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Battling the pandemic by solving the myths of virtual world

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A B S T R A C T

The entire world has gotten caught and is now furious that the deadly corona virus is out. All and every person’s life across the globe has stopped. It took millions of lives already. The government of most countries agreed to follow the full lock-down of human activities due to its propensity to a high spread frequency. Therefore, this work of mine would be a accentuating the affectivity of the Aarogya Setu application in spreading realization amongst the masses that self-care in this situation of emergence is the only way not only of saving one’s own life but also of others. It would also effectively highlight that though, the use of virtual platform has benefitted all but its improper utilization can create loads of misunderstanding, confusion and can give rise to some devastating situation.

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1. Introduction

In a very early phase of the Pandemic, the Government of India took an effort to create a mobile application and spread awareness through many social media channels in order to monitor and provide best health advice related to Covid-19. The mobile application that any person in the country can easily install and then use all the responses you need to answer your questions about Covid-19. The GPS and Bluetooth device are used to detect infections of Covid-19 in and around the person installing the software. Another key feature of the Aarogya Setu app is its name. Etymologically, the word “arogya” means the Bridge or Connection to free an individual from the Network of Diseases. However, as the country has an enormous population, the problem gets worse. The number of people affected by this crisis continues to rise by slowdowns and limits. Therefore, monitoring the growing number of Corona virus cases is both a real challenge for government and medical experts. On the one side, we have a large part of the population, which consists mainly of people who make a living from agro-based employment or are employed on a daily basis. It is at this juncture that we have a great responsibility to create knowledge among the masses.

In the one side, however, there was considerable assistance in the availability of social media. On the other hand, the fast accessibility of smartphones and the overuse of social media caused problems of various dimensions [1]. Cases occurred when people exploited social websites and spread false information. Promoting fake news will always create feelings of fear and uncertainty among people at any point. Social media are also used as a means for disconnecting unity and creating a social conflict scenario in society. When we discuss the positive aspects of the virtual framework, we find that Aragya Setu is now available in 11 different languages and has enabled many people to use this application without having to face any difficulties. However, the growing number of people infected every day also created a catastrophic situation in which everyone received the same health benefit. In order to address this vast epidemic the current number of hospitals and medical facilities has begun to fade. Therefore, Aragya’s Setu app has been made available on a mobile telephone to provide immediate measures, helped by an individual at any time. It is an excellent relief not only for people who may be positively tested with Covid-19, it also continually works to provide ordinary people with proper advice as to what precautionary aids to minimize risks of infection should be taken. During experiments carried out to determine the trend of the human virus it has been found that it mostly affects the younger and the older people. This is why, it can be concluded,
and these two ages are the most fragile. They usually have low immune levels in the body needed to resist the disease that causes the virus to spread the infection. With the app’s mounting on its telephone, however, it has helped many people at least at a preliminary level take care of their young and old family members [2].

2. An enquiry to the vicious situation of the media engendering the societal structure

The infectious disease of Covid-19 did spread like a forest fire, engulfing one and all. The thing which flared up the situation more was the use of media facility to create communal disturbance and conflicts between groups. As human being is a social animal, therefore the need to socialize, crossing all the barriers of physical and social distance, has given birth to the system of making platforms where individuals can get associated with others in a virtual form. But, due to observance of complete lockdown, people have started getting bored and anxious. Taking advantage of this situation, the internet has become the new way to create differences among groups of people in the society. They try to influence the thought process and thereby acting as a catalyst to reduce the trust of the citizens in the performance of the government. The thing which was invented to facilitate opportunities to humans was gradually turned into a weapon to degrade their own existence. In the successive years, the incidents of circulating fake news about a particular issue has attained a great speed [3]. They have caused the citizens of a country in losing their faith and have raised numerous questions in their minds, related to reliability on the media personalities and broadcasting companies. The wide usage of internet as a source of obtaining information is shutting down the business of print media. New findings in the field of technology has enabled the scammers to fabricate news content which would dupe the viewers to believe in their created false content. Such misleading sources are generally known as “deep fakes” [4]. When the circumstances are already engulfed in the gloomy atmosphere of uncertainties, then it leaves the people paranoid about the present scenario and also about their future. It is at this point of time, when the frauds makes use of this weak situation in order to meet their selfish motives. People start viewing news with a suspicious eye, when they come across false newflash anywhere else in the social media. The whole set of authenticated report and the hard work of the team comes at a stake, when they face challenges of such false reports. Similarly, when everyone is busy figuring out how to save the life of themselves and their closed ones from the claws of this life threatening disease, it is then some people resort to unethical means in order to spread terror. As the use of various social media and internet have increased to a large extend, therefore, these unscrupulous people target the social sites as an effective and a fast reaching way to reach all [5]. In order to tackle with such fraudulent activities strictly the important organizations like WHO or World Health Organizations and the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention have adopted special measures by creating true information on web, where the false claims like consumption of liquor or exposure to increase temperatures can cure people of Covid-19, are discarded. Once the outbreak of any fake news occurs and people comes to know about it, then at that juncture, it becomes difficult to convince any person about the genuineness of such news. Even a well, clear and verified news comes under the periphery doubt. The knock of fake news doesn’t stop to only misleading people but it still continues to blur the understanding capability of the individuals in distinguishing between right and wrong. They misinterpret the correct information and conceive the fictitious elements to be real. The difference amidst “ingroup” and “outgroup” in virtual platforms depends on the techniques the scammers adopt in spreading rumor about any particular topic, chiefly when the subject of the rumor created is related with any political, volatile and conflicting issues. The situation of emergency has presented many new disputes infront of the government [3]. Lockdown observed in various parts of the world has affected the worldwide demand and supply linkage, thereby creating employment scarcity, crashing of stock markets and millions to lose their jobs. Such conditions is gradually pushing the future of the young generations to the dead ends. The upheaval caused due to the spread of Covid-19 has cropped up questions about the unpreparedness of the countries to face such huge calamity. There is no doubt remaining to analyze that this epidemic has created a deep crater in the economic situations of many countries. As a result of this, the circumstance of emergency is affecting not only the population presently but it will keep haunting generations to come. Previously, in the United States similar other instances had occurred which also followed the same trend. For example, 9/11 hike in the price of oil, the supply instability in the year of 1970 s, the Great Depression and the invasion on the Pearl Harbour in the year 1941 of December [6]. In the year 1990 s, the philosopher called Robert Grudin, had forwarded an explanation as to why the nations fail to effectively handle these unforeseen situations most of the times. He had come up with the answer that the countries often remain incapable in combating such situations, not because they lack multitudinous information that they need but it is due to their shortcomings in carefully analyzing those available information [7]. History holds evidences that a long list of epemics had happened over the centuries. Starting with the Bubonic Plague or the “Black Death” which appeared in China in the year 1855 and then gradually effecting the world by causing pandemics three times. Secondly, the world was afflicted with the epidemic disease called Cholera. The first instance of Cholera was found in Africa, in the year 1961. It was consequently followed by other epidemics like Malaria, Smallpox, Tuberculosis or “White Plague”, Influenza and HIV/ Aids. As per an American cultural critic called, Virginia Heffernan, epidemics are an part of unavoidable truth and the tenet of Plague compositions, contains the saga of the ruthless and unconquerable rule or quality of the universe Therefore, it can be inferred that the pandemics which had afflicted and harmed the inhabitants presently, leading to huge disruption in the life style of the individuals, can again pause off the normal flow of life in future. It might again give rise to some more new challenges to the human race. We need to be prepared to face any such shortcomings with great power and strength from within [8].

3. Statistical interpretations representing How the dissemination of fake reports has affected the society each time

Figure 1 shows How the Spread of False News Increased in Four Months(January 2020- April 2020). It was accentuated by a group of medical experts, authorities from the Revenue Department and other voluntary candidates from the health team that the family members of a person who was sixty five years of age, expired due to Covid-19 contamination, were targeted at various places like Indore and Madhya Pradesh on 2nd of April 2020. This whole incidence took place due to the spread of a false video [9]. The video depicted that physically fit persons belonging to Muslim community were captured and given shots of the Corona virus. The propagation of such videos created panic in the people all around. Moreover, it was also studied and highlighted by the researchers from the Michigan University that on 18th of April 2020 and also after just the two days observation of complete lock-
down was made, there were wrong news of Covid-19 contamination. The research was conducted with the aid of Tattle Civic Technology (A news project from Delhi which works towards making correct and true news available to mobile-first users.) who collected 243 special cases of fake news circulation in their archive. The archive includes all the fake news contents that has been put on hold by 6 fact checkers like Alt News, BOOM live, Faculty, India Today Fact Check, Quint Webqoof and News Mobile. Fact Checker which are certified by International Fact-Checkers (IFCN) in the midst of 23rd January 2020 12th April 2020 came up with this information [10].

Table 1 shows the types of distorted information shared by the diverse sectors of the Society (Source: Study on Misinformation; 18 April 2020). According to the studies conducted to find the rate of spreading false news, it was found to the utter surprise that India is slowly heading towards a circle of deception that will directly attack the sentiments [11]. In this process, the importance of receiving authenticated news is getting neglected. In this period of acute crisis, the circulation of fake curative ideas and pictorial depictions of pain, give rise to false hopes in the minds of sufferer and other individuals who want to save themselves from such painful occurrences. Moreover, the passage of fake pictorial depictions, which even if create suspicion in the minds of the viewers but in the long run, they fail to establish such speculations as they are deeply rooted with the culture of a country. Amongst the reasons cited for creating such skeptical environment causing friction in between individuals and communities are, it might be simply a mischievous action of someone, or a try to make any content politically disturbing [12-14]. As per Joyojeet Pal, who is one of the writer in this survey, effectively pointed out that, there are some people who like watching false news. So by creating such contents and then forwarding them accordingly, makes them viral. Another group includes those who want to pass on a specific political ideas amongst all. There are also people who performs such deeds to have monetary benefits depending on the maximum amount of views collected. For example, in YouTube, a person can earn money when more number of people watch that shared content. The contents which deals with more forbidden ideas are likely to attain more attention, views and likes. According to Jatin Gandhi, who is a fact- checking trainer and journalism educator, mentions that [15], as now people have more leisure time, therefore they get drawn towards fake news. An atmosphere of epidemic and anxiety is originated all around, which in turn, creates the favorable ground for such group to form distorted contents that later on, thrive and extend their roots to the minds of the people successfully. It is also used as a way to deviate people from actual situations.

4. Graph representing the Agents Accountable for circulation of false contents

Figure 2 shows Agents Accountable for Circulation of False Contents. The whole concept of spreading fake news got so intense and serious that Chief Executive Officer of Facebook, Mark Zuckerberg took active regulatory steps in order to check the proliferate comments or messages containing violent content (Fake News; Who’s Responsible for Fighting Fake News Online? Felix Richter (Data Journalist); April 2019) [16-18].

5. When confused aura begets deep repercussions

While the government is busy controlling the degrading health conditions all over the country, the terrorists find this as an oppor-

| Types of Misinformation | Instances | Definition |
|-------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Culture                 | 62        | Messages with cultural references such as to a religious/ ethnic/ social group or a popular culture reference |
| Cure, Prevention & Treatment | 37       | Messages suggesting remedies (alternative or mainstream), preventive measures and vaccines-related misinformation |
| Nature & the Environment | 16        | Messages that have references to animals and the environment |
| Casualty                | 36        | Messages relating to deaths, illness of people in the pandemic, including graphic images of suffering (not including doctored statistics) |
| Business and economy    | 15        | Messages relating to scams, panic-buying and target businesses with fake positive cases |
| Government              | 54        | Messages have government announcements and advisories or refer to police, judiciary, political parties |
| Doctored Statistics     | 23        | Messages that have exaggerated numbers of positive cases or death counts and fake advisories |
tune time to afflict the society with its acts of violence. It has been marked that just like those malicious software Duqu, making use of Zero-Day risk, had done disastrous effects on computer systems and on the internet facility, in the same manner, the Covid-19 has affected the various sectors of the economy, thus hampering the growth and development of the country. The term Zero-Day use is a known and a widely accepted term in the digital world [19]. The threats of Zero-day generally affects the computer systems and their security set up but it makes difficult for anyone to either trace its movement or safeguard the computer from the inevitable damage. Free and easy access of important details to the scammers provides them the easy entry to ambush the prey while at the same time keeping the identity concealed. As an exemplar of such cyber abuse, it can be mentioned that, in the year 2014, Sony Entertainment and in 2017 Microsoft, were attacked by Trojan, known as Dridex\textsuperscript{2} or CVE –2016–2017\textsuperscript{3}. From such instances it can be well understood that if technological advances are misused or if not handled with utmost care, then it might prove to be the most dangerous harpoon ever discovered for endangering the whole human race. As the well - being of human, animals and plants is centered around the epidemic caused by Corona virus. The first case of Covid-19 emerged from the “wet market” of Wuhan city in China [20–22]. Also, more than sixty percent contagious diseases in human beings are carried from animals to humans and almost seventy five percent of new variety of diseases are found to be caused by being in contact with animals. The category of disease which are caused by animals has been grouped under one common head called “zoonotic”. According to some, total disappearance of the zoonotic factors from the Earth is not possible. Therefore, holding responsible any one part of the society is not proper in order to put a check on the further cause of diseases. There is a need for the parts of our community to unite for combating this crisis together [23,24]. Some of the big concerns like WHO or World Health Organization, the UN Food and Agricultural Organization and the World Organization for Animal Health, of the world have already started working jointly under the One Health proposition, enabling the doctors, laboratory expertise, specialists taking care of hygiene and sanitization, nurses, general scientists, vet doctors and other health experts to contribute effectively for this noble cause. These team of specialists and experts are working hard with all their might in order to find the exact causes behind such epidemics or even if such emergency arises in future, what would the steps to control its effect(WHO 2019).

The Fig. 3 shows how infectious disease is caused and transferred amongst a host and a causal agent. It also depicts how the other factors like genetic and biological, physical environmental, social, political, economic and ecological factors are actively engaged in such transfer (How a disease can occur) [25,26]. These categories mentioned above surrounds the whole constituents of the health world. The impact created by them modify the level of disease causing process in human beings, wild life and plants.

* Based on a survey of 1,203 U.S. adults conducted between May 21 and June 4, 2018
Sources: Gallup, Knight Foundation

\textsuperscript{*}Fig. 2. Agents accountable for circulation of false contents.

\textsuperscript{2}Fig. 3. How Disease can occur.
6. A resolution to March ahead towards creating a new life

The use of technology in remain informed and communicate information has attained a great speed. Information and Communication Technology or the ICT has become the part and parcel of everyone’s existence [27]. They are being used in order to keep a record of the energy consumption that is being by other applications. But, it has found that the information and communication technology is itself making use of a lot of energy [28]. The increased dependence on the technological advances have increased the level of energy consumption and it is gradually cause a rise in the cost of energy consumed. This situation has occurred due to more use of on-demand facilities, which in turn makes use of cloud architectures. Moreover, over-use of internet and broadband services have even more worsened the situation. Since all the systems have already become technology based, therefore it has now become the major concern of the internet service providers or ISP, that what steps should be taken in order to save the energy use. The telecommunication corporations like the Telecom Italia made use of more than two terawatt hours (TWh) in the year 2006, which is equal to the 1 percent of the whole Italian energy demand. This energy use increase by – 8% in comparison to 2005 and – 12% in the year of 2004 [29]. Similar increased energy use were revealed by Telecom France, British Telecom, by Verizon in the United States and by NTT in Japan. Other than these facts, it was found that the world’s data center consumed over 270 TWh in the year of 2012. It is also expected that they will make use of nineteen percent more amount of energy in the twelve months to come, than they have consumed in the previous year. The excessive use of internet services give rise to internet traffic. The internet traffic keeps increasing at a gap of every three years. But, no step has been taken to control the use of energy by these internet facilities. Therefore, as a way to combat the situational crisis we need to be conscious about our activities. We need to become eco-friendly in our ways so that we can limit the excessive pressure created on the natural resources can be stopped [30]. Becoming environmentally responsible will also enable us to control our greed and only take care of our needs. Eradication of being over-dependent on technological implements in order to enjoy a luxurious life, should be stopped. This in turn will prove to be beneficial in terminating the entry gates of the scammers to spread violent and fake contents all around. In this regard, governments in all over the world have started taking active initiative in accepting patent works which would ensure and promote green technologies. This steps adopted the countries will allow to propagate a clean and green society and would also help in reducing the hurdle the climate change and its consequences. (Building the Global Green Patent Highway: [31] A Proposal for International Harmonization of Green Technology Fast Track Programs. Emphasis has increased on the use of green technology. Advocating of green technology implies use of production methods that will be used in a different context or will reduce the use of harmful materials that will also degradation of the environment. As both the government of a country and the citizens are growing conscious about the need to protect the ecosystem and its inhabitants, therefore they have started relying more on the work strategy that will employ environmental methods. Therefore, time has arrived when we have to reform not only our early habitual thoughts of self-care but also take the environmental issues as a matter of importance and concern [32].

7. A culmination to concoct the predicament of interweb based Survival

The emergence of Corona virus and outspreading of the disease of Covid-19 has forced human beings to alter to their previous habits and ways of living life. The proverb “Survival of the fittest” has become the crux of the present times [33]. Man has to learn and develop his conscience in such a way so that he is able to differentiate between what is right and what is wrong. The government has generated guidelines and safety measures to its citizens lest they should they trapped in this game of chance. Though due to several setbacks in the health care facilities, people are having a tough time, still it would be a wise act for all to follow the directed instructions carefully. As prevention is always conceived better than cure, therefore it is necessary for all to follow the regulations only broadcasted on the authentic government websites and not get misguided by any false source of information [34,35].

8. Conclusion

The epidemic has already given a big jerk to the entire functioning of the world. It has perplexed everyone that what should their approach towards saving the occupants of this ecosystem. Therefore, as a responsible citizen of a country, a person should not only keep himself well-informed and follow the prescribed advises carefully but it would be a part of his duty to motivate others in following the right directions, advocated by the government of the country. The existence of human beings on this earth is self-explanatory that they are here for serving some valuable purpose. This notion of life aspires an individual to understand that his only being alive is not the prime intention to be fulfilled but he should work hard for doing something worthwhile. Having this sense in life also helps in growing a sense of brotherhood and unity with the other occupants of the Earth. Upholding such emotion of oneness, takes the form of a faith, which would be equal for all. While at a regular state, such faiths develops a sense of unison and have emphasis for the gift of live they have. At other strenuous times, this optimism act as a shield in saving them with a flush of hope, enabling them to restore back to the original status.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Viney Dhiman: Investigation, Writing - original draft. Mandeep Kaur: Conceptualization, Writing - review & editing. Supervision. V.P. Sriram: Formal analysis, Data curation. Anupama Bhardi: Conceptualization. Harikumar Pallathadka: Writing - review & editing. Namita: Writing - review & editing. Supervision.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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