

# THE ROLE OF FACEBOOK DURING KERALA FLOOD; A STUDY AMONG FACEBOOK USERS IN KERALA

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study examines the use of facebook during emergency situations. Facebook could be efficiently used as a communication tool while there is lack of availability of other mediums of communication. The impact created by facebook during the flood period and the posts shared regarding the rescue missions of people who were trapped in their houses which was surrounded with water. Posts regarding the collection of the basic necessary goods that were needed for the people who were staying in relief camps. It also studies about the change that has arisen in the approach towards the usage of social media platforms, especially facebook.

**KEYWORDS:** facebook, Kerala floods, rescue missions, rehabilitations.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Facebook is a commonly used and prominent social media application that has a huge reach and acceptance. People can use the facebook services by creating a profile in facebook and it can be accessed through mobile phones, computers with active internet connectivity. Facebook is not only a medium that creates a social bond between people in the society irrespective of the caste, creed, colour or gender, it can also be used as a medium creating awareness among the public. The monsoon rainfall in Kerala in 2018 was very much severe and the dangerous fact is that it is 116% more than the usual rain fall in Kerala. On 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, and 17<sup>th</sup> August 2018 it was continuous heavy rainfall in all the parts of the state that resulted in dams were filled to their maximum capacities, in those three days of rainfall the state received around 310 mm (12 in) of rain. It was the worst flood that the state or the country had faced in nearly a century. More than 483 people died, and 140 were found missing. About ten lakh people were evacuated and were forced to leave their homes. More than 3,274 alleviation camps were opened at different areas due to the flood and unfortunate casualties. It is assessed that 1,247,496 individuals have been.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Content analysis and Focus group study are the methodology planning to be used in the research study. A study will be carried out by using qualitative content analysis method. Content analysis allows the collected qualitative data in research to be analyzed systematically and reliably so that findings can be made from them. The two facebook pages that were used for sharing information about the flood affected areas, the rescue missions and for collection of flood relief materials will be analyzed. The posts shared in the pages of Anbodu Kochi and Kerala flood relief urgent help during the flood affected days will be analyzed. The circumstances in which the posts are shared will be analyzed. A focus group is said to be small group of people and the study is said to be conducted among that small group and the focus will be completely on the responses that arises in that group. A qualitative focus group study will be conducted among 15 people by dividing them to group of 8 and 7 respectively. A questionnaire of 7 questions will be prepared. People from the Southern and Northern regions of Kerala will be taking part in the focus group study. The responses will be recorded and analyzed. Certain parameters were used in analyzing the contents of the facebook post that were shared and they are TIME, DATE, LOCATION, SITUATION, PURPOSE, YEAR OF CREATION, CONTENT

## **ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS**

The study is to be conducted among people who had worked as volunteers during the Kerala flood in 2018. Volunteers had done a great job in the rebuilding of the state that was totally destructed by the flood and facebook played a crucial role as a helping tool during all these process. 15 volunteers were selected from the different districts of Kerala and they were divided into group of 7 and 8. 7 volunteers from the Northern part of Kerala and 8 from the Southern part of Kerala. All these volunteers were asked to gather at a place and the focus group study was conducted. The set of 7 questions were asked and first the questions were asked to the group from the Northern side and after those questions were asked to the Southern side. Questions regarding the use of facebook had been asked and the responses were recorded and analyzed. And the responses were;

The first question asked was that how helpful was the facebook during the Kerala flood 2018 and among the 7 members of the group 6 were of the opinion that the facebook had played a crucial role, one among this had an oppositional opinion. The same question was asked to the group from the Southern side and everyone from the group had been of the same opinion as that the facebook had played a crucial role in the rescue and the rehabilitation process.

The next question asked was that how much helpful was facebook in finding out the location of the people who were trapped during the Kerala floods 2018 and all the 5 from the group had the opinion that facebook played great role in the process of finding the location of people who had been trapped and isolated during the Kerala flood 2018. The rest 2 members of the group had an opinion that there was lack of accurate

details of the location in the posts that were shared in the facebook. The second group all the 8 members had a unique answer as facebook was helpful finding the location where people are trapped and isolated during the Kerala flood 2018.

The next question asked was that how has been facebook helpful to volunteers in the rescuing of people who were trapped during the Kerala floods 2018 and in the first group 5 were of the opinion that it was very much helpful for the volunteers during the time of the flood. The rest 2 members present in the group were of the opinion that it was the government missionary and the respective district administration that were more helpful for the volunteers in getting information about the victims. All members in the second were having the same opinion that the facebook posts that had all the required details of the people who were in danger.

The next question was that how has been the “mark me save during Kerala flood” feature in facebook helpful at that time. Among the 7 members 4 had the opinion that the mark me safe feature in facebook was very much useful and 3 of the group had no such awareness about the feature and so they did not had any opinion. In the second group 6 members had the opinion that the mark me safe during flood feature in facebook is a very helpful feature. The other 2 members of the group were not aware about the feature and so they did not had any opinion about that question.

The next question was that how has been facebook helpful to people who doesn't had any active profiles at that time and from the first group 5 members had an opinion that facebook was helpful to the people who never had any facebook profiles and rest 2 members in the group was of the view point that facebook was not at all useful in any manner to the ones who never had any facebook profiles. The 8 members of the second group had an opinion that facebook was helpful to the ones who never had any facebook profiles.

The next question was that how has the circulation of fake facebook posts negatively affected the rescue missions and the all the 7 members of the group had a same opinion that the fake news and fake facebook posts that were circulated during the time of the flood had a great negative impact over the rescue mission. All the members of the second group also had the same opinion that the fake news and fake facebook posts that were circulated during the time of the flood had a great negative impact over the rescue mission.

The next question was how have been facebook groups helpful in collecting relief materials and all the members of the first group were of the same opinion. The members of the second group also had the same opinion.

## CONTENT ANALYSIS

For content analysis the two facebook pages that were used for sharing information about the flood affected areas, the rescue missions and for collection of flood relief materials will be analyzed. The posts shared in the pages of Anbodu Kochi and Kerala flood relief urgent help during the flood affected days will be analyzed. The circumstances in which the posts are shared will be analyzed.

The facebook post was shared facebook on the page named as Kerala flood disaster urgent help. The facebook post was published on the 15<sup>th</sup> of august 2018. The content embedded in the post was that it was said an emergency post which had the information regarding a place in Pathanamthitta district named Panthalam with the exact location as M C road had collected the required medicines for the flood affected areas in the Malabar areas but there is lack of transportation facility and they are requesting so that someone could arrange it.

The facebook post was shared on the facebook page Anbodu Kochi, the facebook post was shared on 17<sup>th</sup> august 2018. The facebook post was created by the Anbodu Kochi page itself and the contact details of the responsible persons were provided .The content of the post was that Anbodu Kochi had a collection center in Kochi regional sports center and they have been collecting goods to be circulated in different parts of the state especially to relief camps. They have asked for the supply of candle, mats, matchbox, oil, dress, pulses, water etc....

The facebook post was shared on the facebook page named as Kerala flood disaster urgent help. The facebook post was published on the 15<sup>th</sup> of august 2018. The content of the post was that there is lot of sanitary pads required in the various relief camps so as awareness to the people who has less knowledge about the pads it was said to buy whisper, Stayfree and Sofy are the commonly used pads by women in Kerala. So when buying these pads it should be assured that the pads with wings are bought.

The facebook post was shared in the facebook page named as Kerala flood disaster urgent help. The facebook post was published on the 15<sup>th</sup> of august 2018. The content of the post was that there was a lot of flood relief camps opened in various parts of the state in 2018 due to the flood. The post had the details about the collection points in various parts of the state and also the contact numbers of the each and every collection points and so the people could easily contact the respective collection point and handover their collected materials.

The facebook post was shared on the facebook page named as Kerala flood disaster urgent help. The facebook post was published on the 15<sup>th</sup> of august 2018. The post was created by the same page itself. The content of the post is that there was requirement of relief materials like brush, soap, bed sheet, lunki, bucket, dress etc... in a relief camp in tripunithura, which is situated in Ernakulum district of Kerala.

The facebook post was shared on the facebook page Anbodu Kochi, the facebook post was shared on 17<sup>th</sup> august 2018. post was about the requirements of materials that are urgently required. The content of the post was that Anbodu Kochi had a collection center in M A college of engineering Kothamangalam and they have been collecting goods to be circulated in different parts of the state especially to relief camps. They have asked for the supply of candle, mats, matchbox, oil, dress, pulses, water etc....

The facebook post was shared on the facebook page Anbodu Kochi, the facebook post was shared on 17<sup>th</sup> august 2018. The facebook post was published on the 15<sup>th</sup> of august 2018. The post was created by the same page itself. The content of the above mentioned post is that the KSRTC which is the transport corporation owned by the state government had offered free supply and transportation of relief materials to the flood affected areas and relief camps in Wayanad district of Kerala.

The facebook post was shared on the facebook page Anbodu Kochi, the facebook post was shared on 17<sup>th</sup> august 2018. The facebook post was created by the Anbodu Kochi page itself and the contact details of the district collector of Kozhikode were provided. The content of the post was about a collection center in Kozhikode district of Kerala and they have been collecting goods to be circulated in different parts of the state especially to relief camps. They have asked for the supply of candle, mats, matchbox, oil, dress, pulses, water etc....in larger quantity.

## **FINNDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

### **The major findings of the study are:-**

- Facebook and facebook posts regarding the rescue missions and the details of people who were trapped in the flooded areas had helped a lot in rescuing people. And also for the collection of flood relief materials facebook has been very much helpful during the flood that destroyed the state of Kerala in 2018
- The facebook posts shared at the time of the flood in 2018 was very much helpful as it had the date time and the location with exact details of the people who were trapped for the volunteers who had been working as part of the rescue missions
- Facebook posts was very much helpful in finding the location as it had all the required details of the people trapped and isolated and including the contact number, total number of people trapped and even the exact location of the people those were isolated and trapped during the flood in Kerala in 2018
- The mark me save feature in facebook was very much helpful in assuring the people who are safe as people and the volunteers get to know about the ones who have marked themselves safe are safe and people could think of helping the other ones that there is no such information is available during the flood in Kerala in 2018

- The facebook post regarding the need for need for necessary items to the rehabilitation camps were widely spread through facebook and it has helped a lot in collecting materials from several places and collect it at a place and distribute the necessary items to the required areas.
- The facebook post shared during at the time of the flood had a great impact in creating a unity and the proper functioning other 6000 relief camps that were opened in different parts of the state. There was several collection points set up in different parts of the state and the materials were collected at those places and later it was dispatched to the various relief camps according to the need for the various relief materials.
- The facebook posts shared had been very much helpful to the NDRF and the other government missionaries in the incorporation of the rescue missions and the collection of the relief materials.
- Facebook posts were very much useful during the time of the flood and it had helped in creating a positive aspect about the facebook but there is no such change in the attitude of the people and still they are of the view point that facebook is not at all useful.

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