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**INFORMATION, COMMUNITY AND ACTION: HOW DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS IN  
ASIA USE SOCIAL MEDIA  
A CASE STUDY ANALYSIS ON THE USE OF FACEBOOK IN WOMEN'S  
EMPOWERMENT CAMPAIGNS IN INDIA AND REGIONALLY**

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**ABSTRACT**

Asia has some of the highest reported levels of violence against women (VAW) in the world, where it has a profound impact on individuals and communities as well as the overall development of states. The rapid diffusion of information communication technologies and social media channels such as Facebook is bringing a new era of possibilities for organizations to communicate with and engage with target audiences and the general public. Social media channels can be beneficial tools not only in providing information, but in promoting action and community development when leveraged in advantageous ways. However, there is a lack of information detailing how development organizations are using this technology. This study explored Facebook utilization practices of three nonprofit organizations in India and regionally that have overall goals of shifting social norms to prevent violence against women through analyzing the campaigns' Facebook posts. In these three varying contexts, the study explored how Facebook was used to achieve different types of communication functions, including for informational purposes, mobilization purposes and community building processes. The analysis reveals that three key functions of Facebook updates were used —'information,' 'community,' and 'action.' The informational use of Facebook is only occasional, and the three organizations are using Facebook mainly to engage their stakeholders to build communities and to an extent take action, practices not possible with traditional websites. For all three case studies, the Bell Bajao!, UNiTE and Must Bol campaigns, Community posts were the majority of posts in the campaigns. The adoption of social media seems to have brought in new ways of stakeholder and public engagement.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Asia has some of the highest reported levels of violence against women (VAW) in the world (WHO 2013), having a profound impact on individuals and communities as well as the overall development of states. The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is the main treaty that addresses VAW<sup>1</sup> as it creates legally binding obligations on States parties to provide women with guarantees of gender equality and non-discrimination. Social norms,<sup>2</sup> or commonly held beliefs and practices that condone VAW, are often deeply embedded in cultures and societies, thus the ratification of human rights treaties is not enough to result in immediate change. Rather, ratification is one important step in laying the groundwork for ongoing social and legal reform.

Recent data from the Asia-Pacific region has shown that men with gender inequitable attitudes are more likely to perpetrate physical violence against women (Naved 2011). Violence, however, can be prevented and this assertion has been proven true within the field of public health (Meurn 2011). Because VAW is rooted in a complex set of issues, multiple responses at different levels are required, including working with individuals, communities, institutions and in the larger policy environment

The rapid diffusion of information communication technologies and social media sites such as Facebook is bringing a new era of possibilities for organizations to communicate and engage with target audiences and the general public. Social media channels can be beneficial tools not only in providing information, but in promoting action and community development when leveraged in advantageous ways. However, there is a lack of information detailing how development organizations are using this technology. This study aims to address this by exploring Facebook utilization practices of three nonprofit organizations in India and regionally that have overall goals of shifting social norms to prevent violence against women through analyzing the campaigns' Facebook posts. In these three varying contexts, the study explored how Facebook was used to achieve different types of

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<sup>1</sup> The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is also critical to addressing VAW not only because of the intersections between women's and children's rights, but also because VAW can be part of a cycle of violence that begins with child abuse and/or the witnessing of violence by children. The Convention obliges ratifying States to take all appropriate measures to protect children from "all forms of physical or mental violence." VAW is a human rights violation under CEDAW.

<sup>2</sup> Social norms are shared expectations of behavior that define what is considered appropriate behavior, and what is not acceptable. Individuals are discouraged from violating these norms through threat of social disapproval.

communication functions, including for informational purposes, mobilization purposes, and community building processes.

This paper enhances understanding of how campaign organizers use Facebook by examining the Facebook practices of three development organizations that are using this technology. The three nonprofit organizations studied have overall goals of shifting social norms to prevent violence against women in Asia. Through analyzing the campaigns' Facebook posts, the study explored how Facebook was used to achieve different types of communication functions. Research questions explored are:

1. What type content do these organizations share online?
2. What functions does the content pertain to: informational purposes, mobilization purposes, or community building processes?
3. How can the findings associated with social media usage of each campaign impact outcomes related to violence against women?

The third research objective aims to understand the potential benefit to be gained from social media through the application of social norms theory, providing insight into how social norms can be transformed, leading to an improvement in gender equality and a reduction in the levels of violence against women. Social norms theory purports that people inaccurately assume that the attitudes and behaviors of others are significantly distinct from their own. In general, these erroneous assumptions are most often applied to problem behaviors or negative attributes, thereby influencing the individual to change their own beliefs and behaviors to emulate what they consider to be "the norm" (Berkowitz, 2002; Miller & McFarland, 1987). Furthermore, as an individual is increasingly exposed to others who may perpetrate violence or discrimination, they tend to become less sensitized to it, eventually adjusting to it and even considering it "normal", in spite of the fact that they may have been vehemently opposed to it in the beginning (Berkowitz, 2002; Miller & McFarland, 1987). Thus negative beliefs or behavior can be contagious in that one's exposure to it may result in their attitude changing to one that is in agreement with these negative perceptions. Or, it may result in the belief that harmful behavior is not *that* bad when it seems to appear so frequently and is so pervasive (Berkowitz, 2002; Miller & McFarland, 1987).

## **METHODOLOGY**

The methods implemented within this research involves three case studies, which are subject to analysis. The three case studies are Must Bol (India), Bell Bajao! (India) and the UN's 'SayNO - UNiTE to End Violence Against Women' campaign (global, including contributions from Asia-Pacific campaign organizers). All of these campaigns use Facebook and share the common goal of women's empowerment. The analysis of this study is modeled after a unique approach that was set forth in Lovejoy and Saxton (2012), from which the analytic coding and resulting categories were derived, as elaborated on below.

Consistent with the study of Lovejoy and Saxton (2012), the sample utilized in this research is derived from each of the three cases mentioned above and will be established upon their campaign presence on Facebook. Facebook's broad usage over the internet has made it a significant space for messaging (Lovejoy and Saxton, 2012). As a result, these posts can serve as an effective and expedient vehicle for understanding stakeholder communications.

**Must Bol in India.** The Must Bol campaign in India was formulated for the purpose of addressing the issue of gender-based violence (Must Bol, 2014; P4P, 2011). It was created as a means of providing a place for young people to learn about gender violence and as a forum for discussion in the absence of such a venue anywhere else (Must Bol, 2014; P4P, 2011). In doing so, the campaign leverages the use of social media and the interactions that occur between young people in this space as a mechanism to prompt discussion, while reaching a diverse demographic of people (Must Bol, 2014; P4P, 2011).

**United Nation's Asia-Pacific UNiTE campaign.** The *UNiTE to End Violence Campaign* is led by UN Women and the office of the SecretaryGeneral of the United Nations. Its goals are to raise public awareness and to increase political will and resources for preventing violence against women and girls. The campaign calls on governments, civil society organizations, women's groups, men, youth, the private sector, media and all UN agencies to join together and address violence against women.

**Breakthrough's Bell Bajao India.** Breakthrough is an Indian women's rights organization that was established to raise awareness about human rights using popular culture and community mobilisation. Breakthrough's *Bell Bajao!* campaign calls on men and boys to take a stand against domestic violence. The campaign seeks to reduce domestic violence and to highlight the role that men and boys can play in reducing violence.

All three campaigns above campaigns were selected for this study primarily because they have an overall goal of changing social norms to prevent violence against women, have activities in Asia that place an emphasis in using social media, and have active Facebook pages in English.

The process of collection extended for one month in which all posts associated with each campaign were downloaded into a database. The period 15 Nov – 15 Dec was chosen because the time period includes the annual ‘16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence Campaign’ which takes place 25 November to 10 December every year. This is a time when campaign organizers typically are most active both online and offline. The year(s) data was collected from were 2011 and 2015, which is the time period when each campaign was most active.

**Table 1 Case study Facebook page**

<b>Campaign name</b>	<b>Campaign Facebook page</b>	<b>Date range data was collected</b>
Must Bol (India)	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/DelhiYouth">https://www.facebook.com/DelhiYouth</a>	15 Nov – 15 Dec 2011
Bell Bajao! (India)	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/BreakthroughIN/?fref=ts">https://www.facebook.com/BreakthroughIN/?fref=ts</a>	15 Nov – 15 Dec 2015
SayNO - UNiTE to End Violence Against Women campaign (global)	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/SayNO.UNiTE/?fref=nf">https://www.facebook.com/SayNO.UNiTE/?fref=nf</a>	15 Nov – 15 Dec 2015

The posts were compiled and coded. Descriptive data was calculated for each organization, including the average number of posts during the data collection period. The posts collected and analyzed comprised of posts from the organizations only, whereas comments from viewers were deemed outside the area of this study thus not collected and analyzed. Relevant tables and graphs were then developed.

Each post was coded by assigning one code from the categories, based on the post’s content and primary purpose according to the 12 categories in Table 2 ). Through this undertaking, the type and functions of content these organizations share online was revealed, namely, content for informational purposes, mobilization purposes, or community building processes. Thus through this analysis of each organization’s Facebook post behavior, it was possible to make generalizations about the different ‘types’ of organizations. Understanding

the use of three types of posts will help to shed light on whether social media is being used for monologic dissemination of information and/or dialogic communication that promotes interaction between individuals.

**Table 2 Categorization and Coding Scheme**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Subcategory</b>	<b>Code</b>
<b>Information</b>		1
<b>Community</b>		2
	Giving Recognition & Thanks	2.1
	Acknowledgment of Current & Local Events	2.2
	Responses to Reply Messages	2.3
	Response Solicitation	2.4
<b>Action</b>		3
	Promoting an Event	3.1
	Donation Appeal	3.2
	Selling a Product	3.3
	Call for Volunteers/Employees	3.4
	Lobbying/ Advocacy	3.5
	Join another Site/ Vote for Organization	3.6
	Learn How to Help	3.7

### **Information**

The information includes posts about campaign activities, events, news, and facts. The notable characteristic about this category is that it involves monologic, or one-way, communication from the campaign organizers to the public. Following is an example:

UN Women Goodwill Ambassador Nicole Kidman supports the global movement to #orangetheworld in #16days to end violence against women and girls. Learn more: <http://ow.ly/ULi8v> (*Say No UNiTE campaign*)

Information posts aim only to inform. That is, the post does not aim to mobilize audiences to take part in any kind of event or action, initiate dialogue, or build networks/communities. The posts in this category are one-way information. This is not to say

that information-sharing processes are not an important tool. When a campaign shares information about its activities, mission, achievements, governance, etc., it can help portray accountability and trust. Informational posts can also be a necessary building block for other functions described below.

### **Community**

The current literature on social media use by nonprofits finds that most organizations mainly use social media for informational functions (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2009). However, as Facebook is a social networking tool, organizations can use Facebook for dialogic communication, thereby facilitating community building with its audience.

Thus in the Community category, there are basically two main functions: dialogue and community-building. Posts that promote interactive conversations between the campaigns and their audience are dialogic. Posts that aim to communicate something that strengthens ties to the campaign's online community (that aren't necessarily dialogic) relate to building social capital and networks. All four sub-categories in this function seek to build a participatory online community.

Two of the sub-categories that comprise the community function. 'Acknowledgment of current and local events' and 'Giving recognition and thanks' and, are basically aimed at community-building. The following example typifies posts in the giving recognition and thanks subcategory, which thanks fans who participated in an online video contest:

Huge thanks to all participants for their awesome entries! The jury is evaluating your music videos currently and will be out with the results soon. Keep watching!  
#Shoot4ACause The 48 Hour Film Project India (*Bell Bajao*)

A typical post in the sub-category acknowledgement of events, often aimed to show that the campaign is a part of the community, for example :

On 25 October, police, village chiefs, students, and tuk-tuk drivers in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, joined the UNiTE Campaign's #OrangeDayaction to end violence against women and girls in Cambodian communities. (*Say No UNiTE campaign*)

The remaining two subcategories under this function - 'Responding to reply messages' and 'Response solicitation' - are dialogic in nature. Posts in the 'Response solicitation' sub-category are the clearest type of communication aimed at sparking



“dialogue” – a response - between the campaign and its audience, including direct questions, surveys, contests, requests, for example:

Is there something you wanted to do, but couldn't due to your gender identity?  
(*Must Bol*)

This category exemplifies how Facebook can be a more effective in dialogic communication than traditional websites, promoting interactivity and two-way communication, as well as fostering and/or strengthening networks.

### **Action**

The third function is “action,” which comprises of posts to get the audience to take some sort of action related to the campaign — such as donating or participating in an on-the-ground event. Because this category asks followers to do something, this is the most tangible category. It is important to note, however, that while many nonprofit organizations may ultimately want to achieve tangible actions such as mobilize followers to come to or donate, the case studies here primarily aim to change social norms, which may be at least equally if not more relevant to the Community category.

Facebook can be a useful means of promoting events. Posts in this subcategory not only included information about an event (which would be in the ‘information’ category) but also information about the date, time and/or location of an event to promote participation, for example:

We are looking forward to Harpreet's music performance today at 7 pm at our 50:50 #KeepItEqual event. Through this event, we want to create a safe, fun and inspirational space to celebrate the strength of the movement against gender-based violence (*Bell Bajao*)The ‘Learn how to help’ subcategory entails basically two-step process - learn how to help, then help, and served as another way to garnering supporters. For example:

When you #shareyourstory of #sexualharassment with your son, you ensure he never harasses a girl. Let's create a culture of empathy. Talk to your son and tell us your experience by following this link: <https://www.inbreakthrough.tv/campaigns/shareyourstory/>  
(*Bell Bajao*)

‘Lobbying and advocacy’ is another subcategory that comprises the Action function. Facebook was used to directly ask followers to get involved in a lobbying/advocacy action, such as:

Did you know that several countries around the world still have laws that fail to protect women from violence? Learn more about these# Unsexy Laws from Equality Now: <http://ow.ly/VJfJ9> via Refinery29  
(Say No UNiTE)

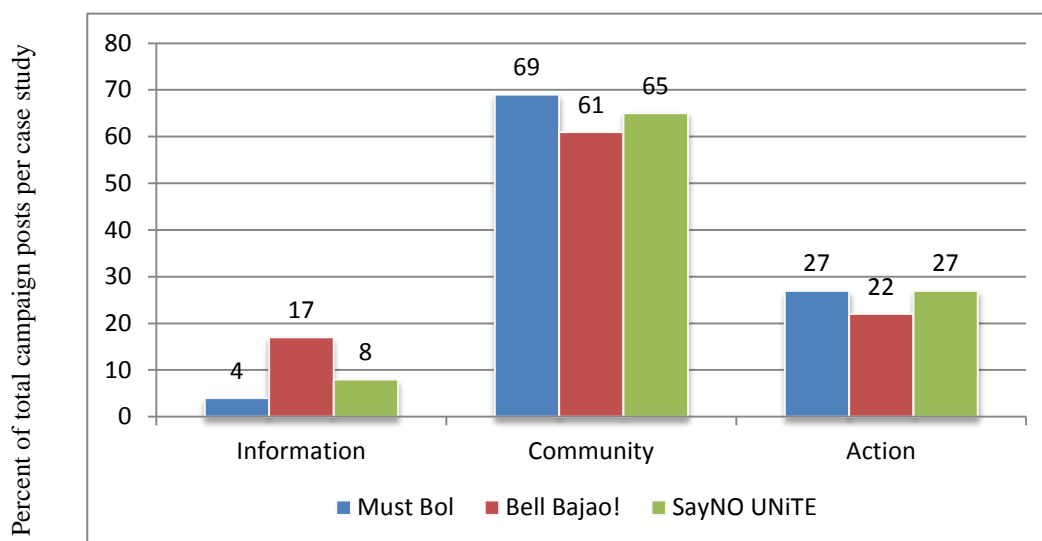
The ‘Join another site/vote for organization’ sub-category mainly served to cross-promote partner organizations, such as:

#16DaysofActivism looks at different ways of curbing violence against women. Men and boys, in their various roles, have a responsibility and an important role to play in promoting gender equality, advocating for gender justice and ending violence against women and girls. Check out this super-effective and simple campaign for men called 16 ways in 16 days by White Ribbon <http://www.whiteribbon.ca/news/16-ways-in-16-days/>  
(Say No UNiTE)

The remaining subcategories – ‘Donation appeal’ and ‘Selling a Product’ - seek to ask the audience to directly contribute funds by donating to the campaign or buying a campaign-related item.

## Statistical analysis

Figure 1 illustrates the three primary categories, Information, Action, and Community, as well as the proportion of posts dedicated to each in each campaign.



**Figure 1** Categorical proportions in each campaign

Interestingly, as evidenced above, none of the initiatives made primary use of the information categorical functions. More specifically, all three campaigns presented with posts in the Community category that comprised the majority of posts, whereas Action posts were the second most frequently used all three campaign pages. A striking finding is the close similarity in ranges within each category among the three campaigns.

Interestingly, the majority of Community classified posts functioned to solicit responses in both Must Bol and Bell Bajao!. The unique approach of both Must Bol and Bell Bajao!, in this regard, was to post a comment that promoted thought and introspection, thereby allowing the individual to formulate their own conclusions, while potentially gaining some added self-awareness and awareness of the social situation emphasized. Rather than simply stating a message, this approach required a greater degree of attention from the individual, prompting them to more consciously engage in the message being communicated through the element of thought required. Typical examples of this include:

- When was the last time you saw more women than men in a public space? Tell us where that public space was and what, according to you, encouraged more women to be there! #MissionHazaar
- If you have a son in the future, will you share your sexual harassment story with him? Send your open letter here: [shareyourstory@breakthrough.tv](mailto:shareyourstory@breakthrough.tv)
- Is there something you can do to remove violence in your relationship?

When examining how the UNiTE campaign utilized Community posts, the category was comprised predominantly of Acknowledgement of events posts. These mainly consisted of posts on events held by the campaign members in different locations. Interestingly, UNiTE did not leverage Facebook at all to promote the events beforehand, rather only posting about the events after they had taken place.

Supplementing the aforementioned, while all three campaigns made predominant use of Community posts, all of them had a notable lack of posts falling into the “Response to reply” subcategory, which is interesting given that fostering a sense of community was one of the primary goals of these campaigns.

The frequent use of response solicitation for two of the campaigns, rather than acknowledging events of interest to the community or another function in the category, require and indicate a higher level of participation. In turn, this higher level of participation

evidenced by the response posts likely contributes to a perception of a campaign that receives a higher level of interest from others, thereby creating a favorable perception. In addition, it is also likely that the presence of responses from individuals will serve as a catalyst for further responses from others, who wish to reply to a message or add their own thoughts. This creates the perception of an active organization, fostering the sense of community that is one of the predominant goals.

Overall, Bell Bajao! and Must Bol both presented with posts in the Response solicitation subcategory (38% and 43%, respectively) in the Community category comprising the majority of all posts within this category for each organization. Posts in the Response solicitation sub-category are the clearest type of communication aimed at sparking ‘dialogue’, that is, a response between the campaign and its audience. This included posts with direct questions, surveys, or requests, for example:

- Stalking - Is it an expression of love or sexual harassment? #StopSexual Harassment
- Families with only girls are often perceived as ‘unfortunate.’ Have you experienced such discrimination around you? #MissionHazaar #Haryana
- When did you realize that street harassment exists?

This category exemplifies how Facebook can be a more effective in dialogic communication than traditional websites, promoting interactivity and two-way communication, as well as fostering and/or strengthening networks.

This could possibly be attributed to both Bell Bajao and Must Bol having a more localized focus of their campaigns, and UNiTE have a larger global span. Ultimately, it seems to be this element of invoking thought and active communication that encourages engagement, possibly leading to introspection and subsequent awareness.

When examining how the campaign utilized Action posts, the infrequent use of UNiTE of the Promoting an Event function is interesting given that the campaign clearly conducted events but did not post about them until after the event (in the Community category, under Acknowledgment of events). This could be attributed to the UNiTE campaign having a global span, while both Bell Bajao and Must Bol have a more local focus. Ultimately, it seems to be this element of invoking thought and active communication that encourages engagement, possibly leading to introspection and subsequent awareness.

Although the general levels of the main categories were similar among all three campaigns, what is becoming evident is that it is not only how posts are allocated among

categories, but how they are used *within* these categories that seem to define participation in the initiative, as it pertains to social media and ICTs.

## **Discussion of findings through the lens of a violence against women theory of change**

At the core of this paper is the question of how the findings associated with each campaign's Facebook page can impact outcomes related to violence against women. As previously discussed, the primary communication approaches to changing norms to date have generally entailed one of three strategies: awareness-raising campaigns; small group workshops (often including community engagement activities such as street theatre, posters, etc.); and behavior change and communication strategies, including "edutainment" programs (Heise, 2011). According to the literature, to be effective the methodologies should be based on social norms theory.

Thus one means of understanding the potential benefit to be gained from social media is through the application of social norms theory, providing insight into how social norms can be transformed, leading to an improvement in gender equality and a reduction in the levels of violence against women, as described below, beginning with social norms theory.

Social norms theory purports that replacing the misperceived norms with more positive, accurate ones will impact the individual by fostering more beneficial behaviors and attitudes (Berkowitz, 2002). Therefore, working under the assumption that what is perceived as an unhealthy norm may be replaced with a healthy and productive norm, should a more positive alternative present, then it is possible for one's perception of a negative behavior to change (Berkowitz, 2002). Thus, social media may serve as the vehicle to this occurrence through the provision of healthy positive statements that challenge those persisting detrimental beliefs, particularly if the presence of positive behaviors and attitudes outnumber the negative, thereby becoming the "new norm" in a virtual capacity. The intended objective then is that this ultimately translates into "real life", which has been empirically investigated and found to be a feasible objective, reducing violence and mobilizing the community against violence aimed towards women by targeting and replacing the negative, inaccurate perceptions of norms (Kyegombe et al., 2014).

Yet, in spite of the aforementioned, some sources contend that violence cannot genuinely be eradicated against women by targeting single individuals and their associated

attitudes or beliefs (Fulu, Kerr-Wilson, & Lang, 2014). Instead, in order to truly facilitate change, a campaign must implement a multi-pronged approach that possesses the capacity to reach a broad spectrum of individuals, collectively (Fulu et al., 2014). Therefore, social media is a critical component in this equation, affording the opportunity to reach an audience that is exponential in size. In addition, achieving community mobilization requires that a campaign can “empower women, engage with men, and change gender stereotypes and norms at a community level” (Fulu et al., 2014, p. 8).

Therefore, when examining the three campaigns at the core of this paper, in order for them to truly be successful and facilitate change, they must present with the ability to reach a broad spectrum of individuals, engage them in the process, as well as empower through positive messages, bringing awareness through the provision of positive beliefs and attitudes.

In terms of reaching a broad spectrum of individuals, this may be ascertained by the number of people who have “liked” each campaign page. The Must Bol campaign has 32,937 page likes, followed by Bell Bajao! with 68,845 page likes, and UNiTE with 176,908 page likes. Combined the pages reach more than a quarter of a million people directly (278,690). While this represents a large number of people, it may be surmised that this may not necessarily constitute a broad spectrum of people as the campaigns mainly target urban youth. Furthermore, the youth being reached may be those who are already aware of issues related to violence against women. Therefore, if this is the case, posts that prompt viewers to take action by, for example, speaking with their sons may be a prudent way to enlarge the spectrum of individuals reached.

Further, when examining the campaigns of interest within this context, UNiTE’s substantial use of posts that lacked dialogic content may not have used Facebook taking into account social norm theory as much as the other two campaigns. In contrast, Must Bol prompted introspection through the posting of questions that changed (“response solicitation” in the Community category) almost daily, thereby serving to empower and engage. Similarly, Bell Bajao! also made prudent use of their relatively frequent posts in the “advocacy” and “promoting events” subcategories among Action posts, as opposed to other comments that may not be as useful or engaging, such as promoting a website.

As a result, while changing perceived social norms is the underlying purpose of these initiatives, posting information that does not engage the audience may not take into account social norm theory as well as more dialogic posts. Dialogic posts, however, possibly take social norm theory more into account when providing new information, while also

prompting individuals to formulate their own thoughts, while witnessing the replies and posts of others. When a positive message was posted on these sites or a question presented, the positive message was reinforced by additional statements posted by others. It was through these steps that the process of transforming negative beliefs into positive norms could occur to a degree.

Thus rather than posting negative informational messages, a more effective message, according to social norms theory, could be a message that communicates the positive benefits of not adhering to a negative social norm.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Overall, the proposed study aimed to contribute to the existing body of literature and provide analytical data pertaining to the use of ICTs by social movements. This is particularly relevant in light of the fact that many research endeavors within the current studies conducted are comprised of theoretical discussion, opinion, or a case analysis of one potential movement. This study utilized three movements, allowing an identification of commonalities and relevant findings that persist across organizations, thereby providing results that are more conducive to extrapolation and more credible in terms of the insights that are brought to light.

In addition, the resulting findings will be relevant to social movement organizations that wish to more effectively use social media by illustrating means by which this can most successfully be achieved. Finally, in the midst of a global society that has undergone profound changes as a result of technological advances and new ICTs, it is to the benefit of women and men, across the globe, to explore and define the most useful ways of applying these new innovations for the promotion of development.

As a result, the following outcomes are summarized as a result of this research:

1) In all of the cases examined, ICTs, particularly social media platforms, are an effective means of public engagement and are a valuable tool for giving information, mobilization for action, and promoting community development.

2) Overall, nonprofit organizations are interactive in their use of social media, but many use social media as an extension of information websites as found by Lovejoy & Saxton (2012). However, organizations focusing on prevention of violence against women's use of Facebook is more focused on community and action rather than information.

3) In the cases examined, campaign organizers displayed differing approaches in how they used Facebook within each category to convey information, promote action and promote community development, with some using Facebook as a dialogic communication tool, and to an extent reflecting social norm theory.

4) The adoption of social media seems to have brought in new ways of stakeholder and public engagement, particularly when combined with social norm theory, engendering a more active, dialogic, and interactive civil society with potential to influence social norms

Overall, the impact of ICTs on social movements is varied with differing effects dependent on the context in which it is used and the technology, itself (Garrett, 2006; Nam, 2012). Yet, as a whole, ICTs can be used as tools for strengthening social movements as far as civil society is concerned, ultimately contributing to the potential justice and balance of power across socioeconomic domains and social issues (Garrett, 2006; Mercea, 2013). However, this does require the ability of those within a society to be sufficiently literate and have access, in order to engage in this connectedness, as well as understand and contribute to the issues at hand (Garrett, 2006; Mercea, 2013).

When these variables are present, then a two-step process can occur, which involves the transmission of ideas over social media or another technological platform (Garrett, 2006; Mefalopulos and Paolo, 2009). This information is best utilized when shared and disseminated further by friends, family, and other individuals, contributing to the formulation of opinions that can ultimately set the stage for action and make a difference (Garrett, 2006; Mefalopulos and Paolo, 2009).



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