



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SOCIAL MEDIA FROM INDIA AND CHINA ON THE GLOBAL PANDEMIC

Media

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ABSTRACT

The worldwide pandemics are the common enemy of all mankind. When faced with the global pandemics, it becomes necessary for all nations to strengthen cooperation. Although India and China are close neighbors in Asia, their media coverage of each other in 2020 was extremely asymmetrical. Nonetheless, this media coverage should be strengthening communication and cooperation. Only in this way can it benefit the people of the two nations and ultimately realize a co-prosperity and collaborative development.

As of May 25, 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic is still raging around the world. At present, although many nations around the world have successively started the inoculation of the COVID-19 vaccine, it will take some time for humans to completely eliminate the disaster. COVID-19 has caused a huge disaster to the entire human society, and mankind will definitely encounter a public health crisis similar to COVID-19 in the future. Since the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic to May 2021, countries around the world have been fighting the pandemic for a full year and a half. The positive and negative facts have proved that in the context of world globalization and highly developed modern transportation, mankind must strengthen international cooperation in order to overcome major pandemics and disasters today and in the future. As India and China are close neighbors, strengthening India-China social media cooperation and exchanges is particularly important for each to overcome major pandemics and realize a mutual peaceful development and prosperity.

I. International cooperation matters when responding to major pandemics and disasters

Although China was the first country to have a large-scale outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, after more than two months of national efforts, China won a decisive victory in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic on April 26, 2020 and built-up a very important experience in anti-pandemic. On April 6, 2020, the WHO representative in China, Gordon Galea, introduced China's experience in fighting the pandemic. Galea said that China has accumulated a very important experience in the prevention and control of the pandemic. It has adopted public health measures suitable for different local conditions and has effectively controlled the spread of the pandemic in accordance with those conditions. He pointed out that through measures such as maintaining social distancing, isolation, and strengthening personal hygiene, the Chinese people have made tremendous efforts in containing the spread of the pandemic and have produced positive results. All nations in the world should work together to share anti-pandemic experience and information, learn from each other, and adopt timely and effective prevention and control measures.

In 2015, after the Ebola outbreak, Bill Gates warned the world to pay close attention to the major infectious virus pandemic. "When I was a kid, the disaster we were most worried about was nuclear war," he said in a TED speech. "That's why we had a barrel like this down in our basement, filled with cans of food and water. When the nuclear attack came, we were supposed to go downstairs, hunker down, and eat out of that barrel. Today the greatest risk of global catastrophe doesn't look like this. Instead, it looks like this. If anything kills over 10 million people in the next few decades, it's most likely to be a highly infectious virus rather than a war. Not missiles, but microbes. We've actually invested very little in a system to stop an

pandemic. We're not ready for the next epidemic. If we start to prepare immediately, we can be ready before the next outbreak. It has been five years since Bill Gates delivered his speech. Judging from the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic, many governments, especially the health sector, have obviously not taken Bill Gates' early warning seriously.

China's effective experience in this pandemic prevention and control is of global significance and should be extracted and shared with the world. Chinese Leader, as early as the G20 special summit in March 26, 2020, pointed out that "virus is without borders, and pandemic is our common enemy. All countries must join hands to pull up the most stringent joint defense network. China has established a new and open knowledge center for the prevention and control of the COVID-19". "The Knowledge center" is an online platform for acquiring China's prevention and control experience, technical guidelines and technical standards, which is welcomed by relevant countries. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, China has provided assistance and support to more than 150 countries and international organizations, including providing medical aid and sending medical experts. At present, China is offering vaccine assistance to 80 countries and 3 international organizations.

II. Reporting asymmetry on anti-COVID-19 from Chinese and Indian Media

News reports and sharp reviews of current events by various media play an important role in the government's decision-making of fighting pandemic and leading the active public participation. Unfortunately, 2020 was a year of fierce confrontation between China and the United States, as well as a year of deteriorating relations between India and China. The world environment has led to a great discount in the cooperation and exchange of social media between India and China, and also indirectly affected the objective reports of Indian media on China's anti-pandemic experience. Difference between media guidance and government actions leads to anti-pandemic results widely differ, which is in line with the logic of dialectical thinking. Through observing the mutual reports of mainstream media between India and China in 2020 it presents a very "asymmetric" problem. As US President Trump and Secretary of State Pompey have been engaged in the stigmatization and politicization of the "China virus" pandemic, China's mainstream media and we media mainly "fight" with the United States in the public opinion circles, and the content of the People's Daily, Guangming Daily, Xinhuanet, Renmin.com, CCTV and other mainstream media's report on pandemic situation and anti-pandemic in India is very small. Only the Global times, an unofficial newspaper, reports more about India's. It can be said that the total number of anti-COVID-19 pandemic news about India from all the official media in China is not as much as such that reporting about China by the Times of India. The Times of

India has news about the pandemic situation in China almost every day, sometimes two to three times a day.

It matters more there is a huge difference in the tendency of the mainstream media between India and China mutual reporting on each other. Chinese mainstream media, out of the need of political sensitivity, are cautious and most of them have the tendency of "good will", hoping to strengthen India-China cooperation and jointly fight against the COVID-19 pandemic; In fact, Indian media reports China's pandemic situation and anti-pandemic activities more or less skeptical and resentful.

The official mainstream media in China mainly reported positive news about the pandemic in India. For example, the People Daily reported "*Wang Yi Talks with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of India, Indonesia, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Brunei respectively*", Xinhua Daily Telegraph reported "*The Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Hindu Group Plays an Important Role in the High-level Media Forum*".

Although negative news is still present, the mainstream Chinese media nonetheless stands in a neutral position, discussing well-founded facts. For example, the Indian news reported by the "Liberation Daily" on June 6, 2020 is based on the comments of the US CNN News: Recently, the story of the 26-year-old Indian migrant worker Rajesh Johan returning home after traveling thousands of miles has attracted media attention. According to CNN, in order to go home during the lockdown, Johan crossed more than half of India, eventually crossing 2000 kilometers on his feet and hitchhiking in 10 days. Johan said that this journey will never be forgotten in his life, "it will always carry memories of sadness and anxiety." When India announced a nationwide lockdown on March 25 to curb the spread of the COVID-19, Indian cities came to a standstill. In India, about 100 million migrant workers like Johan have left their homes to work in cities. Today, millions of migrant workers must return home on foot.

The Chinese non-official media "Global Times" is also very measured in reporting the Indian pandemic. It is basically based on the "current affairs commentary" of the Indian media and foreign media on the news reported in India. The Global Times reported on July 10, 2020: How difficult is it to make scientific anti-pandemic in India? Which introduced a source from The Straits Times on the 16th, as many as 22 official languages and 19,000 local dialects in India have become an "unimaginable challenge" for the country's fight against the pandemic. According to reports, the "response team" composed of more than 700 Indian scientists and engineers to deal with the pandemic needs to use 19 languages like Hindi, Bengali, Konkani, Tamil and Malayalam in addition to English every day in order to deal with the pandemic. Rumors are also very distinctively regional, so they must be targeted when dispelling rumors. For example, the team's experts will deliberately translate relevant materials into Tamil to get rid of the "splashing turmeric water can disinfect rooms only in Tamil Nadu".

Chinese self-media and netizens' comments on the Indian pandemic are full of more sympathetic expression. For example, netizens named Baiyu Feiyu watched the short video "Indian police use a board for law enforcement" (using the board to hit the feet of those who violate the ban.) and commented: "If this news happens in China or Hong Kong, it might set off a global human rights storm! If India does it, everyone in the world will ignore." Another example is from Zhanghuihui245, a netizen who watched the short video "Indian migrant workers returning home on foot" and commented: "It is heartbreaking! I hope this plague will end soon! I hope the God will bless the Indian people!"

Unlike Chinese media reports on the Indian pandemic, Indian mainstream media reports on China are quite diversified. There are but not many positive and neutral reports, and most of them are negative reports. For example, the Times of India

published a signed article on January 31, 2020 *Why life-threatening viruses always come out of China?* which wrote "It needs to be traced how such life-threatening viruses are always spawned in China. China has a biological laboratory where the corona virus was (first) found." The article simply blamed the Wuhan Institute of Virology at the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak, which could easily mislead the Indian people. Currently, the WHO is organizing scientists to investigate the source of COVID-19. Before scientists could find the "source", we believed that COVID-19 originated from nature like HIV and Ebola. It was not known when and where a virus would come to the world by accident. In this regard, Bill Gates was more far-sighted than ordinary people.

In short, Both Indian and Chinese people should believe in science and scientists. One day, scientists will discover the origin of COVID-19, and history will be the best judge.

III. Further media cooperation crucial in times of the pandemic

India and China are both emerging developing countries and the rise of Asian countries is an irresistible historical trend. China is happy to see the rise of India at the time. After all, should China and India rise in unison, the power of the developing countries will be greater and the pace of rise will be faster. In order to achieve the smooth and effective communication between the two nations, social media's interaction and cooperation from India and China must strengthen, especially during pandemic disasters, where the responsibility and guidance of the social media is essential.

On January 31, 2020, the Chinese State Councilor and Minister of Foreign Affairs Wang Yi had a phone conversation with Indian External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar to share related experiences and effective measures on anti-COVID-19. Wang Yi said that the Chinese government and people are going all out to fight the pandemic. We have adopted the most comprehensive and strict prevention and control measures, many of which far exceed the standard of the International Health Regulations. China's efforts are not only to protect the health of its own people, but also to protect the people of the world. Governments and the World Health Organization have confirmed this. China is also willing to further strengthen cooperation in public health with the international community. S. Jaishankar said that the Indian people advocates an objective and rational assessment of the pandemic and does not approve of measures that may complicate the problem. The Chinese people have a strong will, and the more difficulties they face, more united they become. I believe that China will eventually win a full victory in the fight against the pandemic.

On February 26, 2020, the Indian Air Force aircraft C-17 arrived in Wuhan carrying 15 tons of medical supplies including masks, gloves and other emergency medical equipment. Indian External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar said that the delivery of these supplies from India showed that the country was in solidarity with China in "difficult times." As early as February 16, 2020, Indian Ambassador to China Vikram Misri personally recorded a video to express his support for the Chinese people and the Chinese government in fighting the pandemic, and announced that India is willing to give the Chinese people what it can in times of crisis. So the Chinese people will not forget the help provided by the Indian government when China first experienced the COVID-19 strike.

In March 2020, the pandemic in India worsened. On the 2nd March, the Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi had a telephone conversation with Indian Foreign Minister S. Jaishankar. Wang Yi said that India and China being the only two nations with a population of 1 billion respectively in the world, we should continue to support each other in responding to the pandemic to overcome the difficulties together. China is also willing to strengthen cooperation with India on platforms such as the Group of Twenty and the BRICS

to promote the international community to strengthen unity and coordination and jointly maintain global and regional public health security. S. Jaishankar said that India is grateful for China's condolences and assistance with medical supplies, appreciates China's effective achievements in pandemic control.. The Indian people does not approve of labeling the virus and believes that the international community should send a positive signal of unity, determination, and force in the difficult time of fighting the pandemic together. On the 31st, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare of India also stated: China has donated 170,000 sets of personal protective equipment (PPE) to India on April 6 to help India fight COVID-19 pandemic.

Sudheendra Kulkarni, former Chairman of Mumbai-based Think-tank Observer Research Foundation, in a recent interview with Xinhua, "The COVID-19 pandemic has been a major blow to the economies around the world, and there is one lesson that we have to draw from the pandemic. It is that all countries should cooperate rather than disengage," he said. Rajeev Sadanandan, a former healthcare policymaker and Municipal Commissioner of MCGM in the state of Kerala of India said that since the outbreak, the Chinese government has taken decisive measures to prevent and control the pandemic, we should learn the experiences of China in combating the pandemic and discussed on the spot the prevention plan. Chief Information Commissioner and former Chief Secretary of Maharashtra State Sumit Mullick said that from the closure of the Wuhan City Passageway to the construction of a hospital in a short period of time, it all reflects the Chinese government's determination and emergency response capabilities when faced with the pandemic. In an era of globalization, the spread of the pandemic knows no borders.

On November 30, 2020, the 5th presidium meeting of BRICS Media Forum was held by video. Narasimhan Ram, a member of the presidium and the chairman of the board of directors of the Hindu Newspaper Group, said in a written interview with a reporter from Xinhua News Agency a few days ago: In the post-pandemic era, Ram expects the BRICS media to strengthen cooperation. He said that print media and other forms of traditional media were under pressure before the pandemic broke out. Under the influence of the pandemic, the migration of audiences to digital platforms has further been accelerated. At the same time, increasing digital media revenue is also a big challenge when conducting high-quality news reports. Ram believed that the experience of the BRICS media in reporting on the pandemic and cracking down on false news was worth sharing and learning. The mainstream media in the BRICS countries' reports on the pandemic and its positive influence on people's lives, health, livelihoods and well-being are commendable. Regarding the cracking down on false news, the BRICS Media Forum can contain and eliminate false news by strengthening media exchanges, journalists training and technology refresh.

In short, major pandemic diseases do not distinguish national borders or races. They are the common enemy of mankind. India and China are permanent neighbors that can never be moved away. Only by strengthening the cooperation between the various media of the two nations can the countries and their people be guided correctly, thus avoiding major losses caused by the pandemic while promoting the rapid development of the countries' economy and the smooth realization of their rise.

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