

SOCIAL MEDIA RAGE AGAINST ABUSIVE BEHAVIOUR AND HARASSMENT OF WOMEN

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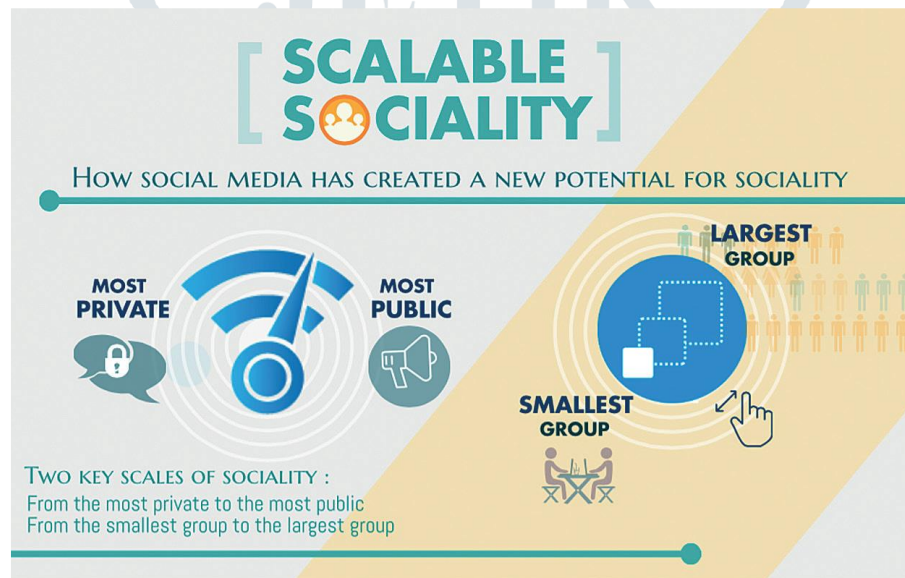
Abstract- This study has been undertaken to analyze the use of social media by feminists to communicate their anger against the violence and abusive behavior to women. The research methodology of case study and content analysis is adopted for this study.

Index Terms – Cyberfeminism, social media, e-activism, violence against women, harassment

Introduction –

New information communication technologies, internet, social media, digital world, virtual space all these mention a sphere which is a s large as universe itself. And this big platform has changed the world. This change has so many meanings and perceptions. One of these changes is the communication and impact of social media on society. WhatsApp, Facebook posts, Instagram are the platforms which gives a freedom to communication without posing any hurdle of religion, caste, color, community, culture or geographical boundary.

Based on a sample of 2496 students, the results show how social media is creating online scalable sociality emerged (Daniel Miller, 2016).



Scalable Sociality, (Daniel Miller, 2016)

Feminists are using social media for communicating about the issues of gender equality, women empowerment. Feminists are also organising processions and online campaigns for better discussing the women's issues.

Literature review-The Online activism with the help of social media is helping them a lot in getting the online support and feedback and more meaningful feedback and help in the form of charity. Social media has helped them in the extension of their sphere. Cyberfeminism a word created in 1994 by Sadie Plant, director of Cybernetic Culture Research University of Warwick, Britain (Consalvo, 2012). After Third wave of feminism and introduction of new technologies, the term Cyberfeminism was used to address or to include the young feminists using technology (Consalvo, 2012). Donna Haraway, a professor of History of Consciousness program at the University of California at Santa Cruz in her famous and a milestone article on feminism, "A Manifesto for Cyborgs" argues that a feminist cyborg challenges the singular identities do the work that contain women and other marginalized groups (Consalvo, 2012). Donna Haraway also said that women needed to become more technologically proficient, better able to engage with the informatics of domination and challenge these systems, she added that women would need to be savvy and politically aware users if these technological systems; simply using them was not enough (Consalvo, 2012). Another branch of cyberfeminism argues that the idea of women gaining power and authority merely through greater use of new media technologies is overly simplistic or reductive (Consalvo, 2012). In addition, the information and communication technology allow women to escape boundaries and categories that have in the past constrained their activities and their identities. The e-media are completely new technologies which give women a chance to start afresh, create new languages, programs, platforms, images, fluid identities and multi-subject definitions. This e-media can be recoded, redesigned, reprogrammed to meet women's need and desire to change the feminine condition (Wilding, 1998) (Dr Mulaningrum, 2007). Social media has proved to be a powerful vehicle for bringing women's rights issues to the attention of a wider public, galvanising action on the streets of cities around the world and encouraging policy makers to step up commitments

to gender equality. Recent cases in Turkey and India reflect the potential of social media to bridge the gap that often separates grassroots women's activism from policy-making processes. The explosion of social media and unprecedented use by women of new technologies represents important opportunities to bring gender equality and women's rights issues to the forefront of both policies making and media attention (E.Loiseau, 2015). Social media has transformed the landscape of how information is shared globally and the relationship between citizens and governments (C.Shirky, 2011) (E.Loiseau, 2015). Beyond its use as a social networking tool, social media allows for the first time any individual to share content and opinions to a global audience, bypassing traditional media or other modes of information transmission (Parliament, 2013) (E.Loiseau, 2015). Platforms such as YouTube, Facebook or Twitter have allowed activists around the world to retransmit events live to a broad online audience, such as during the Arab Spring movement (Center, 2012) (E.Loiseau, 2015). Local issues become global concerns; local activists become connected with global citizens (E.Loiseau, 2015). Women's rights movements have also been quick to capitalise on social media's unprecedented political and awareness-raising potential. During the Wikigender online discussion, participants stressed the importance of social media in allowing gender activists to connect within and across borders, at a low cost. The surge of female bloggers has helped attract a younger generation of activists, who represent a key target audience to break established stereotypes and help advance gender equality. (E.Loiseau, 2015).

Objectives- This paper wishes to explore how social media is being used by women in India. Is social media is an option to show the atrocities, abusive behaviour against women. If women and feminists are using social media what are the possible reason for it.

Research methodology- This is an analytical study doing the discursive content analysis. Case study and Online content analysis are the research methodology adopted for this paper. The hashtag activism campaigns #WhyILeft and #WhyIStayed are being studied for deep understanding the use of social media to show the rage against the harassment and violence against women. Multiple case studies have distinct advantages and disadvantages in comparison to single case study research method. The unusual, unique, critical and revelatory case can be appropriately studied with the help of one case study method. Multiple case study methods are expensive, requiring extensive resources, time consuming. So, choosing multiple case study method should be very logical and planned. Every case selected should serve a specific purpose, within overall scope of the study, multiple case studies means considering multiple experiments, to follow a replication logic, replications with similar or altered will make the findings robust, worthy of continued investigation (Yin, 2003).

The logic for use of multiple-case studies is if all case studies are producing same results, i.e. literal replication, predicting contrasting results but for predictable reasons, a theoretical replication (Yin, 2003). A rich theoretical framework helps a lot in deciding the case study sampling. Single or multiple case studies, both should be the focus of a summary report. In multiple case study methods, each case study should indicate what particular proposition was demonstrated or not demonstrated, few cases were predicted to have similar results and few cases were predicted contrasting results (Yin, 2003). The number of case studies cannot be decided with the sampling logic, it has to be decided as a reflection of the number of case replications theoretical and literal that is needed in the study (Yin, 2003). It is a discretionary, judgmental choice, and the number of cases depends on the certainty you want to have about your case (Yin, 2003). With the higher criterion for establishing statistical significance the higher number of cases will be appropriate for generating the greater certainty. For literal replications when the rival theories are grossly different and the issue at hand does not demand an excessive degree of certainty, for high certainty researcher can select five, six or more case studies (Yin, 2003).

Rationale for multiple-case studies designs derives directly from the literal and theoretical replications, the simple multi-case design would be the selection of two or more cases that are believed to be literal replications such as a set of cases with exemplary outcomes in relation to some evaluation theory. More complicated multi-case studies are involved where two different extremes are being discussed have deliberately chosen (Yin, 2003). A multiple case study can be consisting of multiple holistic studies, or multiple embedded cases. The difference between two alternatives depends on the type of phenomenon being studied and the research questions. The use of multiple-case studies design should follow a replication not a sampling logic, and researcher must choose each case carefully, cases should serve in a manner like multiple experiments with similar results, literal or contrasting results i.e. theoretical, predicted explicitly at the outset of the investigation. The individual cases selected within multiple-case study design can be either holistic or embedded (Yin, 2003).

Purposeful sampling is a much used research methodology used in qualitative research for identifying and choosing the information rich cases (Patton, 2002) (L.A. Palinkas, 2015, Vol. 42 (5)).

Discussion- #WhyIStayed and #WhyILeft was a trending hashtag in 2014. This campaign was coming as a reaction to the incident of Ray Rice a football player hit his fiancée in the hotel lift. The video of this fight and her fiancée lying on floor, fainted got viral immediately (tmz, 2014). Later on, after public given sharp reactions on this incident and it was criticised by one and all, Ray Rice was terminated by his team, he was suspended by NFL (S., 2014). Social media portals were crowded with the same kind of stories from women narrating same kind of physical assaults and misbehavior. The team and the league showed the disappointment with the Ray's behaviour and he was charged with eh aggravated assault later on. After the video got viral the Ravens terminated his contract with eh team and NFL suspended him indefinitely (Logan, 2014). Janay Rice came to the rescue of Ray, it got mixed reactions on social media. She that Rice is a nice human being and one mistake can be forgiven. She married Ray in March roughly after one month of the assault incident (Elliott C., 2014). The reaction from the public appeared in two online hashtags #WhyIStayed and #WhyILeft (E., 2014). Both these hashtags stormed the internet and hundreds of stories appeared from all walks of life, mostly female Twitter users shared their stories sharing the reason why they decided to come out of the relationships due to abusive behaviour and harassment. Or why they decided to stay back even after physical assault or abusive behaviour (Laura, 2014). There were also many men in the hashtag campaign, there were haunting and sobering stories. The data analysis done in the research showed that there 2,522 tweets on these two hashtags, including retweets (Clark-Parsons, 2016).

The data collected from websites and Twitter it was found that crisis period was the most vital and having maximum response during that (Clark-Parsons, 2016). The vast majority of the people supporting the Hashtag, shared their personal experiences with detail and others used the discourse between victim and abuser to narrate their incident (Clark-Parsons, 2016). The stories showing the survival stories of Hashtag users politicized through testimony concept that too in public, it brought new challenges between victim and abuser, it gives a new way to communicate the suffering (Clark-Parsons, 2016).

In addition to hashtag users' personal stories, the coding process shed light on the role of the audience in the dramatic action of #WhyIStayed. Social media enables active audience participation as opposed to passive consumption (Kreiss, Meadows, and Remensperger 2014) (Clark-Parsons, 2016). This trend motivated enough to other users to retweet it, to share it with added their own stories and to address this issue of violence against women with the help of hashtag, the active participation increased the #WhyIStayed movement to further advance the claims

that Hashtag activism got the ability to mobilize the action and ideology by creating a public sphere around one idea, event or incident. Consequently, #WhyIStayed audience members not only demonstrated what Susan Berridge and Laura Portwood-Stacer (2015) refer to as hashtag feminism's power to "promote gendered solidarity" (341), but also made evident feminist hashtags' ability to empower users with material resources. These tweets advanced the movement's counter-frame by recognizing victims' complex struggles while also going a step beyond recognition, implicitly demonstrating the potential impact of domestic violence discourse that supports rather than shames victims (Clark-Parsons, 2016).

The hashtag activism seen in these two cases, showed the political impact of discursive activist which generate a public sphere of hashtag feminism, it can be analysed with the data of people tweeting, discussing and debating about the issue that time (Clark-Parsons, 2016). A tweet can be as simple a thing as cup of tea but when it comes as a combined communication from masses and with the networked power of Hashtag Twitter network then the political opinion building and the discursive influence generated can build into a strong online resulted action (Clark-Parsons, 2016). Before this campaign women or say victims were too shy their personal sufferings publicly, but these tow hashtag activism make it an imperative study to bring these sufferings out in public so to avoid stop and fight back suck behaviours (Clark-Parsons, 2016).

In order to counter the snarky comments being directed towards Palmer, writer and social activist Beverly Gooden started the #WhyIStayed and #WhyILeft campaigns on Twitter to encourage victims of domestic abuse to share their experiences. The campaign soon became viral and successfully exposed the feelings of women who had been abused, instead of blaming them (Domestic Violence : The#whyIStayed campaign, 2014). CEO of domestic violence Hotline said that on average he was receiving five hundred to six hundred calls a day in related to the domestic violence victims and their families and friends which is a normal number but after the Ray Rice's video of hitting her fiancé, he was receiving over 1000 phone calls a days and the number was increase with the increase social media discussions (Wbur, 2014).

There's no question social media is changing lives. It gives every woman with a mobile phone or computer the ability to share her story with the world. It's equally clear that decades of public awareness by battered women's support organizations has paved the way for women to feel more comfortable publicly sharing their suffering. And that can only help. Think of all the battered women who last week felt alone and trapped. Just imagine how these testimonials might lead these women to re-think what love means, and to realize others just like them are showing them a path out. When women's voices are heard, they change lives (Carrie, 2014). What emerged out of Ray's attack incident, was an empowering conversations on twitter and other social media platforms showing the complexities of domestic abuse and raising awareness on how common is the abusive and violent behaviours in relationships (Aine, 2014). The #WhyIStayed and #WhyILeft hashtags are even more important now than ever, because it gives a voice — and a very loud one — to women who have managed to remain silent for so long. It doesn't matter whether these women used their real or fake Twitter accounts, or used a pseudonym, the fact of the matter is that the women who voiced their stories hailed from all cultures, creeds and backgrounds, throwing all caution to the wind, as they shared experiences that were bold, raw, and tearfully painful. And, even though, personally, I will never understand the physical, emotional and mental trauma that ensues from domestic violence, I do actually personally know quite a few women who have struggled with it, especially those who hail from the same cultural background as myself (Pashtun). And these women don't necessarily live back home, in Pakistan; these women live here, in Canada and the United States — in the "modern" west — where they find it so incredibly difficult to just pack up, grab their children by the hands, and simply walk out of the marriage (SesapZai, 2014).

#WHYISTAYED Conversation Highlights



MENTIONS

198,696

Posts on all Media

TOP MEDIA TYPES



90% **6%** **3%**

BREAKDOWN

WHYISTAYED: 185,794
WHYILEFT: 63,883

*Some posts included both WHYISTAYED and WHYILEFT

- The majority of mentions were made on Twitter, followed by Facebook and Mainstream News
- Over 99% of mentions used hashtags (#) and 689M Twitter users were reached
- Over 112k of the mentions were Retweets, while 85k were original posts
- Most mentions were written in English, while 78% were from individuals in the United States
- The most common reason people said they stayed with abusive partners was to keep their family together
- The most reported reason why people left was fear for their children
- Over 75% of Twitter mentions were from non-celebrities (less than 1k followers), while Ashton Kutcher was the celebrity with the highest reach
- Common hashtags used included #HowIHelped, #DomesticViolence, #DomesticAbuse, #whenILeft and #DV



(#WhyIStayed, 2014)



Why they Stayed

- The most common reason why individuals stayed with a violent or abusive partner was to keep their family together – women especially were afraid of being single mothers and felt guilty when considering taking their partner away from their children
- Love was the second most common reason people stayed, followed by being threatened, manipulated or scared to leave their partner – in many of these cases, individuals reported that they were fearful for their lives
- Other reasons for staying included fear of financial burden, hope for the abusive partner to change, lack of a support system, fear of being alone, guilt for leaving their partner, strong religious views and low self-esteem
- Some individuals reported they did not think or believe that the relationship or partner was abusive at the time
- Several people responded and replied to posts, and included supportive comments and debates on what women should have done in certain situations – a lot of empathy expressed



(#WhyIStayed, 2014)

Celebrity Influencers



"Women Start #WhyIStayed Twitter Trend To Defend Those Who Stay In Abusive Relationships [http://aplus.com/a/why-i-stayed-domestic-violence-awareness ...](http://aplus.com/a/why-i-stayed-domestic-violence-awareness-...)"
 – [Sept 10, 2014](#)

Ashton Kutcher
[@aplusk](#)
 17.1M Followers



"Lots of discussion around @bevtgooden & #WhyIStayed. Leaving an abuser isn't easy, but there is help: http://bit.ly/DV_Resources #endthesilence"
 – [Sept 18, 2014](#)

Doctor Phil
[@DrPhil](#)
 1.4M Followers



"When i was 9 i stopped my mom's boyfriend from stabbing my mom to death. if you mock domestic abuse i have no time for you. #WhyIStayed"
 – [Sept 12, 2014](#)

Moby
[@thelittleidiot](#)
 1.3M Followers



(#WhyIStayed, 2014)

Non-Celebrity Influencers



"#WhyIStayed Because I didn't know the value of my own life and love.
#DomesticViolenceAwareness"
- Sept 21, 2014

Edie Summers
[@ediesummers](#)
1K Followers



"#WhyIStayed I didn't believe in Divorce. I loved my husband & wanted to make the marriage work no matter what. If he broke a bone I'd leave."
- Sept 12, 2014

Patty Felker
[@noteworthytones](#)
1K Followers

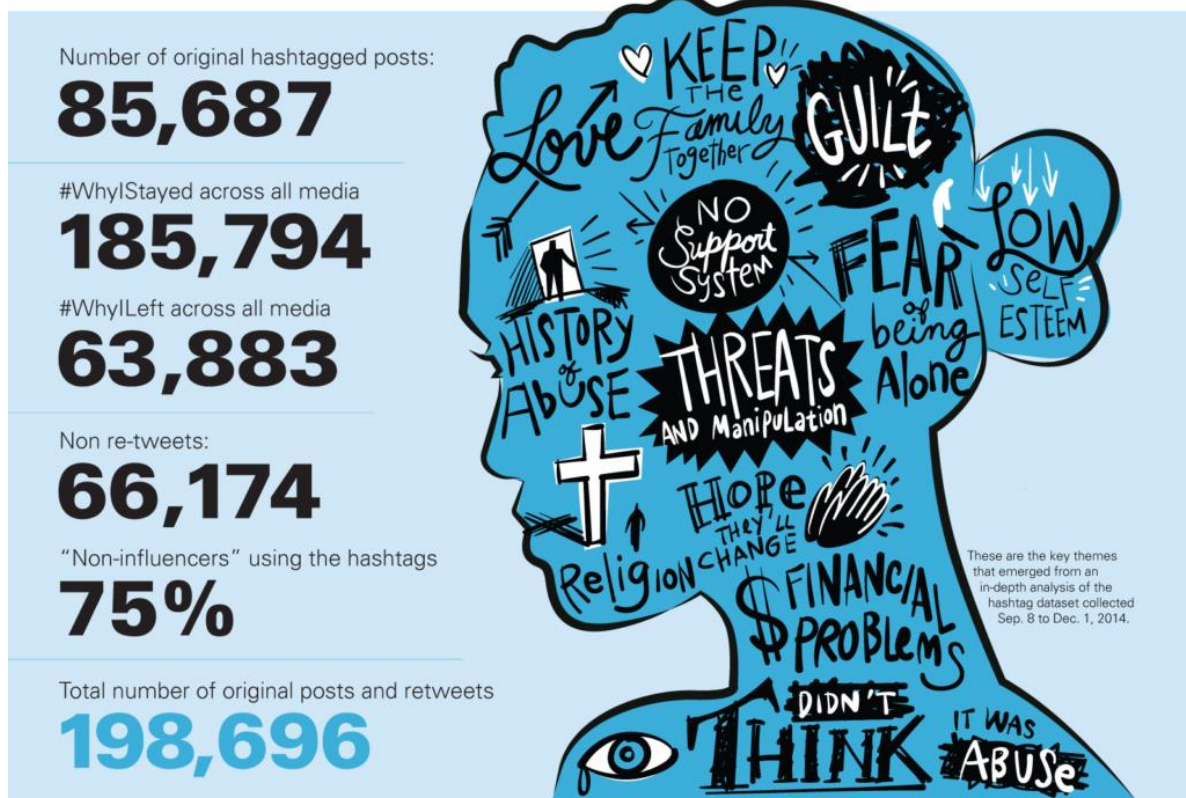


"@JuddLegum @bevtgooden I remember the moment I saw this wheel-in DV training & cried-I recognized for the 1st time I was a victim #WhyILeft"
- Sept 9, 2014

Urbanly DIVA
Inc.
[@UrbanlyDIVA](#)
1K Followers

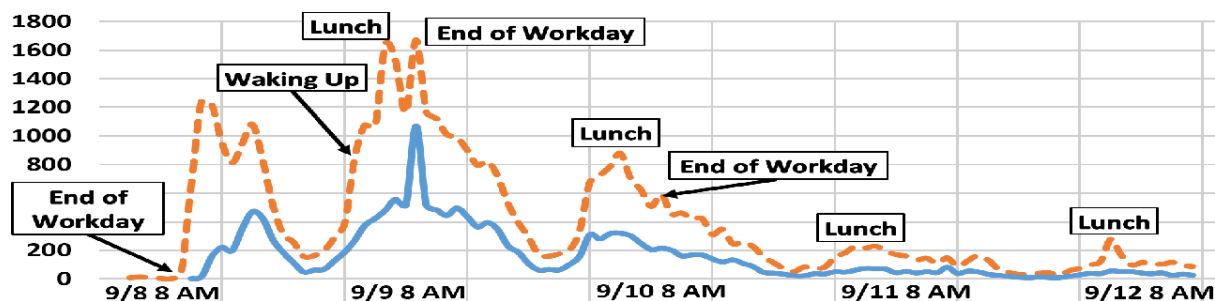


(#WhyIStayed, 2014)



(Matthews, 2015)

Big Mountain Data recognized the importance of this Twitter phenomenon as a turning point in the public conversation on domestic violence. The organization aggregated the activity over the period September 8 to December 1, 2014, to reveal the scale and magnitude of the survivor voices who came forward. The conversation spiked on September 9 with 77,544 tweets in one day. With 85,687 original hashtagged posts and mentions, and nearly 185,794 posts and retweets for #WhyIStayed and 63,883 posts and retweets for #WhyILeft, the results provide a glimpse into the complexity and scale of intimate partner violence. Most importantly, the fast-paced, viral exchange empowered survivors to come forward messages from out of the shadows of an abusive past. Survivors found refuge and resolve in the community that grew organically with each subsequent tweet and media mention (Matthews, 2015).



Tweet count per hour with #WhyIStayed (dotted) or #WhyILeft (solid) from 9/8 to 9/12. Times in EST, vertical lines mark 12-hour periods, with label corresponding to its left line. Spam removed, includes meta tweets (Jaclyn D. Cravens, 2015).

A study done by Society for Social work and research done on the #WhyIStayed and #WhyILeft, they did the mapping of the response of these two online campaigns. This study revealed the emergence of five thematic domains: victims/survivors of DV describing their reasons for staying in and/or leaving abusive relationships (56% of tweets); educating about DV (9%); encouraging others to participate and/or learn from the campaign (7%); a general emotive response (25%); and tweets with an unclear meaning (2%). Tweeters employed over 100 unique reasons for why they stayed in abusive relationships, with the most common being threats of harm, the severity of the abuse, and believing the relationship would improve. The primary reason cited for leaving was concern for their children. Educational messages contained content related to explaining abuse dynamics and the challenges to safely leaving abusive relationships. The majority of general responses to the campaign were in support of DV victims, praising the potential of twitter to raise awareness about domestic violence and derogatory comments about individuals who stay in abusive relationships (Storer, 2017).

The study put in the conclusion that these two hashtag campaigns had provided an important platform for the victims to share the stories of domestic violence. The diversity of their responses reveals the incredible complexity involved in the “decision” to stay in DV relationships. While most tweets came from self-described victims, there was also a significant number of individuals using the campaign as an opportunity to learn about the dynamics of DV and to express their solidarity. The #WhyIStayed campaign extended beyond a space of feminist dialogue but became a broader platform for global public discourse on the barriers to leaving abusive relationships. Further implications for social work practice will be discussed (Storer, 2017).

Discussion – After the #WhyILeft and #WhyIStayed online hashtag campaigns and the responses received, it showed that women or victims were hiding these stories with many reasons and have come out to share these with a logic. As the users with the stories of why they stayed, told that family, children, financial dependency or lower financial status forced them to stay back even after violence. The people who left chose that path to save their lives, to live with self-respect. case study of #WhyIStayed, I have argued that hashtag feminism is a form of social drama with all the elements of compelling storytelling. Just as in the case of good theatre, hashtag feminism’s ability to initiate socio-political change depends upon the many contingencies that exist between dramatic actors and their audiences. The social drama of hashtag feminism unfolds through a three-stage process, beginning with an initial breaching event that escalates to the level of crisis, during which actors contest social meanings, and ending with a reintegration period during which the movement’s interpretive framework is rejected, adopted, or revised. Not only can hashtag feminism, through the adoption of feminist frameworks, result in material offline change, but successful feminist hashtags become enduring frames of reference for interpreting and responding to current and future social phenomena. In the age of social media, hashtag protests like #WhyIStayed have overshadowed offline demonstrations and formal movement organizations in the US, resulting in more intersectional and open feminist movements, whose participants are not restricted by the potentially exclusionary membership practices of organizations and whose voices are not filtered through institutional gatekeepers (Clark-Parsons, 2016). Information and communication technologies are meant for all people and women must be an equal beneficiary to the benefits delivered by the technology, and the products and processes which materialise from their use (Mohanty, 2017). Women need information regarding education, research, career growth, matrimonial, health etc. Cyberfeminism focus on the use of technology for the betterment of women, impact of new technologies on the women’s lives, Recent studies have showed that women are using social media and new technologies as a important tool for interacting and getting connected to the women from the other parts of the world. Social media had open different options and opportunities for women to communicate with each other and to share the information (Mohanty, 2017). Internet is enabling networked individuals to develop a new form of social and political accountability, terming it as the “Fifth Estate”. The Fifth Estate is a peer-led forum, where “individuals who are online can create and source information and network with others in ways that are not tied to local or formal institutions. Networked individuals can be armed with the information and social support to hold politicians and mainstream institutions more accountable” (Dutton 2013, p. 20) (Rodrigues, 2014). Social Media is a platform where feminism can get the audience as large as universe and can speak and share their minds in addition can generate a public sphere to create awareness or to establish changes in society for the women empowerment and to bring safety for the women.

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