



## **SOCIAL MEDIA AN EFFECTIVE SOCIAL TOOL USE BY MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS FOR CREATING AWARENESS & GUIDANCE FOR SOCIETY DURING COVID19 PANDEMIC IN PUNE CITY**

**DR. SHAILESH RAMAKANT**

**SIDDHATEKKAR**

Associate Professor,

Rashtriya Shikshan Mandal's Chetan

Dattaji Gaikwad Institute of Management

Studies (MBA) Pune

**(MS) INDIA**

**VIKRANT SANJAY SOMAN**

Assistant Professor,

Indira College of Commerce and

Science, Pune

Affiliated to Savitribai

Phule Pune University,

Pune, **(MS) INDIA**

### **ABSTRACT**

*21st century is known as century of information and technology, which is one of the most important and sophisticated communication platform in the history of human civilization and development which could be traced back to invention of fire and wheel by the early generations of man. Development of Internet and wide usage of the same in India since last 3 decades by common man in our country is constantly increasing. Since 2012 when 4 G service was started in India the number of internet users in India is increasing. With availability of Internet on cellular phone the users have increased a lot both in Urban & too great extend in rural parts of the country. During pandemic of Covid 19 from 23rd March 2020 to 31st of July 2020 when National Lockdown was implemented across the country Pune & PCMC cities in Maharashtra has to follow the lockdown on strict grounds due to the spread of COVID 19. During April & May 2020 there were restrictions on private medical practitioners for some time, they were gradually relaxed but during this period medical practitioners like Doctors, Paramedical staff and pathological sector used internet based social mediums like Youtube, Facebook, Whatsaap on large scale to help people and create awareness among them. This mediums were used in various languages and the use of graphics and Audio-Visual applications were also on large scale. We would like to focus paper on usage of these social mediums by medical professionals in Pune & PCMC areas of Maharashtra*

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**Key Words:** *Social Media, Medical Professionals, Public Awareness for Covid 19, Graphical & Audio-Visual Presentation of Message.*

## **AIM of the Study:**

To study use of Internet based social mediums by Medical Professionals for creating awareness & guidance for Society during COVID19 Pandemic in 2020.

## **Objectives:**

1. To study the use of social media by medical professionals like Doctors & Chemist during the Pandemic.
2. To study different mediums used by medical professionals.
3. To study the need and impact of the use of social mediums by medical professionals.
4. To study the overall response of patients to the use of social mediums by Medical Professionals.

## **Research Methodology:**

### **Research Technique:**

Mixed Research Method with the use of Survey Method, In-depth Telephonic Interviews were tracked and data is collected with the help of observation & Questionnaire method.

### **Data Analysis Technique:**

Data is scrutinized, tabulated, and analyzed with the help of Google form, Microsoft excel and advanced tools.

### **Data Collection:**

In-depth Telephonic Interviews of 8 Doctors Chemist from Pune & Pimri-Chinchwad Municipal Corporation area. They are

1. Dr. Dilip Kulkarni –BAMS, 38 years of Practice in Kothrud Pune and rural areas of Solapur in Modnimb village. Closely associated with NGO ‘Janamitra Seva Sangh’.
2. Dr. Anuja Kulkarni- BAMS, 36 years of Practice in Kothrud, Pune and mobile dispensary for HIV patients with NGO named ‘Manavya’



3. Dr. Vaijayanti Patwardhan – MBBS 38 years of Practice DY Patil and Yashwantrao Chavan Hospital in PCMC.

4. Dr. Keshav Gujrathi: BAMS with 40 years of Practice in Raviwar Peth Pune

5. Mr. Dnyaneshwar Kulkarni, Pharm, with 25 years of Medical Stores in Nigdi, Pune

6. Mr. Narendra Kulkarni, D. Pharm, with 25 years of Medical Stores in Kothrud, Pune

Survey of 75 residents from Pune & PCMC between age group of 25 to 65 Online through the Google Forms.

**a) Primary Data:**

☐ Well-structured Discussions/ Interviews will be prepared for Medical Professional's.

**b) Secondary Data:**

☐ Secondary data required for the proposed study would be collected through Books, Manuals, Journals, Internet and Literature of Health care sector.

Limitations: This study limits only for Pune city & PCMC only.

**Findings of the Study:**

Focus of our study was on the use of different social media platforms for used by medical professionals during Covid 19 Pandemic, specifically during March 2020 to June 2020 as the strict phase of lockdown was implemented during March and April 2020 when there were restrictions and also some confusion regarding working and practice of private medical practitioners. When we discussed regarding this with Dr. Dilip Kulkarni from Kothrud, Pune he mentioned that

“In my 38 years of medical practice this is the paradigm shift in communication system of medical professionals and patients. Scheduling the appointments for patients and systematic planning of clinical work including nursing home and OPD was very common practice, but it mostly included our receptionist or admin staff's task, but during this pandemic as there were limitations on our staff and also challenges for physical presence in first couple of weeks of lockdown, I preferred using my cell phone for telephonic consultation and also whatassp in case of prescribing certain medicines. But I do not recommend or practice on-line. Physical examination of the patients is only the proper method which we follow and that is indispensable. Social Media and internet helped us for creating awareness, controlling the panic and also for counselling of patients. But clinical examinations, laboratory testing are



very important for us. Obviously communication management and general awareness about the same is done through internet based media a lot now a days.”

DR. Anuja Kulkarni practicing in Kothrud, and with the NGO for underprivileged HIV patients shared her experiences with us in her interview, she mentioned her observations saying “ Use of internet has certainly increased specifically I can say the availability of multilingual content has helped us a lot for creating awareness among the people. Use of colloquial language and local dialects has helped us for communicating with many using the same platforms.” She also mentioned about the use of youtube as video search engines and Video logs by doctors and NGO’s in creating awareness regarding the HIV patients during pandemic period. Necessity to bridge the gap of communication created by pandemic was bridged due to social media she mentioned. She also referred to the miss use of these mediums by some sections of society specifically with respect to the unscientific communication. She made it very clear that social media and internet is not an alternative for clinical examination of patients. Laboratory tests and clinical examinations are compulsory for medical treatments.

DR. Vijayanti Patwardhan who is working as a gynecologist in Pune and she is closely associated with the public health department of Maharashtra State. In interview of her she mentioned “Role of internet based mediums in pandemic is very vital and it has helped a lot to create awareness and communicating with patients but the rumors and fake information on social media and promotion of pseudo-science by literates are things to worry a lot”. She also mentioned the indispensable role of clinical examinations of patients and denied the consultancy online in normal situations.

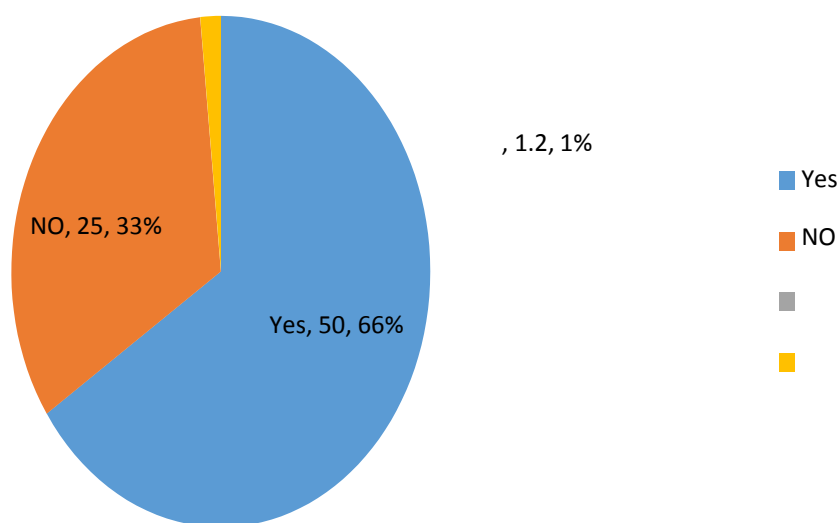
Dr. Keshav Gujrathi who is practicing physician since last 39 years in Raviwar Peth Pune one of the most covid affected area in 2020 mentioned in our interview “Internet and social media has played important role in pandemic, specifically cellular phone made a great impact and were very useful across the section of society. My patients called me for consultation when clinics were having restrictions, but I preferred clinical examination of patients as it is only the way to treat the patients. Social media and internet are mediums of communication and awareness but not alternative for clinical check-up of patients.

Mr. Narendra Kulkarni and Mr. Dyaneshwar Kulkarni who is chemist in PMC & PCMC mentioned in their discussion with us that “During pandemic the use of digital prescriptions has increased a lot.” They also mentioned that increase in number of customers getting digital copies prescriptions has raised to 15 per cent. But they said as per the law and strict directives of government we are not allowed to give medicines without prescriptions but people insist for the same. At certain normal level we agree but with respect to larger extent we do not give any medicines without prescription.

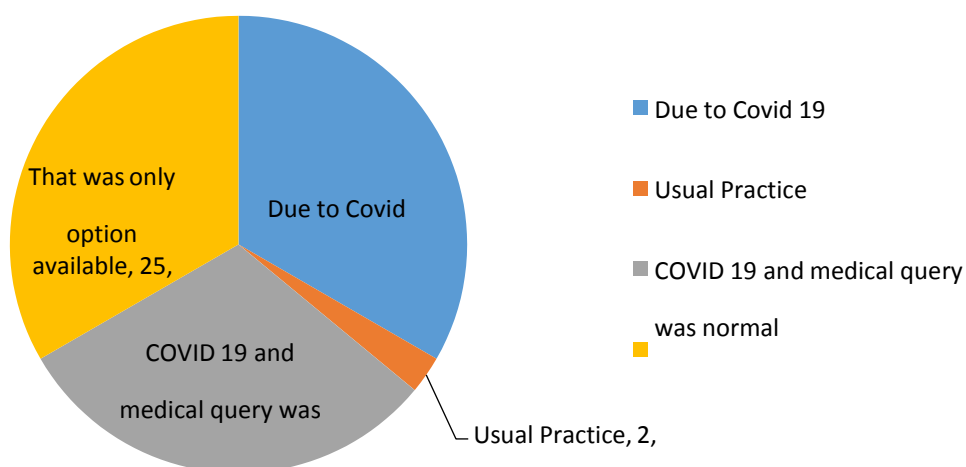
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## Survey Analysis

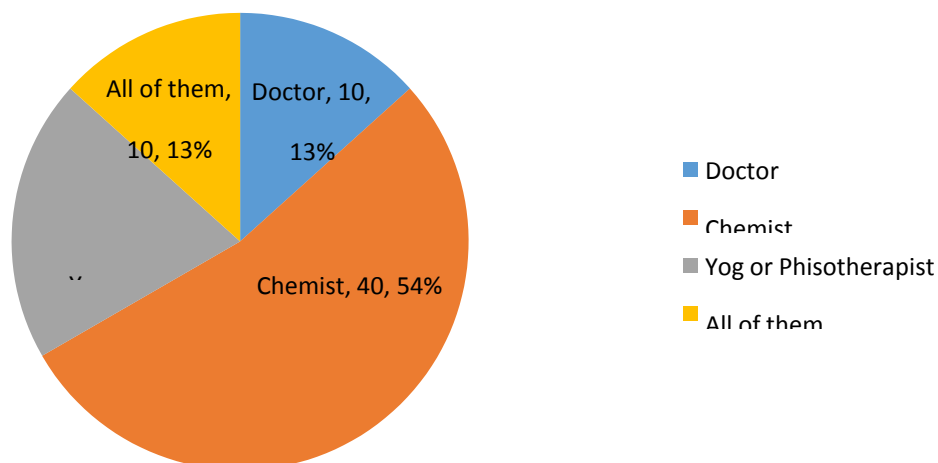
**Did you consult medical professional online  
using Whatapp or other social Media?**



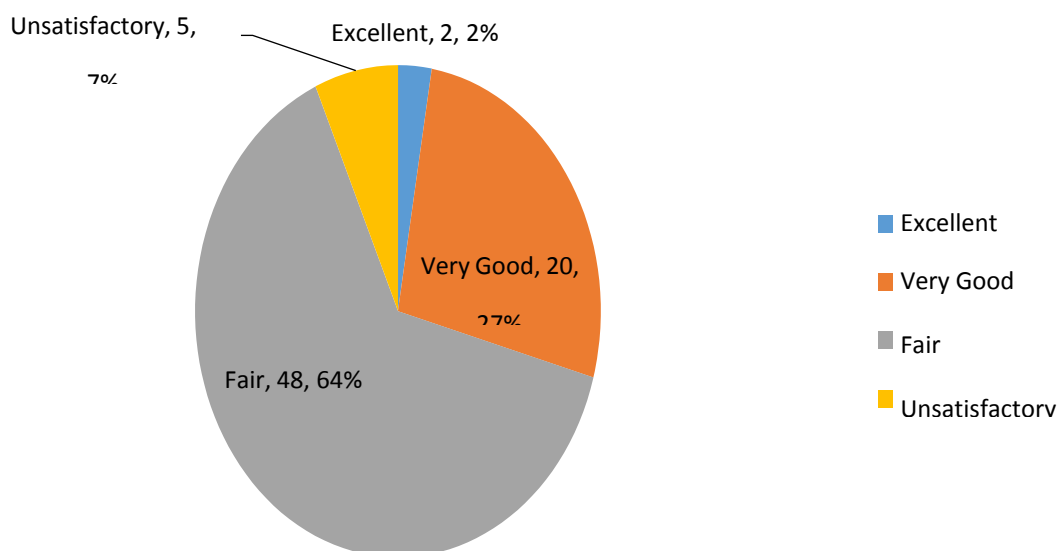
**Why did you consult online**



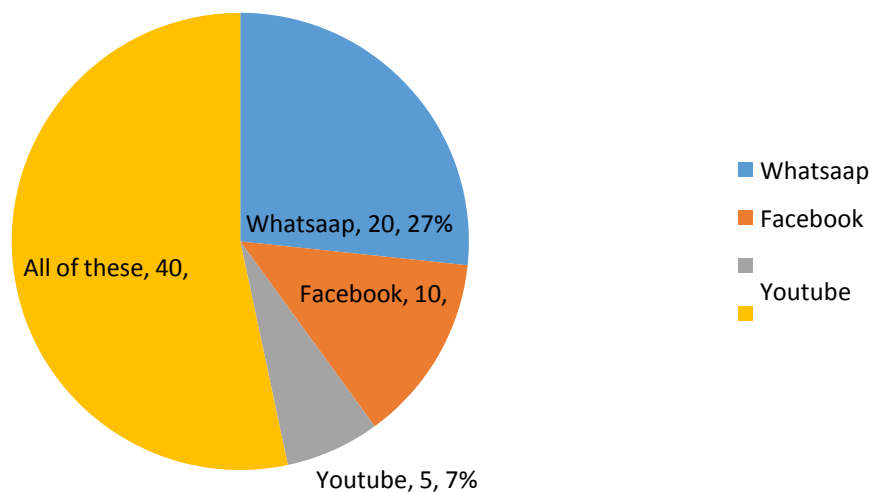
## Who did you consult online?



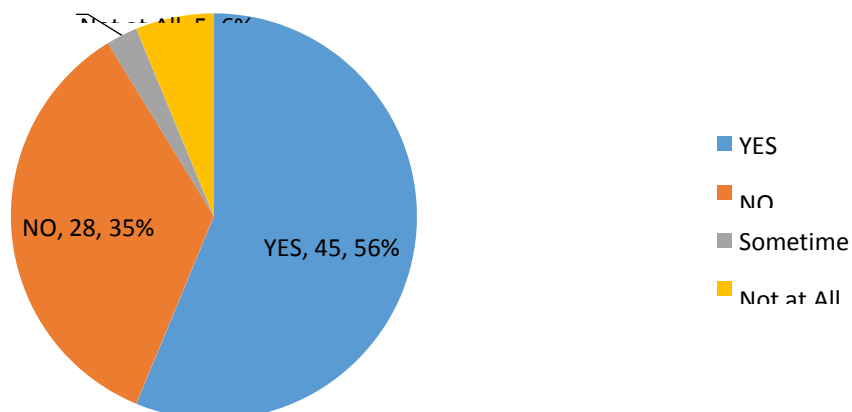
## How was your experience for this online consultation?



## Which medium you used for consultation?



## Do you follow Social Media Page and Youtube Channel of medical Professional







#### **Conclusion & Findings of the study:**

With the analysis of the survey response which we had conducted, brought certain facts in front of us. Through which we came to conclusion that -

1. The use of internet based social mediums like Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp has increased substantially during covid 19 pandemic in year 2020-2021.
2. The use of this social media is now not only restricted to infotainment today but also is in use for some very crucial and essential services of health sciences and medicines.
3. With our interaction with Doctors and Pharmacists, we came to conclusion that the use of social media is certainly for creating awareness and communication with people but none of them are using it exclusively for consulting and examinations
4. Medical field which generally refrains from advertising and branding, due to the laws and general code of conduct of medical field is getting opened for social media.
5. Now social media is one of the best and most used medium of communication by Doctors and paramedical professionals.

So we conclude our paper with the observation that internet and internet based social media's evolution is one of the most impactful evolutions in human civilization as the invention of fire and wheel was important in early human civilizations. Invention of printing press in medieval history of communication and Radio and Television in modern human civilizations. In same way use of social media and internet is important in post-modern era of human civilization. The impact of virtual world is to great extend and with new generations of internet services with 5th generation and 6th generation it will create deep impact on communications and management of trade and commerce across the world.



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### Annexure a) Questionnaire for the Survey

1. Did you consult medical professional online using WhatsApp or other social Media?  
A) Yes B) NO
2. Why did you consult Online?  
A) Due to COVID 19  
B) Usual Practice  
C) COVID 19 and medical query was normal  
D) That was only option available.
3. Who did you consult online?  
A) Doctor B) Chemist C) Physiotherapist/ YOG Instructor D) All of them
4. How was your experience for this online consultation?  
A) Excellent B) Very Good C) Fair D) Unsatisfactory
5. Which medium you used for consultation?  
A) WhatsApp B) Facebook C) YouTube D) All of these
6. Do you follow Social Media Page and YouTube Channel of medical Professional  
A) Yes B) NO C) Sometime D) Not at all.