Group 10

Topic: Social Media Activism

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Project Report
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Abstract

This project aims to analyse the role of social media in activism. In the project, we attempt to give an overview of the relationship between social media and the social movements that we encountered during our field work. To do so, we look at social media platforms, users of social media, activists and people involved in particular socials movement to different extents as actors and focus on the relation amongst them. We compare it with how the relation between the actors would be different in absence of social media as an actor.

The first step is to understand how social media can influence activism through review of previous literature and see the possible advantages and limitations of social media activism. The next step is to determine,with the understanding gained from literature review, a set of parameters for analysing how extensive and effective the influence of social media on a particular movement is. Through these parameters, we would be analysing why, in what ways, and how effectively a particular movement has used social media and in what ways social media has changed or made easier the tasks involved in the course of a social movement. Through case studies of several social movements, we analyse what role social media plays in emergence of and mobilization for a movement.This means that we look at both: social media based social movements and social media assisted social movements and ask how social media affects the internal communication, recruitment and spread of the movement.

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Introduction

With the ubiquitous presence of social media, it has become imperative for individuals and organisations involved in activism to use it as a tool for promoting their cause and also, for fundraising. With the coming of new tools, the way of our communication with the world has also undergone a tremendous transformation. As Clay Shirky remarks in her book, *When we change the way we communicate, we change society. The tools that a society uses to create and maintain itself are as central to human life as a hive is to bee life.*[1] The growth of social media in the past few years has been exponential, as a result of which, it has become a central component of our communication with the world. Along with a central role in communication, social media has become an important entity for influencing people's opinions. Activists are now increasingly using social media to gain support for their cause and in some cases, spark a revolution throughout a country. Activists can now easily spread information and convey their messages to millions at the click of a button. Technologies such as these have made it to the to-do list of every activist as it provides unprecedented access to vast crowds of people with different backgrounds. With such a stupendous growth in a short time, social media activism is an interesting topic for research providing a glimpse into the numerous characters which go into the making of a successful movement implemented through social media. But, there is a caveat, social media is not designed for activism and being a business model, it does not always cater to the interests of the activist. Along with providing a vast array of advantages, there are also limitations and disadvantages associated with using social media as a tool for activism. This report explores in depth the nuances of social media activism and along with it we also study 5 cases where social media was used as an aiding component or where the movement itself was started through social media and was successful in causing a change. Exploring the case studies in depth will give us a clearer perspective on the roles played by social media within a multitude of factors affecting social movements. We will also look at the complex relationships between the human and non-human elements of activism, with social media being our focal non-human element, and investigate whether this form of activism has actually made a positive difference or not.

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1 Shirky,C.(2008).Here comes everybody:The power of organizing without organizations

Methodology

Our field work mainly consists of two parts: qualitative interviews with activists involved in various social movements in concern for this paper and a quantitative analysis of data collected through a survey from a diverse set of 321 people from both urban and rural background. Of the 321 people 39.9% were between age 10-20, 24.6% were between age 21-30, 17.1% were between age 31-40, 10.9% were between age 41-50 and 7.5% were over 50 years old. The major professions of the surveyed were school teacher (10.9%), college/university professor (14.58%) , engineer (5.29%) , homemakers (3.42%) and students (45.17%).

In order to draw an understanding of the relation between social media and social movements from the collected data, we employ the following theories: mainly, to study individual social movements, we take help of the actor network theory. Activists, social media users, mobile phones, computers, social media, internet etc are the relevant actors in this context and we focus mainly on the relation amongst activists, social media users and social media in this report.

Social Media Activism

The protests, revolutions, strikes by publics before the 21st century involved people who were ready to engage and give time to the cause. The technological advancements in the 21st century have perhaps provided a better way to organize these movements excluding the physical involvement of the public. Social media can be regarded as one of the biggest achievements of mankind in the recent past which has facilitated in increasing the public participation in movements around the world. But,as the times changed, the benchmarks for success of any movement have also been modified. *The future trajectory or potential impacts of networked movements cannot be fully understood by using only the conceptual models, indicators and benchmarks that we have gathered from the histories of earlier movements. Similar-looking moments and activities—large marches, big protests, occupations—do not represent the same points in the trajectories of the networked movements as they did in movements organized along traditional models and without digital tools*[2]

As Mr.Roshan Saroliya of The Center for Social Justice remarked when asked about why the NGO opted to use social media-

We were not quite active on social media in the past, but as the times changed, we felt the need to use social media to spread information about our work among people so that they can become aware of the situation around them. It can also help others to learn a lesson from someone else's situation and implement it in their own life. It also helps people to learn about laws and the procedure followed in a court of law. Through social media, we also became aware of people who were suffering and needed our help.

-Roshan Saroliya
Lawyer,
Center for Social Justice

This clearly implies the importance of social media for any organisation involved in activism. In fact, it is not entirely surprising in today's times when a movement is referred to by its hashtag. Also, as we found through our research, an overwhelming 85% of the respondents agreed to the fact that social media has leveraged the power of today's youth in bringing about a change in the society. The activists, social media and the public form a complex network of relationships in which each plays a vital part in the implementation of the process. The outcome of using social media depends on a number of factors such as the motive for starting the movement, accessibility of the social network, organizational structure and experience of the activists, the algorithm on which the social network operates, all these factors combine within a complex relationship to ultimately decide the fate of the movement. Often, these factors help in the implementation of the movement, but,

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[2] Tufekci,Z.(2017).Twitter and tear gas:The power and fragility of networked protest

there are cases where, due to failure of proper approach, social media might even work against the intended outcome of the movement. Activists need to safeguard themselves against it, and therefore, have a clear vision for the movement's progress. In the next section, we look at the advantages provided by social media activism over the traditional form of activism.

Parameters to evaluate the relation between a social movement and social media

Activists' expectations: This includes analysing why activists choose to employ social media as a tool for furthering their purpose and understanding what they expected to be able to achieve from using social media. Further, we analyse to what extent social media has fulfilled these expectations.

Extent of involvement of social media: we analyse how much a particular movement makes use of social media and classify movements in two broad classes:

- *Social media assisted movements*-movements that use traditional tools of social movements that have become easier to organize and coordinate thanks to social media
- *Social media based movements*- movements that "exist only because of social media" where social media is a central actor. These highlight the creative function of new and modified tactics expanding the action toolkit of social movements.

Movement Spillover: Indisputably, one effect of use of social media in activism is quicker and more extensive movement spillover(which is explained later in the report). We determine if a particular movement has caused or is caused by similar movements elsewhere in the world or whether a movement has caused or is a consequence of another closely related movement.

Role in communication: This includes asking to what extent social media has enabled internal communication and debate. In this, we also analyse how much social media has helped activists reach out to recruit the uninitiated citizens and mobilize sympathetic but passive masses to work for the movement.

Advantages over the traditional form of activism

A social movement is a process through which collective actors articulate their interests, voice grievances and critiques, and proposed solutions to identified problems by engaging in a variety of collective actions. These movements have three features: 1) they are conflictual and have clearly identified (ideological) opponents; 2) they are structured through dense informal networks; and 3) they are geared towards developing, sustaining and sharing collective identities.

The two important thing to study when studying social movements are opportunity structure and mobilization structure. Opportunity structures are the political structures and opportunities that facilitate or constrain a movement's action.[3] In other words, conventionally, opportunity structure is those factors that are beyond the control of a social movement, but which impact and influence the degree of resonance and ultimately its success and sustainability. Opportunity structures are traditionally situated at an economic and political level. However, mediation opportunity structure suggests that movements, activists, and other actors together decide what factors matters to the masses in order for them to come together and form a social movement. The other important thing is mobilization structure. Mobilization structures include the movements way of acquiring resources and mobilizing people towards accomplishing the movement's goals.

Social media has completely changed the way social movements mobilize resources and masses. It has broadened the reach of activists and made it much cheaper to recruit new users to their cause. The following section discusses what advantages social media offers to a social movement:

Social media , though often not intended for activism, has revolutionized activism. For instance, Twitter was not invented to coordinate protest events, but a social constructivist approach is helpful in understanding that technology innovation and practice is co-shaped by designers and users. Social media plays various roles in activism:

<u>Roles and Functions of Social Media:</u>

Social media makes internal organisation more efficient through the mediation of internal communication. It can also promote and facilitate internal debate among activists.

The use of social media lowers the transaction costs of participation which, in turn, potentially fosters recruitment and retention of recruits. Social media enables more fluid membership and asynchronous participation, although this potential should not be exaggerated. One of the most revolutionary aspects of the use of social media in mobilizing

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[3] https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/184973/20140925153600_MelkiMallat_Digital_Activism_Final.pdf

is that it trivializes the need for elite support. Through the use of social media, individuals are able to connect with each other and organize at an incredible low cost. More than that, it is also a resource that is available to most people, which means even uncommitted individuals might have an opportunity to join the cause.[4]

Social media plays an important role in facilitating the mobilization for, and coordination of, direct actions offline. Shamini, the co-founder of QueerAbad, acknowledges this in her interview where she admits that without the help of their facebook page, they would not have been able to receive the huge participation they received in their first offline event and all the following offline events. Another instance of social media improving the mobilization for direct action was seen in Sweden during protests against REVA identity checks. Activists appropriated corporate social media as virtual tools to configure and spread real-time warning systems about the whereabouts of police controls as a means of alerting travelers as to when, where, and how the police were conducting identity checks in Stockholm's urban environment.

Another way social media aid social movements is by making networking easier and more extensive. This is seen where women students across India communicate with each other and offer advice and comradery to fellow students protesting against discriminatory hostel rules and regulation, facilitated by the facebook page- Pinjra Tod. Social media increase the ability of social movements to organise across borders on a transnational level, to link up with other organisations building large networks that overcome time/space constraints, potentially leading to movement spill-over. Transnational networks are becoming virtual, more fluid, more decentralised, more de-institutionalised and more global. This can be instantly observed when talking about the Pinjra Tod movement. The Pinjra Tod movement happens to be a movement where social media has caused extensive movement spillovers within the nation. The movement, which started in DU, has motivated students communities in universities across India to speak out against the discriminatory hostel rules and regulations. This is an example of transnational activism where there is a common struggle against university authorities but local/national cells are relatively independent and link up with local struggles but where one instance of the movement is inspired and aided due to another instance majorly due to social media facilitating sharing of tactics, information and support. Another example, of a rather more influential movement is the protests in Tunisia spreading to other Arab countries such as Egypt, Yemen, Libya and Syria. Rapid diffusion of the act of occupying of important public spaces as a direct action in the Arab World spreading to the indignados in Spain, resulting in the Take The Square protests in Spain. This was also similar to Occupy movement that took place across the globe in places like United States and United Kingdom.This serves as a demonstration of influence of social media on global activism which results from movement spillover.

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[4]https://www.creighton.edu/fileadmin/user/CCAS/departments/PoliticalScience/Journal_of_Political_ Research__JPR_/2014_JSP_papers/Lopes_JPR.pdf

It is often argued that social media potentially provide opportunities for citizens and subordinate groups in society to bypass state and market controls and the mainstream media to construct alternative collective identities and share counter-information when mainstream media fails to do so.

Using social media, activists can also attack ideological enemies, using tactics popularly known as hacktivism. Moreover, activists can surveile the surveillers and bring to the public their own narrative of events, enable counter-information and communicate their cause as the mainstream often media fails to report unbiased news or in events where the state causes biased and censored information to be spread, particularly in cases of civil disobedience. A scene from a street protest in Sweden provides us with a good example: Policemen are acting violently toward a young woman. Several activists are standing nearby, filming and photographing the scene on their mobile phones but not helping their fellow activist. They are more inclined to become part of the media "spectacle" by uploading scenes of police violence on social media than they are to seek to rescue their comrade. Nevertheless, making police violence visible online via mobile phones can facilitate an alternative perspective that mainstream media might not broadcast. Social media can similarly be used to share and preserve protest artefacts which may lead to similar social movements elsewhere in the world or may serve as reminders for the past activities of a particular social movement.[5]

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[5] https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/2056305116664360
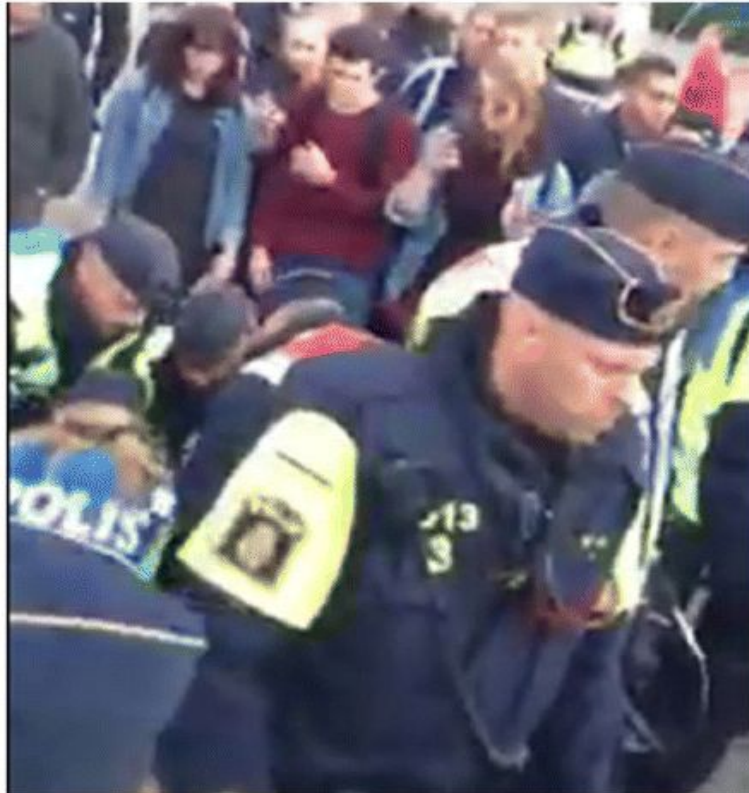
<u>Networks and Ties</u>

Networks and the ties between actors within a social movement can be understood as being constitutive of collective identities that are "constructed and negotiated by repeated activation of the relationships that link individuals or groups".

Strong, weak and latent ties are identified. Weak ties are primarily instrumental, strong ties are emotional and lead to more frequent exchanges and interactions. Weak-tie networks aid by providing experience, information and resources. The strength of strong ties tends to be emphasized in the social movement literature. Strong ties are associated with strong motivation and loyalty. Latent social network ties indicate ties that are technically possible but not yet activated socially. It is the activation of latent ties that social media help with.

The interconnections between actors within networks are a crucial aspect of social movements and activism because they influence their impact and their ability to sustain and coordinate social action. We take help of the SPIN model to make sense of networked movements. The characteristics of the SPIN model are as follows:

1. **S**egmentation - fluid and diverse in demands and aims
2. **P**olycentric   - leaderless and containing a multiplicity of identities
3. **I**ntegration   - horizontal structures and the building chains of equivalent
4. **N**etworks   -non-hierarchical, complex interconnections and flows of information

In this model, weak ties turn into strong ties if (online) interaction and mobilization turns into offline collective actions potentially creating bonds, collective identities and a common sense of purpose. Technology is not treated as an end in itself, but is seen as being used strategically to facilitate direct action offline and to integrate mobilization and recruitment strategies with the distribution of information and movement agendas. (Bennett 2003). In the literature, there is a negative perception of weak ties and online activities may be seen as being less genuine or 'real' than offline activities. Many forms of protest require offline activity and have a need for trusted strong ties if only to avoid infiltration by security forces, but there are also many new forms of networked resistance based on the strength of weak ties, mobilising millions of people. It has also been argued, however, that "lazy" activism, e.g. slacktivism, sometimes called clicktivism, resonates with citizens who fail to make time in their lives for "active" activism[6].

One important point to note here is that online activism is more accessible to those with disabilities who cannot attend rallies, protests, or canvassing. Erin Clifford, who is a member of the group Disabled People Against Cuts, has said, "Disabled people have taken

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[6] http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/62090/1/Social_media_and.pdf

social media and made it into their own medium, where they can have a voice on equal terms with their non-disabled counterparts, something not often afforded by society as a whole." Online activism is also a great alternative to those who live in rural or small town areas as well as those who don't have access to transportation in order to travel to protest. A recent study found that social media activism plays a major part in turning a cause into a movement. There's no other medium that allows for this sense of community. It's the perfect route to post real-time updates and to get news in the quickest way possible.[7]

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[7] https://www.branddrivendigital.com/social-media-activism-effective-slacktivism/

Disadvantages over the traditional form of activism

Surely, social media activism has been successful in many instances and has numerous advantages over the traditional form, but, still, it remains a 'virtual' platform for connecting people, which definitely contributes to the potential pitfalls of it. The doubts surrounding the effectiveness of social media activism was also reflected in our survey, where we found that only 37% of the people agreed to the fact that social media activism was better than the traditional form and almost 44% of the people were unsure about it being better than the traditional form. Here, we look at 3 issues which are the major hindrances faced by social media activists.

Slacktivism:

Often, social media activism has been termed as slacktivism/clicktivism because of the easiness with which people can provide support to a cause. *Slacktivism is defined as giving token support for a cause, without being willing to engage in more meaningful support, like donating time or money*[8]. Even our research suggests that slacktivism is widespread among the public. We found that out of the 46% of the respondents who supported any movement through social media only 31% of them actually invested their time in the movement. But, a research paper suggests otherwise and argues that in a few cases, slacktivists play an important role in initiating collective action, a part of the conclusion of that research paper is as follows-

Our findings suggest that peripheral users in online protest networks may be as important in expanding the reach of messages as the highly committed minority at the core. We do not find equivalent patterns in datasets that concern topics unrelated to political protests. Peripheral users possess potentially valuable mobilization resources that greatly increase the number of online individuals who are exposed to protest messages initiated by core participants.This does not imply that social media can always be used to activate the critical periphery to the same degree. In some cases, the periphery might not be large enough to increase the audience of protest messages and, as a result, fail to raise sufficient awareness of the actions taken by the committed minority. Decades of research on resource mobilization shows that there are many factors involved in the success of collective action. Social media is just one instrument that needs to be played effectively.[9]

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[8]
http://news.stlpublicradio.org/post/activism-or-slacktivism-how-social-media-hurts-and-helps-student-activism#stream/0

[9] Barberá P, Wang N, Bonneau R, Jost JT, Nagler J, Tucker J, et al. (2015) The Critical Periphery in the Growth of Social Protests. PLoS ONE 10(11): e0143611. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0143611

People should remember that the ultimate goal of activism is not to raise awareness but result into real action or change. But nevertheless, slacktivism has been a pertinent problem for social media activism and will continue to be in the coming years.

Cultural capitalism

Another peril constituted by online activism is the issue of cultural capitalism. Social media can drastically alter how we conceive of ourselves. Issues can become labels of political alignment and therefore become a means to the end of social gain, rather than of social change. This in turn results in people supporting a cause for the sake of social gain and hence, resulting in slacktivism. People cultivate a name and image that they can manipulate for social gain, 'likes', retweets, comments, and shares—rather than real change on the ground,become their primary goal. People choose how they desire to be seen by others and then try to manipulate that image in accordance with their desires.

Algorithms

The third and final complication with social media activism is the impedance due to the algorithms on which the social media sites operate. Operating through business models relying on parameters such as 'likes', 'shares' and page-views, activists have to bear in mind that social media has not been designed for their needs and for raising awareness among the public. In addition to it, social sites having their own agendas can easily manipulate the site's content to suit their needs. With the rise in popularity of only a handful of social sites, the problem has become even more hazardous as the companies owning the social sites can impact millions through just a few filtering processes. One of the most famous examples of censorship by social sites occurred in 2011 when Michael Anti, a well-known Chinese journalist's Facebook account was deactivated because he was using his pen name as his username on Facebook. Even though, most of his friends and colleagues know him by this name rather than his real name, Zhao Jing, Facebook said that he had violated their policy of using a person's real name as the username. This resulted in Michael losing contact with thousands of his followers and the potential impact which he could have had if his account would not have been deactivated[10]. Such incidences throw light on the fragility of social media platforms being useful for activism. The policies and algorithms of these sites can have a huge impact in the long run and possibly, a negative impact for activists.

Considering these factors, it might seem as if activism on social media would prove to be a daunting task in the coming times, but, the impact of these factors can be minimised if people start reevaluating their participation in social media and think critically about their role in this complex network.

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[10] https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/mar/09/chinese-blogger-mark-zuckerberg-dog

Social media and law making

Social Media's effects on politics are a growing subject of empirical research. This section focuses on the role of social media in the legislative process. As the number of users have increased on social media platforms, there has been a growing interest in applying social media toward addressing national priorities , not just using them for entertainment or corporate purposes. Although the media obviously have no power to pass laws, activists may influence the behaviour of legislators by paying attention to a bill. A Norwegian study, for example, found that when framing is strong, supported in society, and accompanied by journalistic engagement, extensive media pressure can cause changes in prior decisions as well as legislation. A longitudinal study in Belgium suggests that external pressure, of which media attention is an indicator, sometimes plays a role in policy change. In addition to activism, government usage of social media also plays a vital role in the lawmaking process[11]. Government employment of social media offers several key opportunities for the technology:

- Democratic participation and engagement, using social media technologies to engage the public in government fostering participatory dialogue and providing a voice in discussions of policy development and implementation.

- Co-production, in which governments and the public jointly develop, design, and deliver government services to improve service quality, delivery, and responsiveness.

- Crowdsourcing solutions and innovations, seeking innovation through public knowledge and talent to develop innovative solutions to large-scale societal issues. To facilitate crowdsourcing, the government shares data and other inputs so that the public has a foundational base on which to innovate.

Though not mutually exclusive, these opportunities offer great promise and pose new challenges in redefining government community connections and interactions. As government social media initiatives are launched and evaluated, design lessons can be extracted and shared to achieve these and related goals.

The major factor for influencing law making process is naturally the amount of attention which it receives, since the more attention there is, the stronger the incentive for political actors to respond. Second, the content of the coverage, that is, the claims made and arguments presented, is relevant, because social media attention can provide politicians with

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[11] The media's role in lawmaking:a case study analysis,The International Journal of Press/Politics 2015, Vol. 20(3) 297–316

new information and point their attention toward specific topics. The content can also be factual information and information on the viewpoints of other actors or the public at large. Third, what matters is which the activists covered the subject and to what extent this coverage is congruent.

Politicians and activists can influence each other positively, with political actors responding to social media coverage, and activists responding to what happens during a legislative process, which sets a spiral in motion . Because of this mechanism, the relationship between "behavior of political actors" and "social media attention" is modelled as a feedback loop.[12]

All these factors can combine to eventually affect the outcome of a legislative process as when it comes to the eventual decision making, political actors may anticipate the potential media coverage their position can generate . As a result, if journalists write univocally about a topic, politicians may accommodate toward this position.

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[12] https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0740624X11000992

<h1 align="center">Case Studies</h1>

<h1 align="center">1.Romanian protests</h1>

After a deadly fire explode in Bucharest's Colectiv nightclub on October 30th, 2015, killing 64 people and injuring another 147, the investigation showed that the building was completely unfit for any public events, but had an operating permit.

The media is biased in Romania. So, Activists used social media to spread awareness to bring people together and they succeeded. The ruling party was Social Democratic Party (PSD). A tragic fire gathered Romanian people to stand against Government. #Colectiv was one of the hashtags used by protestors on social media, and eventually became the name of the revolution. By the help of Social media, people gathered and rose against Government. As a result, On November 3rd, 15,000 people protested in front of Victoria Palace and as a consequence, on the morning of November 4th, the Ponta government resigned. Despite the resignation, protests continued for six more consecutive nights, with about 35,000 people getting together in Bucharest and 30,000 more in other Romanian cities. Demonstrators demanded early elections and a total change of the political class. Protests in solidarity with those in the country took place in London, Paris, and Madrid as a result of movement spillover.[13]

Another round of protests occurred in 2017 when The country's ruling coalition government (PSD - who won the election of December 2016) made a decree named Ordinance 13 on Jan. 31,2017 to decriminalize abuse in office by officials, if the sums involved were less than around $48,500. Ordered without any input from parliament, the decree would have stopped all investigations for pending corruption offenses, freed officials imprisoned for corruption, and blocked further investigations related to those offenses from being brought to justice. The coalition government, led by Prime Minister Sorin Grindeanu of the left-wing Social Democratic Party (PSD), argued that these changes were needed to align some laws with the constitution and reduce prison overcrowding. But critics saw the decree as an attempt to allow allies of Grindeanu (PM) caught in the country's anti-corruption efforts to escape censure. Among those who stood to benefit from the decree was president of the PSD, Liviu Dragnea. He was blocked from becoming prime minister due to corruption charges he was facing over defrauding the state of around $26,000. The order might have allowed him to stand as the country's leader. By midnight of Jan. 31,2017, several thousands of people gathered in Piața Victoriei, announcing a longer and larger protests for the days to follow. A week later, night protests caught the whole country, with people mobilizing better and better on social media. Considering that people had

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https://www.diggitmagazine.com/articles/romanianprotests-how-online-activism-succeeded-overthrowing-romanian-government

voiced their concerns and protested at the news of the Ordinance(decree)'s proposal, the Government's response to proceed with passing the Ordinance at night, ignoring public concerns and avoiding any consultation, was unacceptable under any circumstances. This increased even further the people's frustration and deepened their conviction that PSD's mandate was not to the Romanian people but rather to serving their own interests – including widening their immunities and making acts corruption an integral part of their mandate.[14]

Effect - The country was known as being one of the most corrupt countries in Europe when it was admitted into the E.U. in 2007. That has changed over the years. Between 2014 and 2016, around 2,000 people were convicted for abuse of power. This included Adrian Nastase, a former prime minister, as well five ministers, 16 parliamentarians and five senators who were put on trial. Credit has been given to the Romania's National Anticorruption Directorate anti-corruption authority, the DNA, that led to court cases involving 777 indicted defendants, including judges, parliamentarians and ministers, in the first eight months of 2016.[15]

Role of social media-Social media was one of the major reason of such a huge gathering of crowds. Here, these two FB group were the most active at that time. The first group was *#Rezist (Romania Rezista)[16]*, a Facebook community which was set up spontaneously on the 8th of February 2017, to support the street protests in Bucharest, against the PSD Government's sudden issuing of Emergency Ordinance no. 13/2017 (OUG13).

The second Facebook group, *Corupția ucide (Corruption kills)[17]*, started its activity much earlier (after the Colectiv fire), and joined the January – February protests consistently contributing to the coherence of the anti-Government movements too. #Rezist group has high expectations from people. As to the candidates' values and principles, the three declared group administrators specified that they accepted only those who "love Romania", that is, those for whom the "political colours are red, yellow and blue"; likewise, applicants should be correct and accurate towards political leaders and their statements.

Conclusion-Here we see the power of social media activism at its full force, although it was a social media assisted movement, it was necessary for mobilisation and was instrumental in sparking a revolution throughout Romania against a problem which had been prevalent for

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https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325698299_rezist_-_Romania%27s_2017_anti-corruption_protests_causes_development_and_implications_wwwromanianprotestsinfo

15 http://time.com/4660860/romania-protests-corruption-problem/

16 https://www.facebook.com/groups/ romaniarezista

17 https://www.facebook.com/coruptia.ucide/

years. It was only through social media that people in such huge numbers turned up and finally brought the government down to its knees.

2.Social media usage by and for LGBTQIA community

The community has come a long way from being viewed as abnormals to being accepted as a part of the society. Still, there remain major challenges to be overcome in many parts of the world and social media is proving to be a boon for the members of the community. As Fan Popo, who is an independent filmmaker and LGBT activist based in Beijing said when asked about the depiction of homosexuality in mainstream media in China:

Most mainstream media are quite stereotypical on gender issues. Gay and lesbian films are banned in theatres and queer topics are not allowed to be the main theme in movies or TV series. If you shoot a gay movie, it will definitely not pass censorship.[18]

In such a hostile environment, social media provides the perfect platform for the people of LGBTQIA community to express themselves and exercise their freedom. The same was echoed by Shamini Kothari (co-founder of QueerAbad) during her interview when she was asked why Facebook was her choice for starting the group,

So when QueerAbad started, there was, all the groups that existed, the queer groups that existed in Ahmedabad, were extremely underground so it would just mean that people sort of meet up in somebody's house in a room but there was no public space for it and the biggest reason for this was that people were afraid for their privacy and security. They were afraid somebody would out them. They were afraid that associating with the queer group in public meant that their identity was vulnerable so , the founder and I-Anahita and I- thought of some of these things and we thought that it would be good to start a digital platform and it would be good to start a group that is open to both the queer people and allies , because if you like a page, it doesn't mean anything. It means you support it but that doesn't mean you identify as queer. So that was the main reason. Behind the screen, people could engage and like this page and at least know that this page exists for them.

-Shamini Kothari
Co-founder,
QueerAbad

Here, we look at 3 major organisations/movements which have played a major role in bringing about a change for the community through social media:

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[18] https://www.merics.org/en/blog/social-media-helps-lgbt-community-china

1) **It gets better project -** Started in 2010, this project was one of the first social media campaigns to successfully reach out to teenagers. The campaign was prompted by the suicides of Justin Aaberg and Billy Lucas, two teenage boys bullied for being gay. Sexual health columnist Dan Savage and his partner Terry Miller took the help of YouTube and posted a video where Savage articulated his own struggles, including how he overcame his own experiences with bullying and intolerance. The video went viral and other members of the community went to the social media platform to speak about their own experiences and how it "got better" as an adult. Within three years, the project accumulated over 50,000 testimonies, including those from celebrities and politicians and continues to grow to this day. This movement is one of the best examples of social media based movement as it was highly successful in promoting its cause and achieved the desired result.

2) **Human Rights Campaign(HRC)** - This foundation works to achieve equality for LGBT Americans and has over 1.5 million members and supporters worldwide. The foundation has many programs directed at people in the community of all ages and walks of life, from children and families to a health and aging program. The Human Rights Campaign is active on social media but their most successful campaign has been tied to their "equality" logo. In 2013, as the U.S. Supreme Court heard arguments from two marriage equality cases, HRC shared a red version of its logo and asked supporters on Twitter and Facebook to change their profile photos to show support. The campaign went viral, with help from celebrities like Beyonce and George Takei to draw attention to the campaign. Facebook saw a 120% increase in profile photo updates as a result of this campaign. The success of this foundation speaks volumes about the role of social media in bringing social justice to the marginalized communities.

3) **#ComingOutMatters -** Students Moving America and Jonny Drubel of E!'s #RichKids of Beverly Hills launched a social media campaign that aimed to celebrate 'coming out' in the LGBT community. The hashtag became a social media movement where gay individuals were encouraged to share and spread their coming out stories through Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram, where they were later gathered on the #ComingOutMatters website. Users can browse the stories of people coming out to family and friends, or share their own coming out experiences. The goal was to launch awareness effort to educate and support communities with LGBT specific issues, and the movement is continuing to gain support and recognition today. Movements such as these utilise fully the widespread presence of social media. People would have been hesitant to come out publicly as gay, but through social media, they can feel a sense of security providing them with greater freedom for expressing their sexuality.[19]

The given examples illustrate the unique role which social media plays in raising awareness about the LGBTQIA community. The importance of social media is perfectly

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[19] https://blog.techimpact.org/lgbt-organizations-use-social-media-social-good/

captured in the words of Shamini Kothari when asked about whether QueerAbad would have been what it is today, had it not been for social media,

Um, no. I don't think it would have been what it is. That's actually impossible because literally the reason why it worked, even though it was slow in the beginning. Even though everybody cannot access social media and digital media, the reason why people slowly, slowly ,slowly became comfortable was because it's like "okay. I liked a page. It doesn't mean I'm gay" or 'it doesn't mean that people have to see that I am interested in these issues" but as soon as we put up the first offline event we had, we had a hundred people attend. So, it just goes to show that it wouldn't have been possible had we given out flyers and said "hum yahan pe mil rahe hai for a poetry reading" I don't think people would have come at all or like five people would have come.

-Shamini Kothari
Co-founder,
QueerAbad

3.Bangladesh Student Protests

On 29th July, 2018, two public transport buses were racing in Dhaka, Bangladesh for passengers amidst crowded areas. The reckless driving resulted in an accident that injured 9 people and killed 2 students, Diya Khanam Mim and Abdul Karim Rajib, of Shaheed Ramiz Uddin Cantonment College[20]. This enraged many people, especially students, and questions were asked about Bangladesh's Road Safety reforms and all the corruption that flows rampant in the system. On the day of the crash, Shipping Minister Shajahan Khan was asked by reporters about the incident but he reportedly laughed off the questions, as the Dhaka Times reported, "by saying that a road crash killed 33 people in India's Maharashtra, but it was not given as much importance as the Airport Road accident." Khan is also the executive president of the Bangladesh Sarak Paribahan Sramik Federation (Bangladesh Road Transport Workers Federation)[21]. Students took to the streets and protests were held, which was also in response to the lack of room for demonstration or free expression among the general public. Poor compliance of road safety regulations and the corruption in the system had resulted in a number of vehicles having shoddy registration or not being registered at all and a number of drivers without valid driving license. The students decided to fight against it themselves with support from their guardians.

Interestingly, the revolt against poor governance had no leader. There was no one person or a body of people guiding the people and telling them what to do. The students put forth a nine point list of demands to the government. The demands were:

1. Reckless drivers should receive capital punishment and provision for such punishment should be incorporated into the constitution.
2. Shipping Minister Shajahan Khan must withdraw his statement and apologize to the students
3. Construction of a foot bridge or alternative arrangement to ensure safety for students' movement at the spot of Sunday's incident; construction must start within 7 days.
4. Setting up speed breakers in every accident prone road.
5. The Government has to take responsibility for the students killed or injured in road accidents.
6. All intra city buses must stop and pick up students when they ask.
7. Students should be allowed to pay discounted fares in every part of the country including Dhaka.
8. Vehicles must not be allowed on the streets without fitness certificates and drivers must not drive without licenses and updated paperwork.

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[20] https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/08/bangladesh-mass-student-protests-deadly-road-accident-180802174519088.html

[21] https://thediplomat.com/2018/08/students-protest-against-reckless-driving-roil-bangladesh\

9. No bus can take excess passengers[22]

The students were working out of their own conscience and thus social media was widely used to communicate among the protestors. Social media was fundamental in the protests because of 2 major reasons, the first one being that the protestors were all students ranging from children as young as 13 years old[23] to college students. These young kids, did what no government could in all these years, All cars in the street were thoroughly checked for the driver's license and papers and cars without papers or driver license had their keys taken and turned to the police. The students feared no power. Students stopped government officials, police officers, navy personnel and ministers and checked their driving licenses and vehicle registrations. [24] In the 5th day of the protests, the students achieved 4 designated lane traffics: for rickshaws, cars, buses and emergencies. This was a revolt of the students. This was the youth fighting against the govt. in their own means on their own terms. Another factor being that Dhaka has the second highest number of Facebook users [25] per capita of any city in the world and an estimated whopping 3.3 billion people, about half of the total population of the world, used some form of social media in January 2018.. As elsewhere, social media is providing public channels for dissent that might otherwise have been heard only been muttered to a few others at a tea stall or inside a home. Naturally a lot for the protest was being communicated over the internet using these platforms and just as naturally government tried to stop it. Another important fact to consider is the ruling party of Bangladesh, the BAL (Bangladesh Awami League) and their student wing BCL (Bangladesh Chhatra League) which was formed back in 1948. The BCL and BAL in general have been involved in violent backfires of protests and are not poorly organised in general as was shown in events like the death of Biswajit Das who was mistaken for a member of the opposition party [26]and when a heated argument between two factions of BCL, elevated to the use of firearms and lead to death of a student who got caught in the crossfire [27]. This nature of BCL was also followed in the July-August student protests when the spread of the protest by students on social media also saw a backlash by BAL and BCL on social media.

Role of social media-After the protests started, students took to Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Reddit and other platforms to spread awareness and amongst the people of their own country as well as the people of the world. Facebook posts and Twitter tweets saw a lot

[22] https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/2018/08/03/the-nine-demands-of-the-students
[23] https://medium.com/@studentofdhaka/bangladesh-wants-justice-da027e539c8a
[24]
https://www.thedailystar.net/city/students-stop-police-dig-finds-no-license-or-papers-students-block-streets-in-dhaka-1614904
[25]
https://bdnews24.com/bangladesh/2017/04/15/dhaka-ranked-second-in-number-of-active-facebook-users
[26] https://www.dhakatribune.com/uncategorized/2013/11/04/biswajit-killing-case-hc-order-rejected
[27] http://www.theindependentbd.com/post/142409

of spread with hashtags like #WeWantJustice, #WeDemandJustice, #BangladeshStudentProtests, #ChhatraLeague, #BDRoadSafety were trending on Twitter and saw as many as 11.1k tweets for #BDRoadSafety and 50.8k tweets for #BangladeshStudentProtests with a whooping 500k twitter posts mentioning Bangladesh [28] by 5th August, i.e. in the first 7 days after the accident on 29th July.

Many of the posts contained gruesome images and clips of the violence that students faced from the members of BCL and the police. Police and BCL members used tear gas, rubber bullets, batons, machetes, knives, rocks, sticks and other weapons against the students. As many as 115 people were reported to be injured in the government backlash on 4th August. BAL, BCL and the police all denied having used any violent means but the videos were rampant on Twitter and Reddit. [29]. There were posts of BCL members taking 4 female protestors to BCL Office and being raped by BCL officials although BCL leaders denied these reports. The students then protested forming 3 queues keeping women in the middle queue holding hands to protect them. Journalists were also stopped from recording and beaten up on the streets. Their devices and videotaped footage were also destroyed [30]. On the morning of 5th August, a famous Bangladeshi reporter Shahidul Alam was picked up from his home after his interview with Al Jazeera and after he posted a video on facebook depicting the violence of BCL members, as was confirmed by the Dhaka Metropolitan Police [31]. Bangladesh is also ranked 146th in the world in terms of Press Freedom [32].

On 5th August the internet services in Bangladesh were slowed down, as said by Jahirul Haq, chairman of the Bangladesh Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (BTRC), told AFP that they received a 'decision' from the government. But he did not clarify what was the government order was. He said he would comment further on the situation later Sunday (6th August). A senior telecoms official who asked for anonymity said: "The BTRC has slowed down the internet at the order of the government." [33]. 3G and 4G networks were taken down again on 5th August.

The protesters created a list of places across the city that could act as safehouses for the protesters. The list was spread through Facebook and messenger apps while everyone made sure that it would only be passed on to people that could be trusted. This list made was

[28] https://www.dhakatribune.com/feature/2018/08/05/bangladesh-student-protests-trend-on-reddit-twitter

[29] https://www.rappler.com/world/regions/south-central-asia/208845-bangladesh-teens-road-safety-protest

[30] https://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/2-the-daily-star-journalists-assaulted-1616086

[31] https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/dhaka/2018/08/05/photographer-shahidul-alam-picked-up-from-his-home

[32] https://rsf.org/en/bangladesh

[33] https://tribune.com.pk/story/1773800/3-bangladesh-shuts-mobile-internet-tackle-teen-protests/

outed soon though and houses on the list were raided. The posts on Facebook about protests and demonstrations can be used as proof enough to arrest individual according to the amendment made in 2018 in the country's digital law which made it easier for police to arrest those suspected of vague offences, such as publishing material that "tends to deprave or corrupt" or "causes or may cause hurt to religious beliefs". Since then, arrests and prosecutions have soared, according to Human Rights Watch [34], with more than 1,270 charge sheets lodged in the past five years. Bangladesh's home affairs minister, Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, said on 8th August, "We are in the process to identify all those who spread rumours in the social media and incited violence. None will be spared, be they students, teachers or political leaders." "The law is so vague that it can be used to punish anything said or written that the government doesn't like," said Omar Waraich, the deputy south Asia director for Amnesty International. "And if it can be used against someone of Shahidul Alam's profile, the fear is that it will also be used against young people expressing peaceful views online." Cyber Crime division reported as many as 1,200 facebook accounts that had been identified to have been spreading rumors and they started weeding out possible suspects. In the hours after the crackdown commenced on 11th August, accounts that had been actively cheering the protests fell silent. One student who had been involved in the protests from the beginning abruptly deleted her posts, writing in a new post in formal Bangla, "I am sorry. I spread false statements. I was emotional." The girl later deactivated her account and told one of her friends that she had to move cities as members of BCL had contacted her father and threatened them. More such cases were reported of accounts be suspended suddenly or showing abrupt behaviour. Members of BCL also told asked followers to send examples of anyone spreading rumors. BCL members hosted Facebook Live videos with students who claimed to be amongst the protesters and apologised for spreading false rumors. [35]The protests died down a little after these arrests since police was arresting people for sharing the news on social media platforms too. [36]

The protestors also took Reddit by storm by a constant stream of posts. Reddit being an majorly international platform helped spread the news to international fronts. Subreddits like r/Bangladesh and r/WorldNews received posts that got as many as 115k [37]upvotes that also pushed these posts to the front page of Reddit and made r/Bangladesh one of the trending subreddits. Students also started a Reddit Live Thread [38]on 5th August which was being updated constantly with the current ongoings in the city in real time. The thread was

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[34]
https://www.hrw.org/report/2018/05/09/no-place-criticism/bangladesh-crackdown-social-media-commentary
[35] https://www.facebook.com/sarezabd/videos/1981548095209691/
[36]
https://amp.theguardian.com/world/2018/aug/10/none-will-be-spared-students-fear-reprisals-over-bangladesh-unrest
[37]
https://www.reddit.com/r/worldnews/comments/94ivyd/school_students_have_been_protesting_in_demand/
[38] https://www.reddit.com/live/11e4mknpbhjqr

being updated by whoever was safe and had internet access. Links to archives of articles and videos submitted by people was also included that was open for translations so that Non-Bangla people could understand the situation. [39].

The spread of the protests through social media grabbed attention of institutions across continents and the world public with celebrities speaking out for the students and United Nations and European Union expressing concern regarding the safety of the students. "We are deeply concerned about the reports of violence and call on all for calm. The concerns expressed by youth about road safety are legitimate and a solution is needed for a mega city like Dhaka." said UN Resident Coordinator Mia Seppo. [40]The European Union has called for an immediate end to "disproportionate violence" against peaceful student protesters and journalists. It also demanded an investigation for holding the perpetrators accountable."[41]

Effect-On 3rd August, amidst the protests, the government had issued 20 Lakh Taka to the families of the 2 children who had died in the accident and the families urged the students to stop protesting with confidence in the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, but the protests had continued for days ahead for Road Safety [42]The Bangladesh Cabinet on, 6th August, approved the draft of the Road Transport Act 2018, with a maximum penalty of five years' imprisonment and a fine of Bangladeshi 500,000 Taka for drivers found involved in rash accidents resulting in roadside deaths. The new law also proposes death penalty for drivers found guilty in negligence that lead to roadside deaths. "The proposed law has failed to fulfill the expectation of the people", said advocate Monjil Morshed, President of Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh (HRPB). In 2016, the country's high court gave a verdict against a writ petition filed by HRPB demanding that in the case of death in road accidents the accused should be sentenced to 7 years' imprisonment, which was followed before Truckers' Protest in 1985, instead of 5. "7 years' imprisonment as punishment or sentence is also insufficient for causing death of a person by reckless and negligent driving," observed the HC.[43]

An initiative of Traffic Week was also introduced, which is a week long road safety program. The police got much stricter and lodged 19,366 cases on the first day and 25,882

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[39] https://mega.nz/#F!WeBTXAyQ!TiJio41j0gBcjMPcXrfP1Q

[40] https://www.thedailystar.net/backpage/un-worried-about-safety-children-1616560

[41] https://www.thedailystar.net/news/country/eu-voices-concern-over-violent-protests-1617133

[42] https://www.thedailystar.net/city/families-road-crash-victims-meet-pm-receive-financial-assistance-1614913.

[43] https://www.thedailystar.net/country/government-okays-new-road-transport-act-2018-maximum-five-years-jail-1616659

cases on the second day across the country. [44]The bus owners also decided to put the drivers on a monthly payroll instead of contractual basis considering that the incidence in which the students were killed could've been avoided altogether if the drivers had not been racing in the streets to get customers. [45]

On the social media front, BAL allocated $11 million to create a special wing in the Bangladesh Computer Security Incident Response Team, a government body tasked with looking into cyber threats, to monitor social media and identify material that is against the state. This wing will look into the spread of such movements through social media and more importantly the rumors and misinformation that perpetrated during the protests.

"Aside from spreading rumours, a lot of anti-state activities were conducted using these platforms," the current technocrat minister of the Ministry of Post, Telecommunication and Information Technology in Bangladesh, Mustafa Jabbar said. "So, we have decided to take action to prevent such activities in the future." Jabbar said the Facebook official had been told that if they want to run their operation in Bangladesh, they need to do so by abiding by the laws of the country. "As a sort of a publisher of news and posts, Facebook too needs to take the responsibility," he added. "It should not allow publishing of any post that goes against the state." The minister said the government may even block the social networking website if necessary. "The first priority is security of the state and its people," he said. "For ensuring these, we can sacrifice the small in the greater interest."

On 12th June, the govt. had allocated $28 million for equipment for mobile, email and social media surveillance. In June 2016, the government had made an arrangement with Facebook, Google and Microsoft according to which it can request any information from them in case of any "unexpected incident", which has to be provided within 48 hours. All this raises a new question of privacy among the Bangla public. The constitution of Bangladesh does provide a law for the privacy of the people in Article 43 of the Constitution. It recognises an individual's right to "privacy of correspondence and other means of communication". However, there are no data privacy or protection laws or guidelines that outline how this information should be safeguarded.[46]

Conclusion-This case clearly highlights the downfalls and assets of social media, the protests by students through Reddit played a pivotal role in forcing the government to listen

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[44]

https://www.thedailystar.net/news/country/bangladesh-traffic-week-2018-25882-more-cases-filed-on-2nd-day-1617142

[45]

https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/dhaka/2018/08/08/bus-owners-to-put-contract-drivers-on-monthly-payroll-instead
[46]

https://scroll.in/article/891011/bangladesh-ramps-up-efforts-to-monitor-social-media-after-months-of-student-led-agitations

to their demands but the regulations placed on Facebook need to be seriously looked at by the competent authorities as it clearly violates the freedom of expression guaranteed by the constitution of Bangladesh. Being a social media assisted movement, it garnered a huge following through it which involved some of the biggest institutions in the world which would have definitely not been possible had it not been for social media.

4.#BlackLivesMatter

The murder of young African American teen Trayvon Martin by his neighborhood watch volunteer George Zimmerman in early 2012 led to start of a massive movement and a social revolution in the form of the Black Lives Matter equality movement, supported widely by not only the PoC (People of Color) community, but also by some of the whites and the minor communities[47].

The term "BlackLivesMatter" is coined simply as a way to state that we are all equal, and police killings of people of color, majorly African Americans, can not be tolerated. Being coined the "Black Lives Matter" movement, famous as hashtag #BlackLivesMatter across many social media platforms makes the movement highly controversial and sensitive, as it is easy to misunderstand the message and the meaning of these words.

The actions of this movement were not only often radical, but at times were socially unacceptable as people came on street protesting and burning and damaging nearby goods. People of this group assumed all police officials as evil and thus targeted all the rules which were formed by them for overall benefit of society. Though the Black Lives Matter movement is seen as highly radical, it is still a powerful example of how a sensitive issue which was suppressed for a long time i.e. black lives do matter, people of every color matter, and we are all equal was raised impactfully. But being a part of such a sensitive issue which might harm sentiments of others, freedom of speech and power was to be used very carefully. But some integral members of this movement started radical movements and abusive behaviour towards other White citizens and thus the movement was highly opposed. Also, most of the times, the hashtag was misinterpreted and thus other backlash movements such as "All Lives Matter" and "Blue Lives Matter" originated which are discussed in the next topic.

Role of social media- After George Zimmerman was acquitted in the fatal shooting of Trayvon Martin in 2013, members of the black community and activists everywhere needed an outlet for their frustration, as well as a platform where they could call for a change. They found social media as their main platform, result of which was the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag, which has now become an emblem of modern racial injustices. According to a newly released Pew study, the hashtag has been used nearly 30 million times on Twitter – an average of 17,003 times per day.[48] #BlackLivesMatter is a symbol of powerful role that social media plays in all kinds of activist movements. #MeToo, which roared through social media as powerful men in a number of industries were accused of sexual misconduct, is a key example.

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[47] http://academicwriting.wikidot.com/black-lives-matter-essay
[48] #BlackLivesMatter as A Case Study in the Politics of Digital Media: Algorithms, Hashtag Publics, and Organizing Protest Online [University of Carolina]

A Pew study[49] found that 69 percent of Americans believe social media is useful in bringing issues to politicians' attention, while an additional 67 percent see it as effective for creating sustained movements. On the other hand, 77 percent believe social networks can distract from issues that are really important. One key finding of the Pew study reveals that black and Hispanic social media users are more likely than white social media users to see social media as an effective tool for political engagement because those groups don't feel that their views are represented elsewhere – by political institutions or the mainstream media. Thus, social media is very helpful for the people who are oppressed, to present their views to the world but as it is rightly said that every coin has two sides, this boon of being expressive can sometimes hurts someone's sentiments or can divert people's attention from issues that are really important.

Movement spillover - In White-dominated societies, any demand for equality by different colored people is always met by a backlash. This has been true for Black Lives Matter movement also where civilians were demanding equality. Just as the Black Lives Matter went global, so as its backlash.

"All Lives Matter" and "Blue Lives Matter" are the two of the most important backlashes that "Black Lives Matter" faced. Both played major roles in the media coverage of and political response to Black Lives Matter.

All Lives Matter

The hashtag "All Lives Matter" is a declaration of "colorblindness" as described by many individuals on social media. According to Ian Haney-Lopez, Prof. of Law at University of California who is well versed in the topic of racial justice in American Law, "All Lives Matter" hashtag is "the dominant etiquette around race".

"All Lives Matter" erases the long past history that #BlackLivesMatter was building i.e. the Whites don't care about people of other races. The hashtag was but the backlash of Whites to acknowledge the world that Whites no longer 'see race'. Under the White understanding, talking about systemic racism is itself racist, because it mixes thoughts into existence of "racial divides" that are invisible to Whites who believe themselves to be free of prejudice.

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[49] Activism in the Social Media Age (Pew Research Center) [https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2018/07/12/black-lives-matter-movement-and-social-media-after-five-years/778779002/]

There is no better example of this than Giuliani, the former New York mayor who is a famous proponent of "stop and frisk"[50] policing and a longtime master of backlash politics. He told CNN Black Lives Matter is "inherently racist" because "it divides us … All lives matter: White lives, Black lives, all lives."

" Black Lives Matter never protests when every 14 hours someone is killed in Chicago, probably 70-80% of the time by a Black person. Where are they then? Where are they when a young Black child is killed? "

-Giuliani, the former New York mayor

Answer to Giuliani was the article[51] of Alicia Garza, one of the creators of the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag. She explained in 2014 how Black lives mattering is a precondition for all lives mattering:

"Black Lives Matter doesn't mean your life isn't important – it means that Black lives, which are seen as without value within White supremacy, are important to your liberation. Given the disproportionate impact state violence has on Black lives, we understand that when Black people in this country get free, the benefits will be wide-reaching and transformative for society as a whole.
When we are able to end the hyper-criminalisation and sexualisation of Black people and end the poverty, control and surveillance of Black people, every single person in this world has a better shot at getting and staying free. When Black people get free, everybody gets free."

Blue Lives Matter

While campaigning for the presidency in late 2015, Trump said that if elected he would use an executive order to make the death penalty mandatory for anyone who killed a police officer. The US president has no such authority, but Trump was aware about the politics of the backlash.

The idea of "Blue Lives Matter" originated when many police officers were killed by gunman who were mainly Black seeking revenge for the discrimination made by Whites to their black brothers. These atrocities received an ample amount of media coverage and thus people started a movement on social media namely "Blue Lives Matter" in favour of police officers who were facing atrocities of Black which was a direct backlash to "Black Lives Matter" movement going on.[52]

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[50]

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/09/21/it-looks-like-rudy-giuliani-convinced-donald-trump-that-stop-and-frisk-actually-works/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.dd047279f840
[51] https://www.thefeministwire.com/2014/10/blacklivesmatter-2/
[52] Complicity and Resistance: Asian American Body Politics in Black Lives Matter [Journal of Asian American Studies, Volume 21, Number 3, October 2018]

Effects - After a huge political and social attention, bills started to be admitted in favour of "Blue Lives Matter" movement. According to a Huffington Post report[53], 33 "Blue Lives Matter" bills have been introduced in 14 states in 2017, following 15 such bills in 2016. The purpose of these bills is to extend hate crime protections to members of law enforcement, thus increasing penalties for crimes committed against them. Blue Lives Matter bills serve a political purpose. They suggest that members of racial minorities are somehow more "protected" than police officers, who are the real victims. Thus, social media helped to include the political angle in the case study of "Blue Lives Matter" thus protecting the police men around the US.

Conclusion - This case clearly shows how social media is a boon to society if used effectively but at the same time is a threat to society when used for a wrong motive. It is also evident from this case that social media is very sensitive platform i.e. slight mistakes in language or posts can harm sentiments of millions around the world and can thus result in protests which are very difficult to handle. As it is rightly said "With great power comes great responsibility", same is the case with the social media. The Blacks intended to use social media as their weapon to fight against the Whites but the result was mass killings and brutal behaviour of people and children towards police who were meant to protect them. One crucial point to note from this case study is that social media provides a platform to people who are not confident enough to put their view in front of the world. So, the people are now independent enough to put their thoughts in front of the world without any fear of judging by the people and thus innovative ideas and movements are taking place around the world to change the old mindset of the society.

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[53]
http://www.huffingtonpost.com.au/entry/blue-black-lives-matter-police-bills-states_us_58b61488e4b0780bac2e31b8

5.Pinjra Tod

Pinjra Tod (literally, Break The Cage) is an autonomous collective effort to ensure secure, affordable and not gender-discriminatory accommodation for women students across Delhi as stated on the official facebook page by the name of 'Pinjra Tod: Break the Hostel Locks'. It grew out of a Facebook page where women hostel and PG residents shared their bitter experiences with guards, wardens, principals and landlords[54]. They work towards countering the 'security narrative' which is structured around securitisation of the bodies of women and patriarchal protectionism[55].

The campaign, which began in early August 2015, comprises of women from DU, Jamia Millia Islamia, Ambedkar University, National Law University and Jawaharlal Nehru University. In 2015, when Delhi's universities reopened after the summer break, Jamia Millia Islamia had issued a notice stating that the female students of the college could no longer request permission to stay out later than 8 pm. This was followed by a counter-action from the Delhi Commission for Women (DCW), demanding the Jamia administration for answers on why it found it necessary to impose such a restriction on women. Encouraged by DCW's response to Jamia, a group of women students identified this as an opening to make larger interventions at the level of not just Jamia but also other Universities across the capital city, Delhi. They decided to circulate a petition on Change.org. The fact that the movement originated from a facebook page shows us how the movement is a social media based movement, as it is originating on social media and uses social media as the central tool for mobilization and internal discussion.

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[54] https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/delhi/pinjra-tod-student-campaign-exhorts-women-to-oppose-sexist-hostel-rules/

[55] http://sanhati.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Pinjra-tod-8-Oct-2015.docx.pdf

Use of social media in mobilization through instagram

Role of social media - The students of these colleges and universities use Facebook, Twitter, and Whatsapp for organising and campaigning in addition to the other methods. Their Facebook page is now a documentation of the stories of experiences and struggles of countless women that they faced living in paid accommodations or university hostels[56]. The students of many colleges in DU protested the early curfews, policies that apply to only women,moral policing,higher prices for women's hostels and attempted to ensure establishment a sexual harassment committee. This movement has inspired similar protests across India, in colleges like HNLU, Punjabi University,NIT Calicut, IIT-Roorkee and BITS Goa. The campaigners used social media to mobilise students - and others - across Delhi and beyond to broaden their movement for freedom[57].

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[56] https://tracingartinpublic.com/2017/03/19/pinjra-tod-break-the-cagehostel-locks-time-for-equality/

[57] https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-34486891
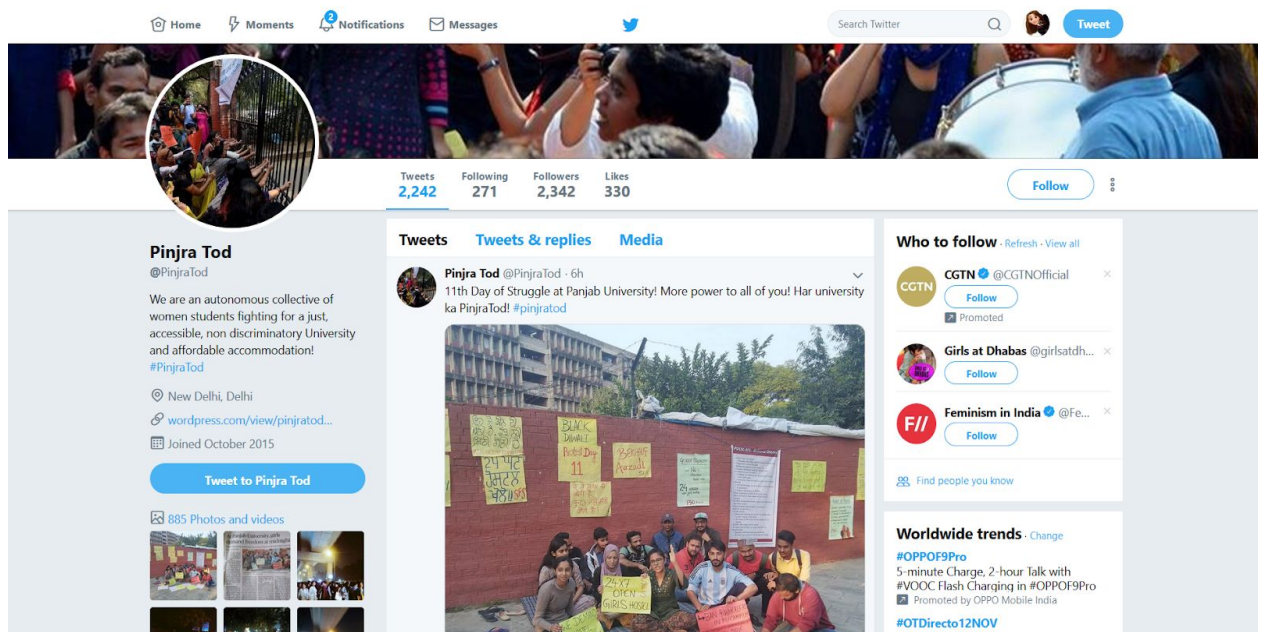
The twitter page: Pinjra Tod

The movement progressed through signature campaigns, online petitions and meetings as well as street protests with posters and chanting slogans like 'we don't need no false protection'. There are marches, performances, skits, street plays, and other performative protests. Members of the movement spray-paint messages of resistance on the campus' streets at night. A major step in the movement was conducting a jan sunwai at Jantar Mantar on 10 October 2015. During the course of the movement, the students shared universities responses with the public on their facebook page, which is still active and shares stories of ongoing protests. The facebook page also shares success stories of movement in colleges where the administration has agreed to have a discussion about the students' demands. We see here how the facebook page serves as a platform for internal debate for the movement and how it facilitates sharing of information as well as support from similar movements taking place elsewhere.
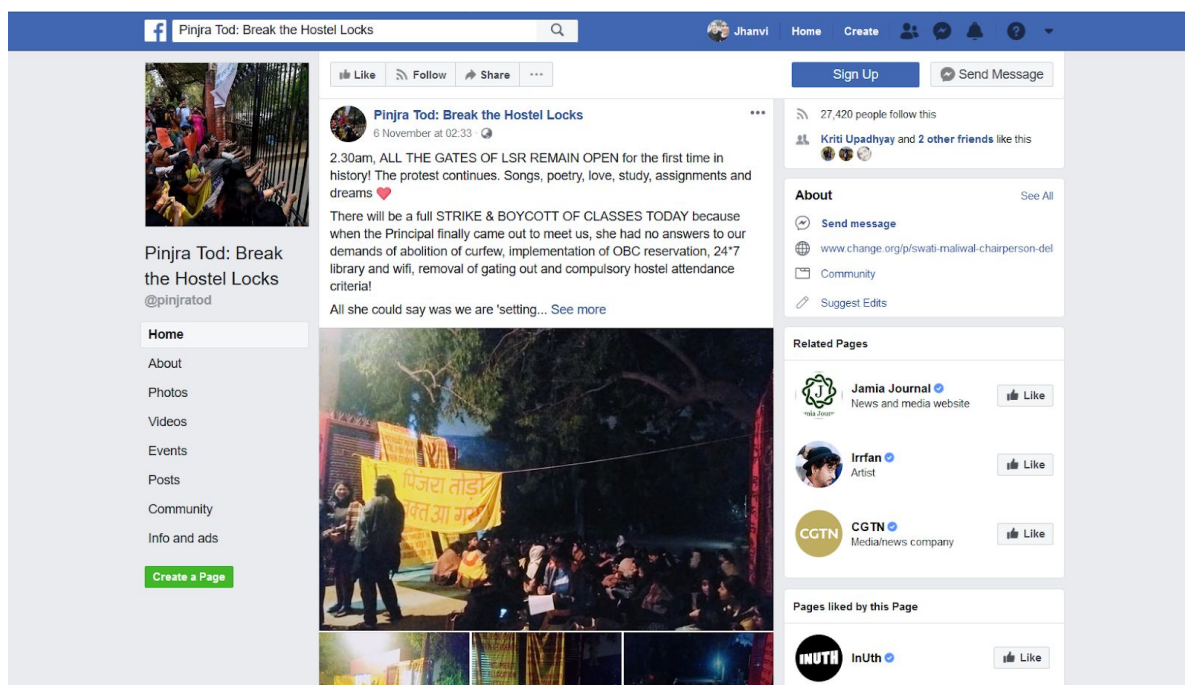
The Facebook page, Pinjra Tod: Break the Hostel Locks

On Nov 21, 2015, in reply to the statement by Smriti Irani, then the Minister for Human Resource Development. As quoted by National dailies, "In India, I don't think any woman is dictated what to wear, how to wear, whom to meet, when to meet". The group intended to inform the Minister about the horrific experiences and insidious approach to control the women students who live in the hostels of other universities that come under the jurisdiction of her Ministry. They read out loud the rules and regulations of the hostel manuals of various universities with an intention to put in Smriti Irani's notice that the women were constantly told what to wear, how to wear, whom to meet, and when to meet. The faction carried eleven hostel rule books and manuals from colleges and universities across Delhi well-wrapped in a package to give to the minister[58]. On 23rd September 2016, Pinjra Tod organized a 'Night March' in Vijay Nagar, North Campus and it was interrupted by harassment of the protesters by ABVP members[59] and the members of Pinjra Tod retaliated by sharing pictures of the harassment on social media and reaffirming to the world that this will not stop them. This is an example of social media being used against ideological-enemies and provides a platform for sharing of the activists' narrative of the events.

Effects - As a result of various protests and petitions, on 2 May 2016, the UGC published in the Gazette of India, a letter regarding Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal of Sexual

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[58] https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-34486891

[59] http://dubeat.com/2016/10/night-vigil-held-by-pinjra-tod-disrupted-by-abvp-members/

Harassment of Women Employees and Students in Higher Educational Institutions following which, DCW issued notices to 23 universities and two institutes, acting on Pinjra Tod's report. DCW later, also issued notices to seven colleges asking for an explanation regarding why hostel curfew timings differ for men and women.

In HNLU, after a month long on and off protests by the students of the university where the demands ranged from ousting the Vice Chancellor to rolling back the curfew timings of female residents to having a more accessible campus for everyone, the vice chancellor resigned and the administration agreed to discussions with the students regarding their demands.

In BITS Pilani, inspired by Pinjra Tod movement, after a two-day door-to-door survey and discussions with the institute, the in-time curfew on Meera Bhawan residents has been removed by the Institute. One of the students actively involved in making this a reality, Sibesh Kar, has written an article on the blogging site, Medium, detailing the methods through which they worked against the in-time curfew. This is an example of social media aiding movement spillover and this brings out Pinjra Tod movement as a poster-child for demonstrating how social media helps with transnational activism. In Sibesh Kar's words, "There has been a spate of student-led initiatives (for e.g. Pinjra Tod movement at Delhi University) to remove gender discriminatory rules, but most fizzle out . The example of the successful curfew removal at BITS Pilani hence serves as a precedent for colleges all over India and a much-needed ray of hope. I'm writing this post because as one of the people who led the charge in the events leading up to the removal of the curfew, I have been asked multiple times how it was done and how it can be replicated, so I'm documenting my experiences here so that other people in other colleges may benefit from them. The method we used at Pilani campus was used in BITS Goa too, where the curfew was removed about a week later."[60]

In Patiala, in Punjabi University, after month long student protests the university administration on October 12, issued a letter stating that the hostel curfew for the female students will now be relaxed to 10 p.m, previously it was 8 p.m. The administration also extended the timings of the access to the library to 11 p.m for both male and female students.

Similar events took place in DAIICT, Gandhinagar as well. The institute imposed hostel time limit for girl students whereas boys weren't bound to any limits. Male students where free to roam inside the campus at any time but female students were given a limit of 12:00 AM and they had to mark their attendance and were restricted by strict rules of

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[60]

https://medium.com/@sibeshkar/the-story-behind-bits-pilanis-girls-hostel-curfew-removal-f1cfbf0873de

warden. The female students experienced gender discrimination and felt that male students were given extra time to utilise the resources provided by the college. Thus, the Pinjra-tod movement also started in DA-IICT. It all started with an idea that was motivated by success of the movement taking place at other colleges. Social media was a great medium in conducting the Pinjra-tod movement as one-to-one interactions weren't possible in a college having more than 1000 students. Thus, conducting polls on social media, signing online petitions and making strong tweets to motivate other students to join the Pinjra-tod movement brought the authorities of the college to come to a solution to remove the curfew of female students.

Conclusion - Amongst the case studies in this report, this movement has arguably used social media most extensively and in various ways. The movement, that originated from a facebook page, uses social media to mobilize stakeholders and inspire similar protests in other colleges and universities across India. We look at it as an excellent example of social media aiding movement spillover. It successfully used social media for internal communication. To this day, the facebook page is used to share information and updates, offer constructive criticism and advice and extend and call for support to ongoing struggles against discriminatory hostel rules. In other words, social media has aided internal communication and enabled internal debate as well as helped the activists reach out to recruit more people, thereby helping in mobilization.

Survey Analysis[61]

1)Pessimistic views

Do you think social media activism is better than the traditional form of activism?

321 responses

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

37.4%

19.3%

43.3%
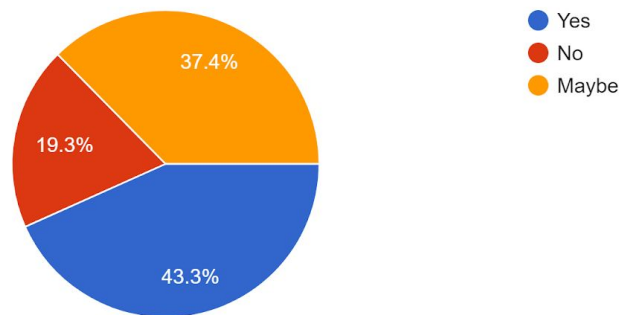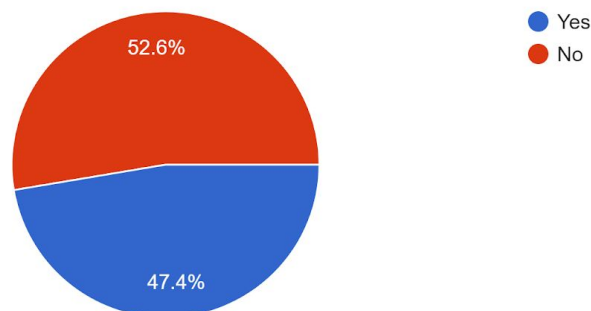
As indicated by the above pie chart, people are still apprehensive about the effectiveness of social media activism. The major reason could probably be widespread slacktivism which contributes to the downfall of many social media centred movements which is clearly visible in the pie charts given below. Other probable reasons could be the ones discussed in the 'disadvantages of social media activism' section of the report.

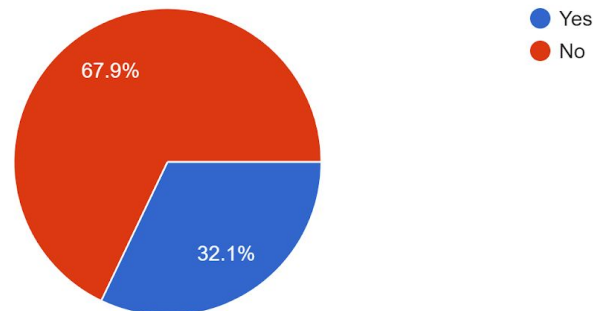### Do you actively support any movements through social media?

321 responses

- Yes
- No

52.6%

47.4%

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[61] https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1Cvh5Z37iBH33KJ1qZakDoJ7nvT625zZjreuGn5oAlxk/edit

Do you actually join the protest/social movement physically(like participating in a rally etc.) rather than through social media?
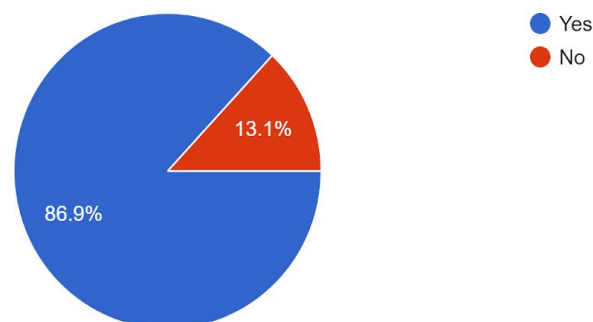
321 responses

While 47.4% of the respondents supported some movement through social media, only 32.1% of them participated in a social movement physically, therefore, clearly showing signs of slacktivism.

2)Optimistic views

Does social media give more power to an individual to start a movement?

321 responses

The pie charts above and below are important indicators of the faith which the public has in social media's potential for bringing about a transformation in the society and providing power to an individual.

Due to rise of social media, do you think the youth of today is more invested in bringing change than previous generations?

267 responses

Legend:
- Yes
- No

15.4%

84.6%
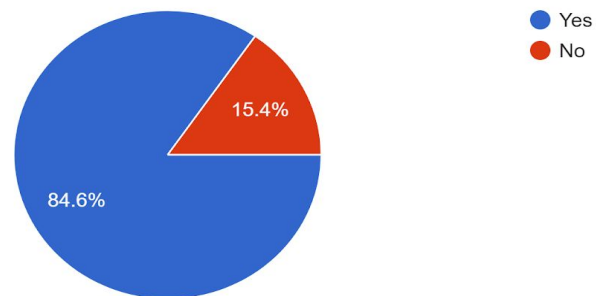
Conclusion

Through this project, we came across many interesting bits and pieces of information which contributed to a further understanding of the complex dynamics involved in social media activism. We realised it is not a one way process which works only through the participation of the activists, rather, the success of the process depends on a number of factors discussed in the previous sections. Social media breaks down the barriers of privilege, access, energy, time, and money and facilitates internal communication resulting in better organization and more productive internal debate. It makes recruiting new people to the movement more extensive and networking easier and cheaper and also helps spread information and viewpoints independently of mainstream media and offers an alternative way of spreading news and counter-information bypassing state-controlled, censored or mainstream media. It provides a platform to attack ideological enemies, and preserve and share records of the movement. Arguably, the most important contribution social media makes to a movement is quickening and broadening the range of movement spillover. It is due to these advantages that social media has become an essential tool for activism despite its limitations and potential dangers. But, being informed about the drawbacks of social media is as important as being aware of the advantages. Through our surveys, we also noticed that people are unsure about the effectiveness of social media activism so far, but, they definitely know the potential of social media and the effect it is having on society at large. The relations between different actors in the progression of movements was explained through case studies where we saw that even the social platform itself was affected by the movement. Such far reaching consequences involved a plethora of factors which eventually resulted in it being achieved.

One of the effective ways to use social media for activism was explained by Mr.Roshan Saroliya when asked whether CSJ had achieved anything which would have not been possible had it not been for social media,

It is tough to say that there is anything, because the major part of our work is groundwork, we believe in connecting to people physically rather than virtually, but there are many common agendas on which CSJ has partnered with forums. So, yes, there are a few things which are only possible through social media, we have been partners in a lot of movements and we are also quite active on Facebook on which we post regularly about our events. Our main aim is to create a network of people who are informed about social justice as it is not a popular topic yet.

From the above comment, it is clear that not only social media, but, groundwork is equally important for the success of any movement. So, our findings point out that for any activist, a good rule of thumb is to never rely on one strategy alone. This is also true for any company trying to market their products or services.

Traditional activism will always play a core role in raising funds, changing regulations, making a difference, but online activism will increase the efficacy and speed of that movement. They should work together to accomplish a greater goal. People should still be hitting the streets to canvass, protest, or hand out flyers and others should still tweet out hashtags, share articles, and check-in to locations. If something is important to you, it's probably important to someone else. Social media is just another stepping stone to help illuminate that voice.

Interview Transcripts

This part contains interview transcriptions of the activists who allowed us to record their interview and provided confirmation that the interview could be shared.

Roshan Saroliya, Lawyer(Center for Social Justice)

Can you tell us something about your association with CSJ?

I have been working with CSJ since 14 years, during which I also completed my law degree, after that I became the lead coordinator in CSJ. I have also worked in Madhya Pradesh for 2 years.

What are some of the major things on which CSJ is working at present?

At present we are working in south Gujarat regarding the PESA act and 1-2 other laws pertaining to the rural people. In the coastal areas, we are majorly working with the fishermen community. In Chattisgarh, we are working on land laws and CSJ also focuses on working for women and dalit rights.

We observed that CSJ is quite active on social media, why did you feel the need for using social media as a platform for spreading your messages?

We were not quite active on social media in the past, but as the times changed, we felt the need to use social media to spread information about our work among people so that they can become aware of the situation around them. It can also help others to learn a lesson from someone else's situation and implement it in their own life. It also helps people to learn about laws and the procedure followed in a court of law. Through social media, we also became aware of people who were suffering and needed our help, and as a responsible organisation, we tried to take a stand and offered help on every issue we came across.

Is there anything achieved by CSJ through social media which you think wouldn't have been possible physically?

It is tough to say that there is anything, because the major part of our work is groundwork, we believe in connecting to people physically rather than virtually, but there are many common agendas on which CSJ has partnered with forums. So, yes, there are a few things which are only possible through social media, currently I can't remember any movement which CSJ started on social media but we have been partners in a lot of movements. We also have many websites which are active at present such as Renuma etc. and we are also quite active on Facebook on which we post regularly about our events. Our main aim is to

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create a network of people who are informed about social justice as it is not a popular topic yet.

As an organisation, what are your views about the future of social media activism, is it going to be beneficial?

It is not easy to answer it because we have to keep in mind the political views which the founder of the movement has in his/her mind, CSJ uses social media to know about the issues which are gaining more support than others. But, of course, the use of social media is important in presenting your point of view to others, also, social media has its own pros and cons. We cannot determine whether the movement will have the intended effect or not if it is started through social media, but, whenever we feel the need to clarify and present our point of view, we do not hesitate in doing it.

Shamini Kothari, co-founder(QueerAbad)

Can you tell us more about your education and how it helped you with queerabad?

Well I think, growing up, like, in a lot of ways, the things we studied, the imagination from both- what we studied and what we saw in movies , what we read- the norm was that of a heteronormative society and also, even in the education, the way the gender roles were represented were very very rigid and at some point in the course of my education, when I did my undergraduate , we had a women's study elective, which taught me a lot about a lot about feminism and so on and then eventually, I did my masters in a degree called sexual dissidence, which is basically queer studies which I think completely shaped my qualities in a very big way, without which, I don't think I would have been able to do half the work I do in QueerAbad.

Okay, so what do you think QueerAbads biggest achievement has been so far, in your opinion?

I don't know, I feel like that is better asked to the other people who come and attend things when we organize but I think it has been to say that in this city, you can no longer say that there is no queer space or there is no queer engagement or the community doesn't have to feel completely alone and I don't think doing that in a city from scratch is easy, and I think having consistent engagement, like month after month we have meetings, we have had every kind of event possible-large scale, small scale- we've had pride, and I think at this point, you can't say there is no queer space in ahmedabad and I think that's important.

Do you see a change in the attitude towards LGBTQIA community after scrapping of section 377?

No, I think you can't have a cause and effect with one change in the law and there is no way to tangibly know that but I do think that the fact that it is being talked about and that it is in the newspaper and so on will make some difference but change happens extremely slowly , progress happens extremely slowly and it has to happen on multiple levels. It cannot just happen in the cream of the country, that is you know, the English speaking, the upper caste and who are able to access the law in a particular way. So, I don't think you can say that people's attitude has changed, one can only continue the work we are doing.

Yes, what made you choose facebook as a platform to start a conversation about QueerAbad?

So when QueerAbad started, there was, all the groups that existed, the queer groups that existed in Ahmedabad, were extremely underground so it would just mean that people sort of meet up in somebody's house in a room but there was no public space for it and the biggest reason for this was that people were afraid for their privacy and security. They were afraid somebody would out them. They were afraid that associating with the queer group in public meant that their identity was vulnerable so , the founder and I-Anahita and I- thought of some of these things and we thought that it would be good to start a digital platform and it would be good to start a group that is open to both the queer people and allies , because if you like a page, it doesn't mean anything. It means you support it but that doesn't mean you identify as queer. So that was the main reason. Behind the screen, people could engage and like this page and at least know that this page exists for them.

So is it still the case that most of the people who come to queerabads live events find out about it through social media?

that is still the truth mostly, between instagram and facebook, that is largely how we disseminate information but we are trying to change some of that. Also, it will change once we get an office space that we are working on. So in the sense, we are going more from digital to analog but it still acts as a huge platform for us and in a way that people feel safe to engage in queer issues.

I hope that works out. Do you think QueerAbad would have been what it is had it not been for social media ? What do you think would have been the difference?

Um, no. I don't think it would have been what it is. That's actually impossible because literally the reason why it worked, even though it was slow in the beginning. Even though everybody cannot access social media and digital media, the reason why people slowly, slowly, slowly became comfortable was because it's like "okay. I liked a page. It doesn't mean I'm gay" or 'it doesn't mean that people have to see that I am interested in these issues" but as soon as we put up the first offline event we had, we had a hundred people

attend. So, it just goes to show that it wouldn't have been possible had we given out flyers and said "hum yahan pe mil rahe hai for a poetry reading" I don't think people would have come at all or like five people would have come.

So what are your views about the future of use of social media in activism?

I think social media has taken a very very big role in activism but I think one has to remember that there are a lot of things social media offers but it is not like social media is neutral, it is not like it is apolitical space. There is also concentrated power there and it is dangerous to think that it can become the only forum. It is still as important to take to the street. It is still as important to be political in public and put your bodies at risk. But at the same time, I do think that for a lot of marginalized communities, they have used social media in extremely interesting and subversive ways.

What advice would you give to young people willing to work towards making a change but unsure about what to do and where to start?

I would say start with yourself, and by 'yourself', I don't just mean small things. I mean, by perhaps asking yourself 'what do I have that others don't?' like, if I am an able bodied person, how do I occupy space? How do I live my everyday life? What does the space look like around me. Just be more aware of your privilege and your surrounding is an incredibly important first step to make because if you're not aware of your own privilege and you are attempting to make a change, you will never be able to see other people's realities because you can't see your own.

Kriti Upadhyay,Member of gender cell at DA-IICT and a vital member of the Pinjra Tod movement in DA-IICT

Why do you think activists choose social media as their tool for furthering their purpose?

Activists believe that since they are getting in touch with like minded people and are able to propagate their ideas effectively, their voices will he heard and their opinions will garner support. It is a fact that all kind of people use social media and hence all these are really achievable targets.

What do they(activists) expect to be able to achieve using social media?

We live In a world where social media is bridging distances and helping you reach others faster, social media is an effective method of communicating with a lot of people and that too very easily.

Moreover, it has provided this platform that helps people express themselves. A platform of this type was difficult to find few years back. I think those are the two reasons.

And to what extent has social media fulfilled their expectations?

The recent me too movement is a great example of how social media movements affect the social discourse. We see all kind of movements doing round on social media. How successful they are is one question but the fact that these movements have made space for themselves in the social media space and continue to do so is a very important phenomena.

Do you think protests and movements that are ongoing on the world are closely related to one another in a sense that one is originating as a result of success of another?

They are related to one another in the sense that the reach of one inspires the other to take up arms in the social space. There surely have been successful campaigns which is why these movements have survived so far.

According to you, to what extent social media has enabled internal communications and debates i.e. among people or group of people?

Debates in the real world have gone down because social media makes you more comfortable conversing with strangers and people who you think will not judge you. Expressing opinions in person and in a group doesn't provide that kind of insulation.

According to you, to what extent social media has helped activists reach out to recruit the uninitiated citizens and mobilize sympathetic but passive masses to work for the movements?

If we take the example of India at present, the country has been divided between people who support Modi and people who don't support Modi. The people involved in this debate also include those who had never had political inclinations. Social media has forced them to have some opinion and as a result, we see debates and discussions happened on social media. And even the people who are relatively new to the political discourse or don't have an informed choice because they have not been given time, have developed an opinion.

Labdhi Shah,a vital member of the Pinjra Tod movement in DA-IICT

Why do you think activists choose social media as a tool for furthering their purpose?

So, for what we did here was in our campus all of this was going on to the social media but it was to a very little extent. So I have been in touch with other people in other colleges who have done this purely with the help of social media, here in our movement social media did not really enhance our efforts much ,in other universities I know a lot of support has been shown by that means, so yes it is really helpful in building up pressure and showing support to the protesters who already giving support to the cause,but in our case it was very less as we did not update it much on social media.

What did you expect the outcome of the use of social media for this movement to be?

When I talk about social media,I want to clarify that Instagram,Facebook,WhatsApp all of these, we did not use them much.I don't think many people will be aware but we did update our batch,i.e 4th yearites on WhatsApp groups that the limit was removed.When any girl or any stakeholder,including the authorities also get to know what other institutes of their own league are doing.If our admin or director any one of them thought that it was not right,and if they go through all the articles which have been published on this issue which already exist on social media,so reading the arguments from both sides at that stage gives a wider perspective to them,so these colleges had put up the arguments coming from their students,faculties and others,all of these things,they had put up on social media,it gives them a much better idea on how things should be pursued,what may be agreed or what may not be agreed and examine the mad demands or the logical ones which need to be fulfilled,so other college's experience was useful for us.

Were you inspired by the other college's posts on social media to do the same?

Other than a few occasions on last year we did not really push it enough for authorities to take it into consideration but effort have been going on for very long, but seeing people actually work very passionately for it and also getting it inspires us here as well, so yes definitely.

So if social media was, you said it was helpful to bring people together.
In our case rather than bring people together, inspired to take action and what do you think would've happened if you hadn't used social media, would it have been as successful as it has been?

In the current situation how it all happened, kind of yes. Because in our case students were supportive, students knew of the journey throughout, what has been happening, what has happened and so on but there wasn't any need for students who were actively doing it, to

come out and speak for this. everything happened with the help of faculty, the faculty supported it, then all the students signed and the director and other people knew that people supported it. Had there been an opportunity or incident where the entire community has to come together and speak up for it we need it, definitely whatever updates we were giving were important for all of that. In fact our seniors and whoever had been working for it in the past for this, it was very important to get their inputs for this so that happened with social media only. Whatsapp was updated, we put up stories on Instagram about what meetings we conducted and all that. So their input was crucial because they already have experience of all this and they know the matter. So what didn't work for them, we changed it a bit and it worked for us.

What if you hadn't used Whatsapp to communicate about the meetings with your peers?

Last to last year, when the batches before us were trying to get the time limit removed, what they did was they took a survey in Women's HoR and that was presented to the authorities but they didn't follow through on it. There were a few people who were constantly in touch with the authorities for other stuff so informal talks were being done already throughout on an informal personal level. But formally, it wasn't pursued as passionately. My batch itself didn't really know that these efforts were put in for this movement so these updates we thought were very necessary for the batch to feel involved and to know that it's an important issue. Before this, people might have known that these discussions were being conducted, but since other people were not actively involved, they didn't know about these efforts being put in.