONCLUSION-

Social media is an information vacuum; it spreads both knowledge and information at an exponential rate, in turn creating opportunities for exaggeration, scapegoating, rumour, social vigilantism and xenophobia. The instantaneous nature of these platforms combined with the dark art of algorithmic manipulation and simple bad faith, can ultimately have undesirable consequences. Concerns around social media therefore become heightened in times of crisis, when public understanding and co-operation are at the heart of disaster management response strategies. However, despite this negative press, COVID-19 also reveals the positive *social* role of social media and the way it has become increasingly central to the public dissemination and discussion of vital information about the pandemic.

Governments around the world are designing and implementing rapid responses to the COVID-19 (corona virus) pandemic. In this effort, they are faced with three extraordinary challenges:

- (1) A public health emergency to contain the virus including identifying and treating infected populations;
- (2) Widespread food and livelihood insecurity due to mandated stoppage of economic activity and the resulting disruption of food supplies; and
- (3) Adoption of emergency powers to address the crises and maintain public safety.

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