A Brief Study on Social Networks and Feminism

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the connection between feminism with social networking and assesses social media's potential to serve as an important forum for the promotion of modern feminism goals. Feminism's influence declined in the ages until social networking became an important aspect of society and female viewpoints were sceptical that it might be resurrected or popularised again. In current history, though, people have utilised social networks to collaborate and distribute progressive concepts. The emergence of "hashtag feminism" has resulted in a radical change in the way femininity is practised and argued for in popular society. Educational women are posing a number of important concerns in view of this drastic change in location for female discussions: Is social platforms beneficial to empowerment and the pursuit of egalitarian goals? This article contends that social network has given feminists a voice to tell their experiences, and has helped in the formation of feminist communities. That's also modern feminism most critical work since it makes us more open to progressive values and concepts, changing our world into one that will embrace and battle for feminism's goals. This paper would look at a number of case reports wherein feminist debates have taken social media by storm. It would assess the effect of social networking as a forum for progressive arguments and the usage of social platforms as a feminism medium in the struggle to accomplish feminism's goals.

Keywords- feminism, social media, hashtags, social media campaigns, empowerment, social networks.

I. INTRODUCTION

Networking is an interchange of ideas around the network to the masses. It functions as a forest fire to scatter every sort of knowledge. Women today use these networking websites to raise their voices. Social networking is the power that can be used to share one's idea to the world. It makes feminists conscious of the present situation. They only join in the campaign to get viral around the world with the use of networking websites. Not only are this some men taking part in these feminist campaigns as well. It should be recognized that protests, revolutions, or concerns posed on social media sites can quickly hit the masses. There are some social media platforms such as facebook, whatsapp, instagram, twitter etc. Which are widely used by individuals to socialize or to express their ideas and thoughts regarding any issue[1]. Moreover, it is a boon for women as they can access everything no matter they have time to go out of their houses. They can easily take part in the revolution of any issue related to society. And such an important issue is feminism. "Feminist activists have campaigned for women's rights—such as in contract, property, and voting —while also promoting women's rights to bodily integrity and autonomy and reproductive rights. They have opposed domestic violence, sexual harassment, and sexual assault. In economics, they have advocated for workplace rights, including equal pay and opportunities for careers and to start businesses." Women are now using these network channels to speak out. In networking, there are several methods, such as keywords and hashtags, used by individuals to promote some concepts[2]. Similarly, to encourage female equality, feminists utilize these tools and boost their voices toward sexist inequality or misogyny as a catalyst. The force with which anyone will spread their idea to the world is social media, making feminists aware of the current scenario. They can only actively participate in the wave of gaining attention across the

world with the use of networking websites. As cited by *Nancy Pelosi*

> **"Women are leaders everywhere you look— from the CEO who runs a Fortune 500 company to the housewife who raises her children and heads her household. Our country was built by strong women, and we will continue to break down walls and defy stereotypes."**

Figure 1: Social Media Platforms

Social media make it so convenient for feminist or women right organizations to run their movement as it permits women to raise their voices against any assault or disparity. In this context Nagarajan says, "Harness the power of the internet to convey the realities of women's lives to the world and to ensure freedom of sexual and gender expression. It takes agency and consent seriously, designing them into thinking, planning and technology". So it can be understood that movements, revolutions, or issues raised on social media platforms reach easily to the mass that resultant today's men also be aware and understand the plight of women and how growth of a women is linked with the growth of a family, society, nation or even of a civilization. Social media has done various amazing things for females, women writer activists, authors, and activists. It permits all to increase their community or group as all know that union is strength[3]. It has provided women a virtual ground or place where they can collectively express their thoughts while other media as print media avoid them. They need no one's obligations to be heard as the power is there in their own hands i.e. Smartphone. Internet acts for them as an Aladin's Lamp as they can learn or do what they want to do being at home. There are lots of activist who used social media platforms and hashtag tools for their campaigns and they gain a lot of popularity and got viral all over the globe. "Hashtag activism is a term coined by media outlets which refer to the use of Twitter's hashtags for online activism. The term can also be used to refer to the act of showing support for a cause through a like, share, and etcetera, on any social media platform, such as Facebook or Twitter".

II.   SOME HASHTAG CAMPAIGNS RELATED TO FEMINISM

- **#MeToo** is founded by Tarana Burke to give a common platform to girls and women to share their experiences. Women from all over the world have participated and disclosed their experiences to all about sexist oppression they faced which they had never dare to share with anyone. In 2017, actress Alyssa Milano tweeted about her sexual assault[4]. Since the time this movement had geared and crossed all the racial, economic and sexism boundaries.

Figure 2: # MeToo Campaign

- **#TimeUp** Monica Ramirez, president of the Alianza Nacional de Campesinasto, an organization that works to end the harassment of women in the USA, wrote a letter to Hollywood women to come up to raise their voices against any sexual assault. This movement was succeeded by the most powerful voices against sexist oppression and gender discrimination.
- **#HeForShe** Emma Watson , an Ambassador of UN Women Goodwill, instigated men in 2017 to come up and join the revolution to combat with gender discrimination by being a part of #HeForShe campaign. Women and men across the world actively participated in this movement Present their contribution to civilization and the well-being of mankind and put an end to gender stereotypes.
- **#OrangeTheWorld** it is a 16 days movement organized every year from the International Day for ending violence against women on 25th of November to 10th of December Human Right Day, by inviting the community[5]. All are invited to take part for awareness to prevent violence against girl and women.
- **#IWillGoOut** this movement channelized the women in India who were fed up with the incident of gender inequality and sexism to come together to convert their rage in action. They used social media and connect each other to echo their voices to fight against gender discrimination and sexist oppression across the nation.
- **#EverydaySexism** Author Laura Bates in 2012 set up a website named "The Everyday Sexism Project" which highlighted the incident of women experiencing sexism in their daily life. Women were motivated to

share their stories of sexism to the world so that everyone could understand that sexism is still breathing and widespread[6]. After sometime the project became a hashtag and spared all over the world.

- **#NotOkay:** After the obscene remark by Donald Trump during the presidential debate that took place on October 8, 2016, the #NotOkay hashtag was recently pioneered. These remarks referred to a recording from his history that outlined sexual attacks that he himself perpetrated and also how he treated women. After Canadian writer Kelly Oxford inspired many others to tweet their respective stories, this triggered a series of tweets using the tag #NotOkay.

- **#BringBackOurGirls** in 2014 number of girls were abducted from their school hostel in Nigeria by a terrorist group. Parents of the victims and other communities used social media platform and created the #BringBackOurGirls to speak against the crime. By this movement more than 100 girls who had been kidnapped, were found and released[7]. It also raised voice against other abuses such as killing, kidnapping, economic reform and healthcare.

These are amongst the campaigns that achieved far too much attention and accomplishment across the globe and made women speak out or demonstrate towards any prejudice targeting them. Speaking out or responding on social media using hashtag or keyword is to showing our support or denial against any issue, when one use these tools on social media, he or she provoke or instigate responses which provide a visible platform for feminists to express experiences regarding sexism or gender discrimination. A feminist academics, Braun wrote; "We seek to explore some of the issues related to social media based feminist campaigns and examine the process of 'shouting back' against hegemony, misogyny, and sexism[8]. Digital spaces are a powerful influence on social movements, and we consider some of the ways in which social media has contributed to the feminist movement."

In spite of women having immense progress and feminist advocacy in using social media outlets including their instruments to tackle gender disparity, sexist discrimination and patriarchal belief exist. Since several women actually do not even have resources for using modern technologies, there are still most women unused with these networks due to insufficient access to technology and ethnic differences. Estelle Loiseau, gender program officer at the OECD Development Centre, mentioned in this context that "There are many other difficulties, including certain Women having exposure to emerging technologies, their preparation to make adequate use of it, or the need for a powerful women's movement to join up with on-the-ground activities, but we must understand that women's voices are more prominent than ever through social media." There is a multitude of websites and online participatory networks that have evolved as yet another means of networking for gender revolutionaries. For progressive

movements, social media sites and emotional relations are essential[9]. They help attract people, maintain groups, cultivate the identity of the movement of participants, and disseminate knowledge. Curriculum alluded to the foundational influence of the internet as well as other telecommunications in physical and digital mobilization. Social media and libertarian blog posts are expanding and fostering feminism activist networks, building new feminist groups, expanding recruiting grounds for online and physical agitation, and increasing opportunities in the global engagement with antagonists. Consequently, in the second- wave feminism, generational changes and the larger interaction between structures of intimacy and physical and digital mobilization is recognized.

There is considerable coherence between both the activities of girls in "safe" virtual tools and those performed in several other cultural and historical environments. But digitalization is consequentially, and perhaps remarkably, a powerful tool for connecting females to bigotry as well as other women's rights activists in developed and undeveloped countries. Recent theory has called for the study of methods to involve teenagers in feminist conversations and to provide them with opportunities to establish new approaches to counteract patriarchal patterns in their very own communities[10]. Social media is considered as one of the appropriate equipment to share their experiences, combat towards street violence, and foster the dialogue on feminist values in regard to this appeal. By using conceptual study, it was investigated how, both in public venues and on Social media sites, a bunch of teenage adolescent girls conveyed modern cultural expectations after exposure to feminist material and after developing engagement techniques to address street abuse. Conceptual research has proven that when the theoretical material is enhanced with personal experiences and when communication is used as a tool to convey emotions, it's really useful to integrate teenagers with feminist values. Social networking globalized feminism action, setting new engagement as well as a drive to combat the patriarchy to everyone with a Twitter account. Places such as Tumblr, Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook have made advocacy simpler than it has ever been, promoting collective conversation and providing a forum for recognition and progress by eliminating the boundaries of distances and ecology. Feminist online activist doesn't just raise recognition for feminism but it has created considerable results too[11-12]. Digital networks has indeed demonstrated to be influential in affecting the way activists across diverse parts communicate and collaborate together to mobilize topics critical to women's empowerment through an interdisciplinary context. In the fight to abolish the patriarchal belief in its numerous forms, social media has proven to be a valuable weapon for women's equality campaigners to unite citizens and capital to take concrete and substantive steps inside their societies.

III.   CONCLUSION

Media is the product of culture and media accounts represent social issues. Media has enormous power to control the masses and connectivity, and digital movement has only enhanced its relevance. Needless to say, today the media are tossing away from its real position and giving bias in the knowledge that creates difficulties for civilization to grow. Trying to portray females as equals. Civilization is a concern that the Indian media have granted low importance[13]. The Indian media needs to be relevant to gender problems and must therefore concentrate on female rights in a definitive way, as their position is counterproductive to women's empowerment in India. Moreover women are striving for their own rights and in today's scenario Women require no one's obligations to be understood when the authority is in their own possession, i.e. Smartphone. In reaction to alleged sexist, misogynistic, racial, and other unequal actions against marginalized communities, networked feminism is the online mobilization and organization among feminists[14]. Social networking has apparently helped to make this a timely moment for women's activism and the inclusion of women in national politics. When social networking platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Tumblr are seen as a catalyst for the advancement of feminist inclusion, networked feminism happens. Such approaches are used to encourage gender equality and to bring attention to others that promote something else[15-16]. A new driver of modern feminism is being online feminist work. To shape coordinated Internet communities, female Internet users use hashtags. Groups are seen in the case of feminist campaigns to promote an ideology or group against patriarchy. This advocacy using resources available on the Internet is also recognized as activism by hashtags. Thus it can be said that women empowerment is the foremost agenda for the civilization whether it is online or offline networking.

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