# #IWillGoOut

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A Social Media Campaign

#IWillGoOut was a nationwide gathering on 21st January, 2017 in solidarity against sexual harassment and misogyny, and to reclaim women's rights to safe public spaces, in response to the terrible mass molestation that took place on New Years Eve 2016 at Bangalores MG Road. The collective of individuals and organisations across various cities in India still continues to exist and continues to spread awareness on issues regarding intersectional feminism.

# What led to the campaign?

- 2016 New Year's Eve incident at M G Road in Bangalore
- Happened despite the deployment of 1500 police personnel
- Reported by the media in the first week of January
- Police initially claimed that this was concocted by the press<sup>1</sup>, only after cctv footage statement changed
- Comments made by politicians Abu Azmi and G Parameshwara fuelled the anger

# Going online

- Angered by number of reports and lack of action and accountability
- Coalition of various feminist organisations and individuals formed a collective
- Account of the timeline given in a paper by Divya Titus, one of the founders, started with a message on her tl:

Hey everyone. I've been horrified by what happened over New Years in Bangalore and even more by the comments being made by the likes of Abu Azmi and G. Parameshwara. I think it's awful that as women we have to deal with daily assault and then put up with these politicos shaming us in public with their comments after assaults such as these. I want to start a petition to have these people publicly apologise for their comments. I think it's important that the narrative post sexual assault changes and that as a society we become more sensitive to this issue. I wanted to check in with all of you if either you or those in your network would be willing to start the petition with me. Feel free to answer or post your thoughts here. (Sent through Facebook Messenger, Bengaluru, 4 January 2017)

### Continued

- Her message received immense response, 100 people in less than four hours
- Created a petition on change.org



What happened to women in Bangalore on New Year's Eve was absolute horror. But listening to the comments of politicians like Mr. Abu Azmi and Mr. G. Parameshwara who either lay the blame on the women assaulted or bizarrely on western culture is a grotesque reminder of the acceptance of rape culture in this country. It is this insensitivity and victim blaming by those in positions of power that contributes to women hesitating from reporting these crimes. Worse still, it leads to perpetrators being as brazen as they are when committing crimes of sexual abuse against women. Many politicians, through their public speeches, have been actively encouraging the continuation of a hostile environment against women where women are blamed for attacks against them.

After December 16, 2012, we were told that action would be taken. Many of us work at the grassroots to effect a change in mindsets through systematic efforts. However, three years later, we continue to have leaders who blame women for sexual assault, disregard the right of women to personal agency and deny them control over their own bodies.

We refuse to accept this as the state of affairs in India and call on Mr. Azmi and Mr. Parameshwara to issue unconditional public apologies for the comments they have made in the media in response to the series of sexual assaults in Bangalore. It is high time we treat women's right to their bodies and to safe public spaces with the sensitivity that these issues require; and not with public soundbites that shame them further.

Signed:

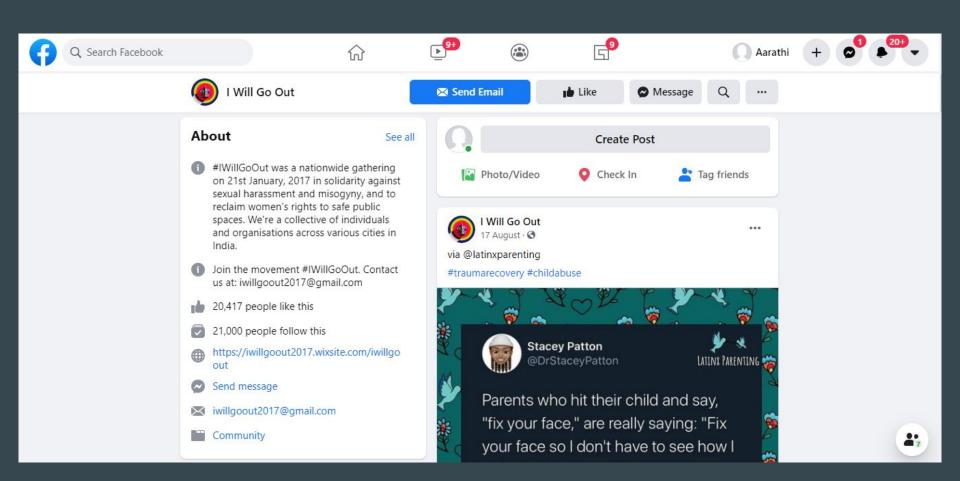
Team #IWillGoOut

# #IWillGoOut on Social Media: The intent and use of affordances:

- Reclaim public and digital spaces for women by mobilizing online
- Social media and its global spread has democratised the access to a large swathe of people. This access can be leveraged, as done with the #IWillGoOut campaign, to exert pressure on those in authority and to push for legislative change to ensure women's safety in public in India.
- Translating this online activity to offline mode to bring about change vis a vis the march on 21st January

# Facebook page









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11 Jan 2017 · @ · There's something very wrong about a significant section of audaciously vocal men, if the first reaction to violence isn't to condemn the act and join hands to find solutions, but to get DEFENSIVE. Tired of such men refusing to grow up, and always being on the defensive while #YesAllWomen have to deal with the offensive all the time. We meet today at...

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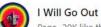
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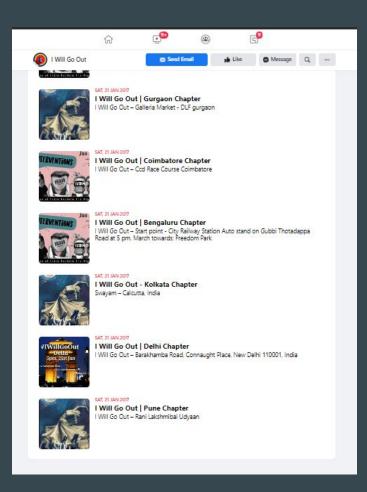
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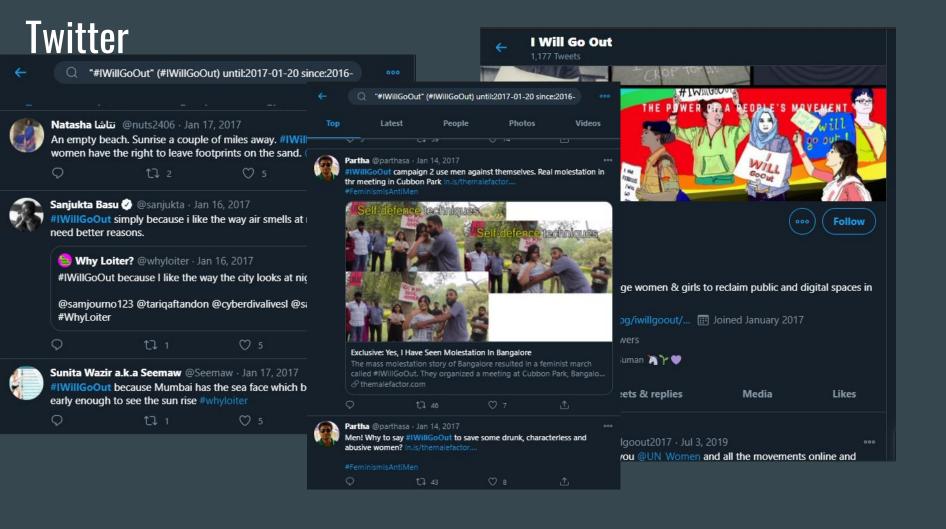
25 Jan 2017 · ● · #IWillGoOut National Coverage · "They will go out!" - The Goan, 25.01.2017, #IWillGoOut Goa Chapter





- FB became main platform for communication.
- Posted regular updates here
- Group and message thread created
- Admins made, city specific admins and pages linked to the main FB page
- Created events for each city
- Email ID with access given to all admins











# Website



#### ABOUT THE EVENT /

As Indian women, we have had to deal with the constant reminder that we do not have control over our own bodies in this country, and that it is our responsibility as women to protect ourselves from sexual assault and harassment. When men leer at us or grope us, we are blamed for allowing this to happen, and not the men who perpetrate these crimes. What happened to women in Bangalore on New Year's Eve was absolute horror.

We know. These movements. These protests. These hashtags. Just another brick in the wall? Sure. Why not? Let's keep adding these bricks, we say. Until we have the whole wall. So once more into the patriarchal breach, our friends! Bengaluru is the latest incident in a deluge of horrific ones, but every city is an abode for harassment, and anyone feminine an easy target. Sexually violent incidents are taking place even as we type this. We are mobilizing organizations, institutions and individuals for #IWillGoOut – an event that boldly states exactly that. I, a woman, will go out. I, a girl, will claim the nights as our own.

On January 21st, India experienced it's first ever #IWillGoOut national movement. In the days leading up to the big event, citizens took the initiative to start #IWillGoOut collectives in their community and took to the streets at 5pm, the empowering message of #IWillGoOut spread across 30+ cities and towns.

The Petition



### Protests in J&K and Chennai

Hostile environments in both states

Arrest of Burhan Wani in J&K

Jallikattu protests in Chennai

Social media afforded protests online using the hashtags #ValleySpeaks and #ChennaiSpeaks

# What does the campaign show us

- Effective use of social media to gain mass mobilization effects across the country within a span of slightly more than two weeks.
- Diffusion of mobile technology was critical to the campaign 2016s India was becoming the world's largest smartphone market
- Social media was critical to the success of the campaign:
  - Allowed organisers to connect and communicate remotely
  - Allowed growth of the campaign without formal fundraising
  - Provided a platform to address women's issues, breaking the physical barriers that restrict this
  - It was also used to gain attention from authorities and police permissions (the Tweetathons as an example)

# Media Logic:

- Choice of hashtag:
- Language used: how it plays a role in the popularity of the campaign
- Role of social media: Social media could enhance women's participation in economic and political life, and allows them to increase their self expression and promote social change, and this is a strong belief that has risen up in the society (Daher, 2012)
- "Hashtag Activism": "These hashtags give social media users the ability to learn from and join conversations that can expand our feminist consciousness" (Weiss, 2016)
- Online to offline

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