An Exploratory Study on the Use of Social Media for Social Marketing

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Abstract

Social media refers to the online media that allows multi-directional conversations and real time interactions such as social networking sites (SNS), blogs, discussions forums, content sharing, social bookmarks, wikis etc. Over the last decade, social media marketing has become a key focus area for both marketing practitioners and researchers. This paper focuses on the impact of social media in the domain of social marketing. For this study, we consider previous academic research in the area of social media and social marketing published in eminent research journals and management. After creating a summative background of social media and social marketing, we propose a model to understand the role of social media as a catalyst in the process of social change. Finally, we present two cases where social media played a significant role as a social catalyst.

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1. Introduction

Social media has transformed the marketing landscape. The ripples from social media conversations can be felt across politics, business, economy, sports, entertainment, and virtually all facets of daily life. From Obama's election victory to the Arab Spring and nearer to home, Anna Hazare's Anti-corruption campaign, social media has played a vital role in mobilizing the masses. The power has shifted from the institution to the individual. These social platforms allow users to connect, create, and collaborate with organizations expanding the influence of marketing (Hanna, Rohm, & Crittenden, 2011).

With the advent of Web 2.0, the traditional model of communication has evolved into a multidirectional model of communication where the message can flow vertically top-down (marketers to customers) or vertically bottom up (consumers to companies) or horizontally (consumers to consumers) (Thackeray &Neiger, 2009). Marketers are moving from one-way information sharing to multi-directional real-time conversations with consumers. These conversations are shaping the content of marketing messages and the way they are distributed (Landry, Ude, & Vollmer, 2007).

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In such a scenario, it is important to understand how social technologies are changing the way users communicate and interact in the context of social marketing. Our study aims to investigate and understand the role of social media in the domain of social marketing.

2. Research Methods

The present study applied a qualitative methods. All data is analyzed descriptively. It is used a paraphrase to explain, elaborate, and explore regarding the phenomenon belonging. The conclusion is the last remarked based on the previously description.

3. Results and Analysis

3.1 Social marketing

Till the late 60's, marketing was thought of being limited to selling a company's product to its target consumers. It was Kotler and Levy (1969) who explored the application of marketing concepts to nonbusiness scenarios. They believed that the classical marketing concepts of product and target definition, customer behavior analysis, creating value perception and integrated marketing planning could also be used in marketing of non-business organizations. Citing multiple cases of institutions like schools, museums, government organizations, nonprofit organizations and campaigns of family planning, health awareness, public safety, they demonstrated how non-business enterprises utilized 'marketing-like' activities for creating awareness, publicity, relationship management, brand building etc. (Kotler & Levy, 1969).

While organizations were already using advertising for social objectives, a wider and more integrated perspective was required to achieve marketing objectives (Kotler & Zaltman, 1971). From the marketer's perspective, social advertising was still ineffective because of insufficient market research and limited number of channels available to spread the message (Fox & Kotler, 1980). For the consumer, the ineffectiveness stemmed from the absence of an outlet for post-exposure action (Fox & Kotler, 1980).

Realizing the broader potential of social marketing, Kotler &Zaltman (1971) proposed a framework for planned social change where "social marketing" was defined as "the design, implementation, and control of programs calculated to influence the acceptability of social ideas and involving considerations of product planning, pricing, communication, distribution and marketing research". In addition to examining the four key variables, product, promotion, price and place (Kotler & Zaltman, 1971), the principles of sophisticated market research, product development, use of incentives and facilitation were also applied to the prevailing approaches to social change namely, social advertising and social communication to create a novel approach 'social marketing' (Fox & Kotler, 1980).

Early social marketing research focused on defining social marketing and its delineation as a distinctive marketing subsystem (Luck, 1974). Fox & Kotler (1980) stressed the need to distinguish social marketing from 'societal marketing' and 'non-profit organization' marketing. In 1994, Andreasen defined social marketing as "the adaptation of commercial marketing technologies to programs designed to influence the voluntary behaviour of target audiences to improve their personal welfare and that of the society of which they are a part" (Andreasen, 1994). Andreasen's definition shifted the 'bottom line' of social marketing from changing attitudes to influencing behaviour but excluded activities such as fund raising and political campaigns from social marketing since such activities would benefit the marketers. Dann (2010) integrated core principles derived from extant literature and established a new definition of social marketing as "the adaptation and adoption of commercial marketing activities, institutions, and processes as a means to induce behavioural change in a targeted audience on a temporary or permanent basis to achieve a social goal."

While discussing marketing in non-profit organizations, Shapiro (1974) highlights three primary tasks, resource attraction, resource allocation, and persuasion for which the marketing mix is developed.

According to Fox & Kotler (1980), social marketing can be applied in three scenarios:
  a) Dissemination of new information (e.g. cancer treatment) and practices (e.g. use of iodized salt)
  b) Counter-marketing against harmful or undesirable products (e.g. cigarettes), activities (e.g. drunk driving) or services
  c) Activation of intentions (e.g. weight loss)

Choosing the appropriate communication channel for promotion is crucial to the success of a social program. This involves making decisions regarding the communication types, the media vehicles and timing of messages (Lee & Kotler, 2011). Social marketers have relied mostly on traditional channels such as mass media and personal selling for reaching their audience. Web 2.0 has further expanded the scope of communication strategies for social change through digital media that allow interactivity and independent distribution of information through social platforms (Seo, Kim, & Yang, 2009). Lefebvre (2007) highlighted the importance of understanding social media and questioning how they can be leveraged for different objectives such as engaging, creating, and enhancing linkages between stakeholders such as communities, individuals, and organizations for the social good.

3.2 Social media

Social media refers to the online tools and platforms through which users connect with each other to share information, news, experiences and more (Kumar, Hsiao, & Chiu, 2009). Social media comprises of online platforms that allow multi directional conversations and real time interactions. Users can create their personal profiles and with a click, make new connections with people around the globe or reconnect with friends, family and acquaintances. Some of the forms of social media include social networking sites (SNS), blogs, discussions forums, video-sharing, content sharing, social bookmarks, podcasts, wikis etc.

3.3 Social networking sites

Social Networking Sites allow users to create a profile page where the user can list his personal background, interests, and other information that he may want to share with other users. The user can then send invitations to join their social network to other online and offline users based on interests or other motivations. Social networking sites offer many possibilities for an organization to create a touch point with their consumers. For instance, organizations can create Facebook pages where they can provide important information about their organization and offerings to their audience and invite their audience to 'like' their page.

There are multiple ways how an organization can utilize this presence. Firstly, the Facebook page can be used for providing consumers with company updates, promotional offers etc. For instance, Delhi Traffic Police   (DTP),a government organization in   India, launched their   Facebook   page (https://www.facebook.com/pages/Delhi-Traffic-Police/) in 2010 as a step in their mission to encourage participation and involvement of citizens in traffic management. Secondly, the organization can engage its consumers in a dialogue through meaningful content and by listening as well as responding to their comments (Facebook, Inc, 2011). The DTP Facebook page currently has more than 119000 followers and provides essential information such as contact info, traffic laws, updates etc. Users can also post complaints, comment on the contents, ask questions, and share photos on the page to which the DTP responds in real time. Finally, Facebook allows organizations to create advertisements and sponsored stories with specific targeting criteria so as to optimize the advertisements' reach (Facebook Inc, 2011). Blogs can be defined as "personal journals on the internet arranged in reverse chronological sequence that facilitate interactive computer mediated communication through text, images, and audio/video objects" (Huang, Shen, Lin, & Chang, 2007). Blogs are one of the most powerful tools for marketing. A blogger plays multiple roles in information consumption – creator, communicator, explorer, collector, and player (Huang et al., 2007). Blogs can play a pivotal role for creating awareness and participation in social issues. The 'Jaago Re' campaign launched by Tata Tea is a good example of how social media can be used to as platform for creating awareness about social issues and creating linkages between people to bring them together for social change (IndiaSocial, 2012). The Jaago Re Blog (http://www.jaagore.com/blog) regularly posts articles related to relevant social issues, updates regarding social projects and information for people who would like to volunteer for social projects. Micro-blogs are online social networks where the updates or content are limited by size. For instance, Twitter is one of the most popular micro-blogging sites where updates are limited to 140 characters. Consumers use Twitter to 'follow' other users, post updates, share interesting web links and 'retweet' updates by other users, all within the character limit. However, this size limit makes micro-blogs ideal for usage on mobiles. Many third party applications have developed applications to support micro blogs on mobile devices and enhance user experience on micro-blogs (Li &Bernoff, 2011). Hash-tags (keyword / phrase preceded by #) make it easy for users to organize, sort and track content on twitter by keywords. Bitly (www.bitly.com) allows users to shorten URLs for sharing on Twitter and also measures the marketing metrics. The

Jaago Re campaign uses Twitter (https://twitter.com/#!/JaagoRe) to share short updates and web links on current social topics with the hash-tag #SochBadlo. Content Sharing Platforms Content sharing platforms such as Flickr, Youtube etc. allow users to share videos, presentations, documents, audio, pictures and other media with other users. Content sharing can prove to be an important tool for a social organization as was shown by Breakthrough's 'Bell Bajao' campaign for creating awarenessagainst domestic violence. The Youtube channel of Breakthrough, a global human rights organization, has more than 1 million video views (http://www.youtube.com/user/LetsBreakthrough).

3.4 Discussion forums

Discussion forums are one of the earliest forms of social media where users can post questions and comment on others posts related to common subject or interest (Li &Bernoff, 2011). There are many discussion forums where their people discuss personal or social issues such as health concerns with others, seek information, ideate, solve problems of other users and discuss products. For instance, Breastcancer.org, a nonprofit organization, is using discussion boards to provide information and community support to people who have been affected by breastcancer (Breastcancer.org, 2012). Their online community (http://community.breastcancer.org/) has more than fourteen thousand members participating and discussing nearly 90,000 topicsacross seventy forums.Social organizations can use these forums to understand and address the concerns and issues of their target audience.

3.5 Social bookmarking sites

Social bookmark sites allow users to 'tag' online content so as to classify and highlight content for personal and others' consumption. For example, Delicious users (http://delicious.com/) can collect and tag website links to save for personal or public reference. Users can read, share and promote content on Digg (http://digg.com/). Organizations can create and monitor tags relevant to them, helping understand consumers associations and perceptions (Li &Bernoff, 2011). Collaboration Platforms

Social media allows users across the globe to coordinate their efforts on large scale on common platforms such as Wikis. Wikipedia is one of the well-known examples of online collaboration by users. Wikipedia is one of the largest online encyclopedias with more than 17,000,000 articles in 270 languages contributed by nearly a million active users. Organizations can create wikis either for their consumers that can function as a repository of knowledge or for use within the organization (Li &Bernoff, 2011) for intra-company collaborative activities and knowledge management.

3.6 Using social media for social marketing

One of the most important aspects of social media lies in the power it has given to the consumer. It has enabled them to connect, collaborate and co-create content. The new age consumers or "Generation I" are characterized by "communal connectedness and consciousness" and can realize the extraordinary by the virtue of the collective (Jaffe, 2007). Social media are an important channel for electronic word of mouth or eWOM communication. Users are sharing their experiences, comments, opinions and reviews with both their online and offline social networks. Past research has shown that social influence is an important factor in the consumers' decisions. In the context of diffusion of innovation amongst Facebook users, Ermecke et al. (2009) emphasize two aspects of social influence, passive and active, which are significant in creating awareness. While passive influence refers to the indirect effect of the influencer on others' adoption of the product; 'active' social influence is more effective and involves 'explicit' action from the influencer in making recommendations and inviting others to use the product (Ermecke et al., 2009). In a scenario with many alternatives or information overload, consumers tend to follow the decisions or judgements of others (Wang & Lin, 2011). eWOM gives consumers a collective voice, which shifts the balance of power away from marketers (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). Nevertheless, this has also given social marketers an opportunity to create and facilitate advocacy by encouraging positive conversations about social change among their consumers. Marketers need to tap into the potential of this groundswell (Li &Bernoff, 2011) to leverage the knowledge and resources for social change (Lefebvre, 2007; Thackeray &Neiger, 2009). Thackeray, Neiger, Hanson, & McKenzie (2008) suggest that personal recommendations on social media could be more effective than traditional advertising in encouraging people to participate in health-promotion related activities.

Social media has several advantages over traditional media which can help overcome the typical challenges faced by marketers in social marketing. A few examples are:

a) Lack of resources and long term support from different stakeholders such as the government, donors and public is a major concern for social marketers (Bloom &Novelli, 1981). Social media allows organizations to involve their stakeholders more closely with their campaigns by collaborating and involving them in different aspects of the marketing campaign to generate the required support and resources.

b) Social marketers have to work with the core beliefs and values of their market (Kotler &Zaltman, 1971), making it difficult to get reliable measures during primary data collection. Moreover it is difficult to ascertain the relative influence of identified determinants of consumer behaviour (Bloom &Novelli, 1981). Most authors concur on social media being a rich mine of valuable consumer insights. According to Edelman (2007), the online environment can provide organizations structural asset, scale and process advantages in terms of a proactive devoted customer base, consumer data available online and new campaign concepts respectively. In his book "Join the conversation", Jaffe (2007, p.22) highlighted the significance of social media to marketers as a point of access to "a series of endlessly rich, dynamic, gratifying, robust, authentic and meaningful conversations going out there".

c) Another advantage is that unlike traditional market research techniques, listening to consumer conversation on social media offers a real-time glimpse in the consumer mind as well as real-time feedback (Chen, Ching, Tsai, &Kuo, 2008). Thus marketers can make changes to their marketing mix, products, services etc. based on what is working "now" (Edelman, 2007; Landry at al., 2007). According to Precourt (2010), listening contributes to brand strategy and tactics; helps assess competitor risk and deal with public issues, thereby increasing marketing effectiveness. Kang & Norton (2004) stressed the importance of incorporating relational communicational elements into the online strategy of non-profit organizations for public benefit and effective reciprocal communication. The two-way communication aspect of social media can prove to be beneficial to both the organizations and their stakeholders, allowing them develop multidirectional relationships through online conversations. By actively participating in the online conversations, organizations are able to take up different roles in conversations to provide direction and enrich the conversation experience, making the content more meaningful and focused. Nevertheless, most researchers concur that the "conversational" potential offered by social media is still underutilized by non-profit organizations (Kang & Norton, 2004; Freeman & Chapman, 2008; Ingenhoff & Koelling, 2009).

d) The amount of information to be communicated is relatively higher in social marketing which complicates the framing of the communication strategy and limits the effectiveness of mass media (Bloom &Novelli, 1981). Social media such as blogs and wikis can give social marketers the necessary freedom to design and implement their message strategy

According to Fox & Kotler (1980), while traditional and social marketing work on similar concepts and principles, social marketers face bigger problems at each level than their business counterparts. Financial constraint is oft cited as a major hurdle which affects the social marketing program at every level of decision making: market analysis, market segmentation, product strategy development, pricing strategy development, channel strategy development, communications strategy development, organizational design and planning, and evaluation (Fox & Kotler, 1980; Bloom &Novelli, 1981; Lefebvre & Flora, 1988).

The internet acts as an equalizer which offers social marketers many opportunities to expand the scope of their offerings and markets (Coombs, 1998; Kang & Norton, 2004). However, a study by Ingenhoff & Koelling (2009) revealed that only organizations with higher incomes tend to utilize the 'dialogic' features on their websites. While some organizations are spending money on revamping existing and developing new websites for social marketing, popular social media sites and their audience are still underutilized (Freeman & Chapman, 2008). Hanna et al. (2011) show how social media strategies can be implemented successfully on a shoestring budget by defining media (as owned, free and paid for) and utilizing them accordingly. The basic methods of reaching out to the target audience through popular social media sites are often free or very cost effective; Hanna et al. (2011) demonstrate this through the case of Grammy Awards. Seo, Kim & Yang (2009) also advocate the use of social media for image building and fund raising in low capacity and financially constrained organizations.

3.7 Integrating social media with traditional media for social change

Sheth& Frazier (1982) have described planned social change as "an active intervention by change agents with a conscious policy objective to bring about a change in magnitude and/or direction of a particular social or consumption

behavior by means of one or more strategies of change". It involves identifying and defining the social behaviour to be changed, identifying the change agent and most importantly, planning a strategy mix for the change (Sheth & Frazier, 1982). To implement the four processes of planned social change (Reinforcement, Inducement, Rationalization and Confrontation), Sheth& Frazier (1982) suggested eight influence or communication strategies:

a) Informing and educating
b) Persuasion and Propaganda
c) Social Controls
d) Delivery systems
e) Economic incentives
f) Economy disincentives
g) Clinical counseling and behavior modification
h) Mandatory rules and regulations

To realize the possibilities offered by social media, organizations are modifying their communication strategies with diminished dependency on traditional media and increased use of social media (Seo, Kim & Yang, 2009). The study of new media usage in 75 transnational NGOs by Seo, Kim & Yang (2009) revealed that the organization's website is perceived as being the most important new media tool for NGOs, followed by blog, videocasts, podcasts and wikis. Social media is being used in NGOs in different areas to promote the image of their organization, followed by fund-raising, providing information to journalists, interaction with the public, and networking with other NGOs.

While social media has been accepted to be an important tool in the promotion mix, social marketers are concerned about the reliability, message control, and the scope of online audiences as possible disadvantages of social media (Seo, Kim & Yang, 2009). Unlike the traditional media, managers do not have any direct control over the content, timing and frequency of the social media conversations between the consumers (Mangold&Faulds, 2009). Concerned about regulation of social media, Freeman & Chapman (2008) noted that social media has provided certain companies selling harmful products such as tobacco an alternative route to advertise to their customers since advertising restrictions do not allow them to use traditional media. Seo, Kim & Yang (2009) contend that organizations use social media for media relations rather than public relations. The parameters for measuring the effectiveness of social media are still not as developed as traditional media, which could be a concern.

Nonetheless, most social practitioners contend that marketers should focus on integrating social media with traditional media to enhance customer reach as well as customer engagement (Lefebvre, 2007; Hanna et al., 2011). While there is significant research exploring the independent effects of different communication channels on marketing performance, Stephen &Galak (2009) highlighted the necessity of an 'integrated perspective' to study the combined effects of traditional and social media as well as their relationship with each other. The investigation of microfinance company Kiva's loan activity and media activity by Stephen &Galak (2009) revealed that both traditional media and social media contribute value to the marketing performance in different manners and are significantly influenced by each other. While the per-event impact of traditional media is greater than social media, social media platforms contribute significantly as "information brokers" continuously propagating information, connecting different channels, creating awareness and maintaining interest.

3.8 Social Media as an instrument for Social Change

The framework below (figure 1) attempts to summarize the aspects of social media which make it a potent instrument for social change.
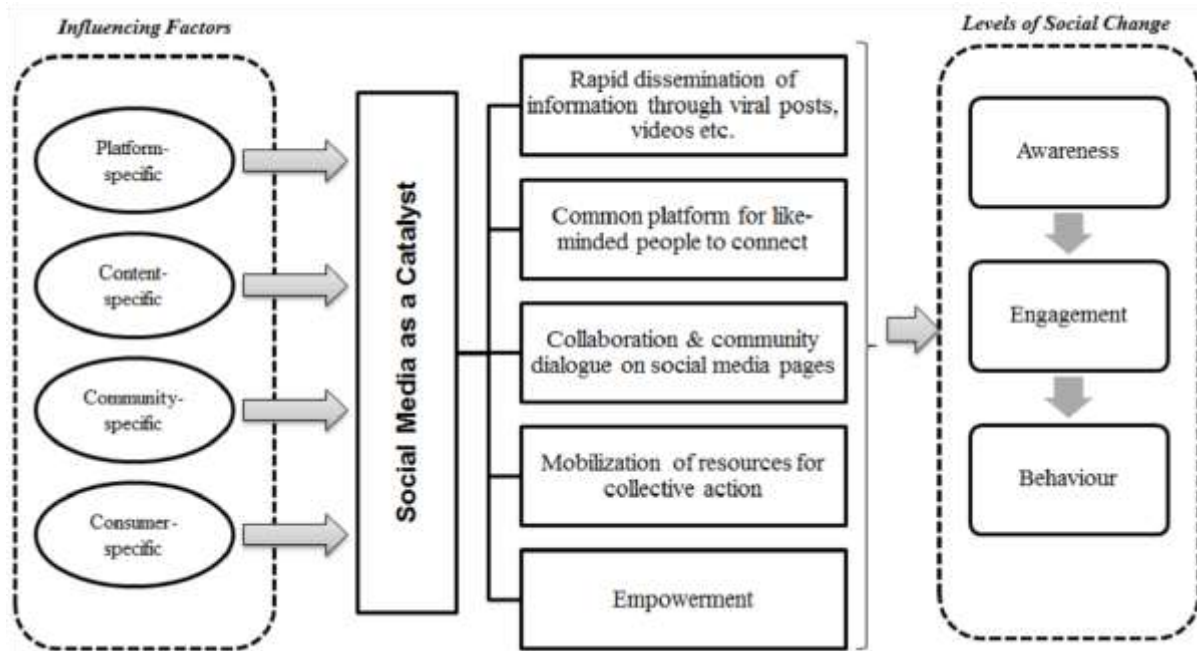
Figure 1. Social Media as an Instrument for Social Change

Social Media as a Catalyst

Investigation of the Iranian protests in 2009 and Wikileaks by social scientists Bertot, Jaeger, and Grimes, revealed four aspects of social media which facilitate social change - collaboration, participation, empowerment and time. Ahlqvist, Bäck, Halonen, & Heinonen (2008) identified five effects of social media: transparency, rise of ubiquitous participatory communication model, reflexive empowerment, the duality personalization / fragmentation vs. mass effects/integration and the blurring of lines between the virtual and real lives.

One of the key characteristic of social media is the uncontrolled, rapid propagation of information at global level. Information sharing is faster and perceived to be more credible as it is coming to them through their existing social connections (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011). Social media has also played a vital role in focussing global attention on and winning global support for otherwise localized social movements. During recent protests, protestors tweeted live updates and bloggers gave detailed accounts of their experiences and perspectives on the protests. The NGO "Invisible Children, Inc." used social media for their "Stop Kony" movement which aimed at the global recognition and arrest of African cult and militia leader, Joseph Kony by the end of 2012. The video "Kony 2012" became one of the most viral videos of 2012 with over 97 million views on YouTube from all over the world. Although Kony has been an indicted war criminal since 2005 and an International Criminal Court fugitive, it was the social media campaign that finally led to a resolution by the U.S. Senate to back the efforts of African countries to stop Kony. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (2011) states that use of social media leads to more interactive and engaging communication with a broader and diverse audience. The faster, almost real-time dissemination of information and its perceived source credibility empowers people to take better decisions. Furthermore, the potential impact of the information is vastly increased when social media is used to personalize social messages for a particular audience (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011). Furthermore, social media provides a platform for users to connect with other 'like-minded' people on economic and social issues. Social media platforms act as hubs for people to exchange news and share live updates. People discuss and identify common issues, common goals which give them a common identity, laying the groundwork for collective action. This is supported by Figueroa et al. (2002) who suggest that a catalyst (such as internal stimulus, change agent, innovation, policies, technology or mass media) was required to initiate community dialogue and collective action for social change.

Another key role played by social communication technologies is in the mobilization of people and resources. Social media allow people to form connections which are much bigger in size and scope than their usual offline networks. These networks keep on expanding as each individual and his/her personal network is added to the existent network, increasing the possibility of participation.

According to most researchers, empowerment is the key aspect of social media as a catalyst for social change. This reflexive empowerment is derived from the grass-root community collaboration which is enabled by social media technologies (Ahlqvist et al., 2008). Social media can lay the foundations for democratizing social communication or 'open politics' where "anybody can participate, participants and their statements are considered equal and all arguments are documented in a transparent way" (Ahlqvist et al., 2008). In this context, they have used societal participation to refer to "the growing possibilities to participate, i.e. communicate, comment and elaborate ideas, in different societal spheres spanning from interpersonal level to local community level and from there all the way to provincial, regional, national and even international level". Levels of Social Change This empowerment can also be a direct impact of the catalyst and can affect the seven social outcome indicators of social change as proposed in the Integrated Model of Communication for Social Change (IMCFSC) by Figueroa et al. (2002): leadership, degree and equity of participation, information equity, and collective self-efficacy, sense of ownership, social cohesion, and social norms. Varcoe (2004) suggests that the effectiveness of social marketing campaigns should be examined at five levels of change: Awareness, Engagement, Behaviour, Social Norm and Wellbeing. In this context, social media platforms play a pivotal role as an external change for initiating and engaging the community in a conversation around a specific social issue. According to Figueroa et al. (2002), this engagement works on two levels and brings about changes in the skill set and behavior of individual participants. Firstly it brings the participants in contact with the beliefs, values, ideology of the movement. Secondly going through material that improves their understanding of the perceived risk, subjective norms; participants typically experience the emotions of solidarity, empathy and confidence which in turn affects their selfimage. This engagement thus affects their behavior related to the specific problem and also their intention to participate in the future. The strategies for each level are critical and need to be monitored and measured since a successful campaign relies on the success at each and all of the levels (Varcoe, 2004).

Social Media for Social CHANGE: The Indian Scenario Anna Hazare campaign

Recent research shows that social media can play a transformative role in the social change approach towards anti-corruption which is based on the social empowerment and participation of citizens (Bertot, Jaeger, & Grimes, 2010). This further exemplified by role of social media in mobilizing Indian youth for the 'India Against Corruption' campaign led by Anna Hazare, a Gandhian activist. The campaign was marked by simultaneous protests and demonstrations across the country spurred by conversations across social media, primarily Facebook and Twitter (Khorana, 2011). Citizens used social media to spread the message, gather support, share pictures and coordinate protest efforts across various cities (ET Bureau, April 2011). Timings and dates of protests in different cities were posted as status updates on Facebook with people showing their support and participation through comments and likes (ET Bureau, August 2011). According to an Economic Times article, the hash-tag #isupportannahazare became the top trending topic in India within hours of Anna Hazare's arrest (ET Bureau, August 2011). Though most researchers do not consider the movement to be a success, it is important to understand the role of social media in India's largest citizen action movement (Shah, 2012). According to Khorana (2011), the presence of Janlokpal movement on social media helped them engage the urban youth across India and also helped them gain a high visibility in print and electronic media. Despite the overall low penetration of internet in India, Janlokpal movement could make the state sit up and take notice, not because of its electoral mobilisation but because of its mobilisation of those demographic segments which have been wary of participation in open forums in the recent years.

SatyamevJayate Another interesting instance of the use of social media for social cause is 'SatyamevJayate" (SMJ), an Indian TV talk show hosted by Aamir Khan, a popular Indian actor, which discusses social issues such as female foeticide, dowry and child sexual abuse. Before its launch, teasers for the show were launched on the Youtube channel of Starplus which went viral within minutes on social networking sites (Starplus, 2012). The show has its own website and presence on prominent social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Youtube. The website for the show, http://www.satyamevjayate.in/, acts as a home base from where visitors can follow and access SMJ on other online platforms. The website also provides a forum where viewers can discuss and comment on the contents of the show. The user can upload messages or videos to ask questions, share solutions, share stories or show support. The Facebook page of SMJ (https://www.facebook.com/SatyamevJayate) garnered than a million fans within a month of its launch with more than 400 viewers posting comments on each status update. The Facebook page also provides a link to the Click to Give Initiative where viewers can make contributions to NGOs. The Twitter profile of the show (https://twitter.com/#!/smjindia) has more than 42000 followers and 500 tweets within a month. The show also has a YouTube channel (http://www.youtube.com/show/satyamevjayate) where it posts videos of the latest episodes and songs from the show. The channel has nearly 9000 subscribers and more than 40 million views. SMJ is a fine example of using social media alongside traditional mass media to create awareness and engage Indian youth. Though it is still early to measure the effectiveness of SMJ, initial effects have been positive. The female foeticide issue discussion on

SMJ led to in-principle nod from the Chief Justice of Rajasthan High Court to set up a fast track court for expediting trial in female foeticide cases and many State Governments implemented policies and regulations to curtail the practice (TNN, 2012).

4. Conclusion

Despite the success of several social media campaigns, social media activism has many detractors. Researchers such as Malcolm Gladwellhave challenged the significance of social media in societal causes. The argument against social media activism is that most young people make much "noise" while expressing their opinions in the virtual world but without any active involvement or follow-up action in the real world. Thissuperficial participation in societal campaigns from a distance has little or no impact on the issue. A recent ad campaign by UNICEF Sweden states "Like us on Facebook, and we will vaccinate zero children against polio … we have nothing against likes, but vaccine costs money." The campaign highlights that without any concrete action, all the conversations on social media are meaningless and there is dire need for translation of thoughts into action. The superficial participation on online media with no connect with the real worldis nowderidingly referred to as 'Slacktivism'.

While social media activism may not be the panacea for social and political issues, it has certainly redefined the scope of social movements and forced governments to become more transparent and accountable. With the world becoming increasingly connected, this change towards social media activism isirreversible. The most significant impact of social media activism has been casting the net wide and bringing active youth participation. Social media platforms have proven invaluable to the youth in taking their first step towards expression for democracy and seeking accountability and transparency in social and political institutions. This study was guided by the need for exploring the implications of social media in the field of social marketing. As society and its governments, institutions continue to evolve, it is imperative for the academicians and social researchers to closely study the developments along the lines of the model proposed earlier to empirically analyze the effectiveness of social media for social change.

Statement of authorship
The author(s) have a responsibility for the conception and design of the study. The author(s) have approved the final article.

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