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Research Article

Unveiling Twitter's Take: Researching #TurkeyQuake Response & Rehabilitation

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ABSTRACT

Approximately 45000 global deaths are caused by natural disasters annually, though the human impact in terms of injuries, homelessness, economic losses, and psychological impact is much larger. In the disaster aftermath, social media platforms such as *Twitter*, and *Facebook*, are often used by communities to stay connected, share experiences, and access vital information and resources as needed to support disaster response and recovery. *Twitter* with a user base of more than 350 million daily active users, has emerged as an excellent resource for communication under such circumstances. However, published evidence regarding the role of Twitter in the post-disaster scenario, especially in relief, recovery, and rehabilitation is very limited but promising.

The current study is an attempt to study the role of Twitter in the 2023 Turkey earthquake. using prominent hashtags. The positive, neutral, and negative frames of reference have been identified by using sentiment analysis. The techniques of discourse analysis and sentimental analysis were utilized for the study. The study reflected that Twitter has played an excellent role in disseminating information, advocacy, and coordinating relief and recovery operations, but it promotes negative discourse.

Keywords: Hashtag research, turkey earthquake, social media in disasters, disaster recovery, rehabilitation, Twitter during disasters.

Introduction:

Earthquakes are considered as worst natural hazards which may develop into catastrophic disasters causing widespread devastation in an upward spiral & destroy life & property (Shah, 2020). Furthermore, earthquakes are the most unpredictable hazards and dangerous geological phenomena (Oral et al., 2015). According to the 'National Earthquake Information Centre,' more than 20,000 earthquakes of moderate to high magnitude hit the globe every year (USGS, 2022). According to, 'The global facility for disaster reduction and Recovery (GFDRR),' the earthquake caused extensive damage even more than the 1939 Erzincan earthquake.

On 6 February 2023, the earthquake in Turkey and Syria caused extensive damage and destruction to life and property. The 7.8 Mw devastating earthquake in Turkey and Syria created wreaking havoc in both countries. It shook the whole world with different sentiments and sorrowful stories of people who either died or were wounded. According to a World Bank report, the total damage due to the earthquake has been estimated at $34 million, including the damage to both residential and non-residential houses (Gunasekera et al., 2023).

The Historicity of Earthquakes in Turkey:

Turkey has a strategic location and is in high-intensity seismic zones. The country is surrounded by seismically active plates which consequentially makes Turkey vulnerable to high-magnitude earthquakes. Surrounded by African, Arabian, and Eurasian plates on the southern and northern sides respectively, the earthquakes in Turkey mostly occur due to the collision and tectonic movements of these plates. Geographically, central Turkey is the most seismically active zone because it is the middle point of the East Anatolian Fault (EAF) and the Arabian Plate, both plates being seismically hyperactive and part of the Alpide belt. The Alpide belt is