



## The Intermix of Social Media in Propelling the Social Change.

### KEYWORDS

Social Media, change, campaign, diffusion

**Vagdevi H S**

**Shantharaju S**

Project Fellow, UGC UPE FA – II, Vijanana Bhavan, Manasagangotri Campus, University of Mysore, Mysore - 570006

Assistant Professor, Dept. Of Media Studies, Christ University, Hosur Road, Bangalore – 560029

**ABSTRACT** *Social media per say has changed the Internet from a static space concerned with the transmission to a dynamic space where users can generate their own content. From one Facebook post that led to a protest in Tahrir square, leading to the revolution in Egypt to Occupy Wall Street movement in US, which was started by a mere blog post, from the 2011 earthquake catastrophe in Japan to Kenyans to garner support for the famine stricken natives in international level. From the 'Pink Chaddi Campaign' to the 'Besharmi Morcha' at the national level, the latest in this list 'Bell Bajao'. From the zero tolerance campaign against eve-teasing to the meter jam campaign by auto rickshaw drivers, at the local level. If we understand this whole process through Evert Rogers 'Diffusion of Innovation', we are in the stage of implementation which falls in the group of late majority. In addition, as our communication networks become denser through technological advance, the diffusion process is happening faster and faster.*

### INTRODUCTION

Log...view, like, comment, share, post, tweet, retweet, update, follow, blog, delete, download, upload... we often hear each of these virtual verbs, which are now becoming the instrument for societal connectives. The societal urge to guard the loosing social interaction is effectively being replaced by social media. It is essentially attracting youth by optimum penetration of technology. In less than one decade, through the social media, the chimera of technological apps has become inevitable in this adapted modernity. This chimera is possible because of real time sharing across the globe.

Social media per say has changed the Internet from a static space concerned with the transmission or swap over of information to a dynamic space where users can generate their desired content. From one Facebook post that led to a protest in Tahrir square, leading to the mass usurp across west Asian countries. Virtual discourses like these are turned into physical metamorphosis in given conditions. As response to reluctant fundamentalists' acts, virtual media responses triggered Pink Chaddi Campaign, where fanatics' garages in Karnataka were filled with boxes of pink innerwear in retaliation. The pink Chaddi (innerwear) sounds amusing but it is not so. The social media provided a resentment path to such smothering ideologies which is out of momentary responses of mere sympathising or passing a comment. The society is evolving to the possibilities of responding against mere critique but instead, being a part in that particular dialogue.

### METHODOLOGY

This study uses content analysis as a research method. Content Analysis is described as the scientific study of content of communication. It is the study of the content with reference to the meanings, contexts and intentions contained in messages. Holsti (1968) says that it is any technique for making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying specified characteristics of messages.

For the purpose of the study, researchers have taken into account few social movements sourced from social media. Here each movement is been analysed and understand the repercussion it created. The study takes into account major international, national and local events while analysing the content.

### New expressions and Changed times...

Besharmi Morcha, Men Against Rape & Discrimination (MARD), Bell Bajao campaign are some of the pan India campaigns that seek to bring domestic violence and discrimination against women to a halt. Accounts of Domestic Violence survivors are presented on the blog, professional help is provided and stories of change are told using various tools of social media and thereby, getting more people involved in this process of social momentum. One cannot disagree with the increasing cases filed by women compared to previous years with respect to Domestic Violence. As per the data given out by National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) the number of cases registered by women is steadily increasing.

Year	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
No. of Rape cases	19348	20373	21467	21397	22172	24206	24923
Total no. of registered cases on women abuse	164765	185312	195856	203804	213585	228650	244270

**Source: NCRB**

These discussions taking place in the giant tree of social media, naturally provides an orientation to the contemporary generation for whom the world is one big social network. The young generation who are born in this connected era are sensitive enough to decode the obscene & derogatory expressions. The feather touch technology is not only restricted to provide smart gadgets indeed, it carving a path to make this generation smarter towards perceiving their gender and sexual sensitivities precisely. In the 2011 earthquake catastrophe in Japan, where social media played a gender momentous role in connecting victims to their families to Kenyans who used similar online tools to garner support for the famine stricken natives at international level.

From the zero tolerance campaign against eve-teasing to the meter jam campaign launched to protest the unreasonable fares charged by auto rickshaw drivers, at the local level. Social media has created a vibrant discourse forum for numerous expressions around the globe. The best local analogy can be drawn to Karnataka's Savanoor's Manual Scavengers issue where the youtube and facebook upload of the inci-

dent created uproar not only throughout the state but had its reverberations at the national level too. The issue was not a newly burst out phenomenon. Instead, it's been accepted by majority of Indians as not an issue to be discussed. The age old wretched practice took off a new turn with use of social media where, a video was uploaded by then an amateur journalist – T.K. Dayananda, ChandraShekar Attibele and many human rights activists. Such Videos on this issue compelled the State to reinforce the existing prohibition of manual scavenger's laws more stringently. At the same time the discourse aroused, created awareness among masses to be reciprocate towards such inhumane acts.

The arrest of two girls during November 20, 2012 for posting a comment on her FB page with regards to the shutdown of Mumbai in mourning of Shiva Sena chief and their immediate release is a naked illustration on the potential of social media networking. Within a day of this issue it created a havoc in media, amongst civil societies, discussed in the parliamentary level, letter from Chairman of Press council to Maharashtra government. In spite of the infamous vandalized image of Shiva Sena workers the issue still caught the rage in positive manner and in a month's time the whole case was dropped. Isn't the whole issue pushing different communes towards sensitive democratic participation? It reaffirmed the fact that expressions over social networks fall under the purview of article 19(a), Right to Freedom of Speech & Expression.

Be it a inhuman practices like manual scavenging or gathering mass for a movement like 'Queer Parade' eg; Pride Parade, Bangalore or be a book release by three friends for 'Aneka' publication, who happened to meet only on the day of book release were able to gather quite an audience of hundreds through social media networking. These are stark examples to show that this media provides platform to everyone irrespective of their allegiances.

With the time Facebook, Twitter, [YouTube](#) and the like social media have proved their prominence in galvanising support for change. This phenomenon is not limited to urban centric educated class but also has penetrated to the rural mass where a group like Gulabi Gang in Banda District of Uttar Pradesh is been successful in fighting male dominated society against women domestic violence. Though the struggle started locally, the imputes that the social media provided increased the number of members to thousands and took this gang to have a chapter in Paris. Inspired by discussions aroused on this new front of protecting soldiers a Bollywood film named Gulabi Gang featured by appreciated actress Madhuri Dikshith is getting produced.

This experience doesn't restrict to NGO's or private organization. Social media is been successfully utilized by State too. Bhoomi.com, Services of Sakaala, whose kiosks in every Taluk & Village have made possible information on the go to the rural mass in matters like land records, caste certificate and any records from cradle to grave. This is not to say that with all these measures corruption is eradicated but atleast, the light of eradication has been lit, giving the hope of bright of future in darker days by making the respective government servant accountable.

#### Traditional Media v/s Alternative(?)

Applications on smart phones like What's App, FB, Twitter, Skype, Hike Messenger, Google+, We Chat and lakhs of other ever increasing applications compelled the cell phone users to be in edge with the changing technology. As per the data given by IBNlive, there are 55.48 crore actual mobile users in the country and 14.32 crore internet users, according to a study by research firm Juxt. The Newspapers and the TV which are so called the mainstream media are not far behind in this apps race. Each and every newspapers, TV channels & Magazines who enjoyed the

hegemony of news creators called the internet precisely blogging & websites as an alternative media few years back. Social activists, documentary film makers and independent users started running the blogs with their sole interest and concerns. Off late, the mainstream media realised the shifting pattern of their loyal consumer base. It was the social media which gave an alternative, driving away the obsession of traditional TV set & stinking newspaper. As internet service became faster so the panicking of mainstream media. All kinds of media had to become portable without demanding any user code, news – entertainment anywhere and everywhere became the market mantra. So, the online editions of newspapers, magazines and live streaming of TV channels like Sonyliv have started mushrooming. Seems like, mainstream is chasing the alternative in the urge to be in this rat race of market survival.

#### The Dilemma of Social media

The undercover report, The Operation Blue Virus carried on by Cobrapost.com is an illustration to show how social network platforms like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube are used to help politicians artificially boost their popularity with fake 'likes' and 'followers', and running campaigns against rivals and even triggering panic among minority groups(Visit Cobrapost.com). This is to say that like every other technology this also has its own pitfalls. But, one thing is certain that we are in the age of exponential change where, what is relevant today might be outdated tomorrow by a better technology which can be harnessed for a better change.

Like the Venus flytrap, a Carnivorous plant, which sways to capture its prey giving an illusion to the prey that the flower is static and the prey is making choice to sit in a way, luring the prey to come and sit on it. The social media is also creating a swaying environment where it has firmed its place and we are mere its prey. Technological convergence is happening to its core through social media. This data is expanding geometrically in Terabytes each second and social media is sucking in infinite data like a glutton getting created across globe. Like popular jargon for newspaper "yesterday's newspaper is today's waste paper", The content over internet might be not relevant for very next hour or might be misleading by tomorrow. This mislead information is carried forward by faceless users without authentic sources before events conformity. For instances, uncertainty over multiple Basava awards given across the State Karnataka and information available over social networking sites is completely misinterpreted. Jnanapeeta awardee U.R Ananthamurthy, Social Activist Medha Patkar and Pakistani human rights activist Yusuf Malala have got diverse Basava awards last year. These awards are given by State Government, Sanehalli Math and many other Matas' across Karnataka. One must know the prominence of history, the culture ethos and pulse of this land without which, multiple interpretations arises which eventually becomes misinterpretation and do echo by the products of social networks.

#### CONCLUSION

If we understand this whole process through Everrt Rogers 'Diffusion of Innovation', we are in the stage of implementation which falls in the group of late majority. We are clearly passing through a phase of transformation. India is a nation of youths, who have a big role to play in the modern transformation. The imprisonment of thought is slowly shedding its swathe towards liberated thought through the avenues of social media networkings. In addition, as our communication networks become denser through technological advance, the diffusion process happens faster and faster, it can be said that the future is on and always connected. Thus, social media can be a tool in the societal transformation. When we talk of advancing sustainable prosperity, social media provides podium for both learners and innovators. The success of this media depends on 4 Es – Effective Exchange/Expouse, Educate, Engage & Enhance, which will help make the transition to a more just and sustainable world.

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