



Use Of Mass Communication In Disaster Management

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Abstract

Informing the public of crucial details before, during, and after catastrophes, the media serves as an essential connection between the public or emergency organisations. The media contributes to the management of disasters through its role in disseminating information about disasters, alerting of hazards, information collection and dissemination, notification of government officials, relief organisations, and the public of specific needs, and facilitation of debates about disaster readiness and reaction for ongoing enhancement. Direct working partnerships between the media with disaster management organisations may aid the media in performing these functions. Interacting regularly with the media before to a crisis has been shown to improve the flow of information and set the stage for successful collaboration in the aftermath. 1 The media's role in disaster management and preparing the public to deal with emergencies was the focus of the 16th annual Press Day. The President of India opened a national seminar that was held at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi. The Hon'ble President, in his inauguration speech, emphasised the need of spreading awareness of disaster management's emphasis on preparation to all segments of society, with particular attention paid to the needs of the most defenceless members of society: women and children.

Keywords: Disaster, Satellite Radio, Mass Media & ICT.

Introduction

Information, thoughts, and ideas may be conveyed to both broad and niche audiences via the use of mass media. They play a crucial role in achieving public health objectives. However, effectively conveying health-related information through mass media presents a number of obstacles for experts in a variety of fields. If you don't know where you're going or why, you probably won't get there when using the media to promote public health, as stated by Liana Winett and Lawrence Wallack in their article for the Journal of Medical Communication (1996, p. 173). Social scientists and specialists agree that the suffering of humans caused by the disastrous effects of catastrophes may be greatly mitigated with a system of dedicated international collaboration. Public awareness and education, enhanced early warning systems, disaster preparation, and damage reduction are the focal points of this partnership. The goal of these actions is to reduce economic losses and increase public safety. Close examination reveals that communication is the key to achieving the aforementioned goals. The goal of these actions is to reduce economic losses and increase public safety. Close examination reveals that communication is the key to achieving the aforementioned goals.

The Role of Media in Disaster Management Types of Media : There are 2 prominent kind of mass-media which are print media and electronic media.

A. The Electronic Media

(i) The Radio: Due to its low cost and extensive availability, the radio has become the primary source of information during crisis management. Documentaries on disaster preparation, ads aimed at raising awareness, forums and interviews, radio plays, and call-in programmes may all reach a wider audience on radios since they are more widely accessible in homes, automobiles, schools, and workplaces. People of all socioeconomic backgrounds, even the dirt-poor in even the most out-of-the-way rural hamlets, have easy and direct access to information thanks to radio. In both the early warning and post-disaster recovery stages, satellite radios may be invaluable tools. One of its main benefits is that it may be used in places where conventional radio transmissions are impossible. When tragedy strikes and the transmission towers of the regular radio channels are destroyed, satellite radio might still be of use.

(ii) The Television : A rising number of nations are turning to television as a reliable source for catastrophe alerts because of the medium's widespread reach and effectiveness. The television's realistic mix of sight and sound offers a unique chance for spreading messages with enormous effect on the watching population.

(iii) The Print Media : THIS DAY'S PAPER The newspaper represents one of the oldest forms of reliable mass media. It's useful for both early alerts and recovery communications. The good news is that the newspaper has a huge readership and can be made reach even the most inaccessible locations by using the use of helicopters.

(iv) Other Printed Material : Whether it be contractors/builders, academics, or farmers, magazines and publications cater to their respective communities. Therefore, it is an efficient means of disseminating timely and relevant catastrophe information to particular groups.

(v) The Media Play a Special Role in Disaster Management : When it comes to emergency preparedness, the media is essential. The use of satellite images has greatly increased the influence of the media by allowing for the rapid dissemination of information throughout the world. Reporters on Disaster Management: An Introduction to Shaping International Opinion. The media gives great awareness for disaster-related problems and may improve the process of dealing with disasters in the following ways since catastrophes are a large source of news and catch the attention of people globally. MORE LOBBYING Through constant coverage, the media may raise awareness of problems affecting marginalised communities and groups (such as seniors and the handicapped) and encourage national authorities to be more attentive to their needs. The media's ability to put pressure on government authorities to address issues in underserved communities is a powerful tool. The media has the power to persuade the government to prioritise catastrophe risk problems, protecting the public from "self-serving" political interests. For instance, the media may expose wasteful spending on relocating people from vulnerable areas prior to a general election in order to secure votes, while the restocking of relief supplies in the overall warehouse for shipping in the event of a disaster receives little to no attention. Such vulnerability allows for a more

measured and well-considered approach to prioritising catastrophe risk problems.

Positive Effects Of The Media

- a) The media is often the first to label an incident as a catastrophe. They spread the word, which raises people's consciousness. Because of this, the public's perception of the crisis management effort is shaped, and relief organisations allocate a greater proportion of their resources to this tragedy than they could have otherwise.
- b) The media is a reliable source of up-to-the-minute information, particularly at the local level, where journalists have a "vested interest" in covering issues that affect their communities. Decisions and actions taken in the early aftermath of a catastrophe may be greatly aided by the network's constant and accurate coverage of occurrences and post-disaster events.
- c) The media's ability to disseminate information concerning public safety during a catastrophe is crucial, especially when roads are blocked or power lines are down. Water safety warnings and locations of nearby medical facilities are two other common methods of addressing critical public health issues.
- d) The news media fills the void left by the lack of cellphones and other forms of communication by giving both the local people and those outside of the afflicted region access to vital information.

Negative Effects of The Media : Gaining an understanding of the pros and cons of catastrophe coverage can help you evaluate reports in the print and digital media more objectively.

- a) It's possible that the media would overestimate the severity of the calamity, leading to unwarranted fear.
- b) The media's exaggeration of people's reactions before and after calamities may make for riveting television, but at the expense of accuracy. In the aftermath of a natural catastrophe, for instance, it is not unusual for all news networks to show video of looting, but the average viewer may not

realise that all the networks were covering the same shop. This might lead the public to believe that extensive and unchecked looting is occurring in the impacted area(s), while in fact this might not be the case.

- c) powerful politicians may use media manipulation for their own ends. For instance, Jamaica was severely hit by Hurricane Dean only weeks before the 2007 general election. By repeatedly showing members of one political party handing out aid to the needy, the media implied that these representatives were more concerned with the welfare of the people as a whole. The media-favored political party actually won the election and is now leading the government of Jamaica.
- d) Reporters may be biased in their coverage for the sake of sensationalism, for as by taking pictures of a street that has been completely destroyed while ignoring the fact that the other side of the street is relatively undamaged. Unnecessary and unsuitable resources may be sent to moderately afflicted places as a result of "irresponsible media," depriving locations more seriously hit by the disaster of much-needed relief.
- e) When a major event occurs, many members of the media go to the scene, causing traffic jams. This surge of people in need into an already overburdened region may be overwhelming, which can impede or degrade search and rescue activities, put rescuer safety at risk, and prevent the severely sick and wounded from receiving the treatment they need. As we've seen, the media may help or hurt the relief and recovery efforts after a crisis, depending on how they're used. In light of this, it is crucial to remember that media convergence often happens in the wake of national catastrophes, and that every disaster plan or standard operating procedure should include a strategy for efficiently managing the media.

Advantages & Disadvantages of the Media Role

a. Advantages: When it comes to emergency management, the news media may be an invaluable public resource, particularly in the dissemination of warnings, advisories, and other notifications. They may also aid the decision-making process by providing important data. Potential public benefits of the media include:

- a. Provides guidance and information to those in need.
- b. Spreads knowledge on how to be ready for such calamities in the future.
- c. Encourages people to give their time and money, including giving blood.
- d. Reveals areas where the government may do better in its reaction.
- e. Withholds knowledge that may be helpful to others.

b. Disadvantages: The news media can also play a counter-productive role:

Disasters and crises that involve hysteria, fear, and collective stress yet don't have a strong basis in objective reality are of great interest to the media. (Rosenthal 1998: 158). In the absence of more complete facts, the media is prone to erroneous reporting. The roles of an uninformed media include,

- a) Inevitably, people freak out
- b) Whole neighbourhoods go offline when disaster strikes.
- c) There is a strong chance of looting and anarchy.
- d) Donations of all shapes and sizes are solicited and accepted since everything is always required.

Variation in the National and the Local Media

A. National media

- i. Don't lose focus in the midst of the crisis or in its immediate aftermath.
- ii. Give a broad overview rather than going into great detail.
- iii. Inquire more deeply into issues than the local media.
- iv. Adhere to myths about tragedy victims' cliched behaviours.
- v. Efforts to manage or manipulate the news.

B. Local media

- i. Concentrate on the immediate aftermath of the tragedy or catastrophe.
- ii. Pay close attention to specifics.
- iii. maintain stronger links with domestic authorities than their foreign counterparts.

The Role of Mass Media During Disaster: The media can and should play a part in every stage of disaster response. As a first step, there must be intensive education for news outlets and journalists on how to cover natural disasters.

The media, whether written, spoken, or visual, is a systematic approach of communicating with a wide audience in a short amount of time. A crucial part of disaster education should be the media's suggestive, informational, and analytical function. It's the most effective strategy for spreading awareness about how to prepare for, respond to, and recover from natural disasters. The media's twin function in disseminating facts and providing critical analysis of catastrophes makes it ideal for these assignments. It's important to look at the aftermath of catastrophes from several perspectives, including technical, scientific, social, and economic ones. Sahni and Dhameja (2004) argue that the media may play a pivotal role in this respect. When we say "media," we usually mean the major forms of public communication.

Media of all kinds, such as movies, TV shows, radio broadcasts, print publications, and audio and video cassettes, are included. Electronic media and information technology are given prominent billing because of the widespread belief that they must be included into both the disaster response and the disaster management plan as a whole. The print media also plays a significant function since electronic media has yet to penetrate many rural areas of Bangladesh. With the right amount of community awareness development, the print media may play a significant part in the pre-disaster preventive, mitigation, and preparation operations.

The media should be more proactive than reactive. They need to get the timely and accurate information out to the public. The dissemination of information through radio and television in Bangladesh is now undergoing a period of institutionalisation. However, these channels must include specialists to facilitate smooth information understanding and reaction.

The presentation of meteorological information would undoubtedly change if, for example, professional meteorologists were involved or media specialists were trained in conveying weather-related information.

Maximum Input Areas for Media During Disasters

- a) Instructional: giving individuals the knowledge they need to prepare for, respond to, and recover from an emergency. The media's reliable and objective reporting on the disaster's aftermath and the recovery effort's progress may be invaluable.
- b) Helping individuals create a resource catastrophe calendar, resource map, and community emergency action plan.
- c) Reviewing the emergency plan and the benefits that will be distributed attentively. Any preexisting plans may be examined and enhanced as part of this process.
- d) Long-term ideas may come from the media in the form of organised measures, such as the passing of specific legislation or the adoption of a code of behaviour.
- e) What the media can do to help in catastrophe preparedness: The media has a significant impact before, during, and after a catastrophe. The media isn't only influential; it also reaches people at every level of society, which may be valuable for disaster-related governance and management. The media's response to disasters, however, must be institutionalised so that it is more focused, accurate, efficient, and successful.

How Media Plays an Effective Role in Disaster management

- i. Community preparation before to a catastrophe, disaster relief efforts, and post-disaster recovery all benefit from early warning systems. All three of these examples highlight the vital importance of the media in modern society. Electronic media, such as television and radio, may provide crucial early warnings of impending calamities, allowing for the rescue of countless people and animals. Damage to property may also be kept to a minimum. The public's consciousness may be raised regarding catastrophe

preparedness thanks to the media's efforts. It may also help the community be ready for catastrophes by educating and training people on what to do and what not to do.

- ii. Keep an eye on the relief apparatus: their reaction time is notoriously slow after any kind of calamity. Reconstruction efforts after a disaster are often not rushed. After a catastrophe, while recovery efforts are underway, the media may serve as a watchdog. In a democratic system, media has a great deal of influence and must be utilised for the common good in a responsible and productive way.

Search and rescue gear, relief supplies, and financial aid are all necessities in the aftermath of a natural catastrophe. The government is obligated to make all necessary resources accessible, but its slow response times may be frustrating. When tragedy strikes, the media may play a crucial role by acting as a watchdog and keeping emergency services operational.

- iii. The media's portrayal of destruction and human suffering serves as a call to action, inspiring people to donate money, provide supplies, and volunteer their time. The public tends to have a favourable impression of the media, which may be used to raise funds for disaster relief.

- iv. In the case of a crisis, when communications are disrupted, rumours spread quickly and may have a devastating impact on relief efforts if not contained. The media may play a part in preventing the spread of false information at this period by disseminating accurate details about the steps being taken. The media may aid relief efforts by alerting those most at risk or offering information on what to do and what not to do in the event of a catastrophe. The media may also be useful for making connections, pinpointing problem areas, and drawing more attention to them. In addition, the media may contribute by aiding authorities, nonprofits, and volunteers in getting the word out to those who have been impacted and reassuring them that help is on the way.

- v. Media may help maintain peace and order by monitoring criminals who exploit police enforcement's absence. They have the option to report the incident and bring attention to the issue. In addition, they may help the authorities restore order and quiet in the afflicted area.

- vi. The media has historically played a vital role in mobilising resources for catastrophe victims. Media's impact on the SIDR. By emphasising the contributions, giving tax-reliefs, and providing fast and effective means of donations, they were able to encourage more individuals to become involved.
- vii. As an alternative to the current system: The majority of Bangladesh's communication infrastructure consists of landlines such as telephones and telegraphs. This system suffers greatly during a calamity. In order to coordinate relief efforts, district administration must depend on the media's communication infrastructure to reach out to the Bangladesh Air Force, Bangladesh Navy, Army, and other government authorities and ministries. The district government uses the media to disseminate information such as lists of casualties and missing individuals, as well as instructions for dealing with the aftermath of the catastrophe. Due to the media's network's wireless operation, it has proven to be an extremely efficient and helpful tool for the district's management.

Expectations of People from media during disaster: Those who have been impacted by a catastrophe and those who are providing aid count on significant media coverage and support. The public looks on the media to be 'partners,' rather than critics, in their endeavours. Reporters should be objective in their assessments of events and avoid doing anything that may be seen as spin or embellishment of the news.

Conclusion

The media has an important influence in reducing the effects of disasters. Although the goals of the media and disaster mitigation organisations are not the same, much may be done to transmit the knowledge that will assist many people save their own lives without jeopardising the independence and integrity of either. A great opportunity exists for the media and hazard professionals to collaborate for the benefit of both parties and the greater good

of the global society by actively lowering the risks associated with natural and manufactured disasters.

Mass media may be a powerful tool in disaster management if established roles and duties are consistently upheld.

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