

## Social Media as a Tool to Achieve Social Justice

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### Abstract

Social media has been emerging as a greater platform for various movements to create awareness among individuals by sharing information, ideas, opinions openly on various Social Media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, etc. This article deals with the justice - activism movements created on social media as a method to bring justice to various issues. Social justice is a greater step towards a greater change. This article also provides various examples from social media where mass movements were created calling for the exact purpose of justice.

**Keywords:** Social media, Justice, Activism, Movements, Protest, Campaign

**Contribution/Originality:** Social media has been emerging as a greater platform for various movements to create awareness among individuals. It can be used as a tool to achieve social justice.

### Introduction

Social Media has been emerging since the past decade at a very fast pace among all users. As of now, almost every person has been using media to share what is happening in and around their lives. Social Media has become so powerful in recent times at such a mass scale at the National and Global levels that information regarding any issue spreads rapidly in no time. The sharing of such information at a mass level has changed the way of our Modern lives, technology, and interacting with Social Activism and Social Justice. One of the greater reasons

for this drastic development on social media is the freedom to speech, freedom to express which allows any individual to express their very own opinion in whatever way they want to.

Social Media has so much power in today's world that it can be used to create a better image of a person or the wrong image. And the greater issue with this so-called Social Media justice is that it is mostly based on the gender of a person. It is more likely to be favorable towards a trend the particular reason for this is the psychological gender inequality in the society towards any crime that is Guilty Until Proven Innocent.

Currently, social media is the key to a greater change in society, the lack of proper knowledge to use it wisely is lacking in the users. Understanding how sharing a piece of certain information can create a greater impact on an individual or society whether being good or bad is a must.

The objective of this research is to highlight the dark side of Social Justice in today's world. To point out how just sharing some information can change so many things. The reason is, the thoughts of an individual or the intentions might not be bad about what they are sharing but things become toxic once there are arguments or any kind of debate taking place such as anti-religion, anti-sexist, anti-racist which eventually makes the Victim endure more humiliation.

### **Ways to Using Social Media Wisely**

With this in mind, various social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, etc were examined to find out about how individuals of a society are utilizing social media for Justice. In today's global world where many countries witness the gross violation of human rights and political and social chaos, different online platforms have become a safe place to share their ordeal and demand justice [1]. The Internet provides us with platforms where we can fight for our rights and against injustice, support people from all across the world in gaining justice, and help people become better-informed citizens of the world.

The implication is they have a huge capability to influence others to be anti-racist and to be anti-sexist at the work, however, to create a true impact, they need to move the conversations with colleagues, and what they share online, on the far side worth statements

toward concrete anti-bias actions. Share the support for de-biasing your organization with friends, have interaction with them in conversations regarding the issues of bias and exclusion in the work, and tell them what actions are being taken to form the team truthfully. Unless they're committed to racism and favoritism, they will be influenced to share the sentiments and to talk with their friends regarding it.

The one way to analyze who is sharing what is them to think from their own mindset about what they are sharing. Social Media platforms allow people to create or follow Hashtags to bring or highlight a specific topic around the globe. One such example can be taken about the Black Lives Matters hashtag which was widely used by many users to support black lives. Many posts which were associated with the Black Lives Matter tag were mainly used to create awareness of how the police brutality is happening while some used to create communal riots. Social media worked as a community-building tool, and, "For a number of BLM groups, social media was referenced as a tool for building direct, personal ties within the community of BLM activists" (Koch, 2020). Many users have used this to gain popularity while the actual message was misinterpreted in many ways. Due to this fact, the call for Justice on social media is less to create awareness but more to gain attention.

Activism is defined by Anderson and Herr (2007) as, "action on behalf of a cause, action that goes beyond what is conventional or routine [3]." Another very much associated with Social Media justice was the call for justice for a female in Bangalore who was allegedly harassed by the food delivery executive. This topic was the #1 trending because of various reasons. The social media was quick to call for justice for the woman based upon her video, wherein she claimed to be assaulted by the executive and all this took place because the delivery executive was late and the female was not ready to pay. Upon further study, it was found that the woman was at fault and the delivery executive had been falsely accused and the trauma faced by the executive by social media users was very much humiliating. Social media is a great platform but the modus operandi of judging an individual without proper evidence is anything but worse than what can happen to a Victim.

## **Various Social Media Platforms**

### **Social Networks**

These types of platforms are used to connect with people which helps in sharing ideas and information. Example: Facebook, Twitter

### **Media Sharing Networks**

These types of platforms are used to share Photos, Videos, and various other types of media. Example: Snapchat, Instagram, YouTube

### **Discussion Forums**

These are those platforms where people can discuss various issues, share news, ideas, opinions, information, etc. Example: Reddit, Quora

### **Anonymous Social Networks**

These platforms allow users to share their ideas or opinions anonymously in order to protect their identity. Example Ask.fm

### **Social Justice – Is it a greater step towards a greater change?**

Social justice is referred to as, "The equitable processes and outcomes that result from efforts to close the gap between what we espouse in our social contract and how we actually enact such a mission" (Davis & Harrison, 2013). One of the greatest of calls for Justice on social media is to make the world a better place to live in. The very concept of Social Media Justice is to bring Justice to a specific issue. The times when the community fails to remember their moral ethics that social media justice is not just about speaking what they feel like but standing with the Truth and fight for Justice. It is the responsibility of each individual to stand for what is right and against what is wrong. There is a trend where people follow or take participation in Social Media justice also known as performative activism which is very toxic as it is done just to gain attention which is entirely baseless, has nothing to do with the movement, and is not a good message towards the society, Performative activism as defined by Clapinski, 2020, as, "activism as a usage for someone's own personal gain or image" [2].

The Me Too Movement, which began on social media by the sexual assault survivor Tarana Burke became the most trending social movement. The dynamically powerful movement was started to bring out the sexual assaults or sexual harassment faced by women

the society. The movement brought in a greater response from various survivors who shared how and by whom they were assaulted which made the world believe how common sexual assaults are. The movement took place in the social media by fire from 2017 where various women came forward to share their stories. The traumatic experience faced by the victims often changed their lives. The typical age group ranging from 18 – 34 years were the highest number of victims of sexual assaults. The initial efforts took a long time to bring in changes, but now it is happening. The movement is finally showing to create a difference, where the stories of various victims are heard and the assaulters are being taken into custody to bring Justice to the victims. Social Media has since played a very important role in this movement, it made women come forward and talk. It is the very people of the society who can make difference by supporting the victims because an assault is not a petty crime but an Institutional failure.

According to Rebecca Seales of BBC, "On 15 October, actress Alyssa Milano suggested on Twitter that anyone who had been "sexually harassed or assaulted" should reply to her Tweet with "Me Too", to demonstrate the scale of the problem. Half a million people responded in the first 24 hours. [4]

Even though many have come forward, it is still to be noted that compared to the number of incidents that have taken place, only a small part of it has come to highlight. As Jane Kamensky stated, "We had a social-media-driven revolution whose pushback was almost simultaneous, as opposed to the way that we often think of revolution and counterrevolution." Social media has helped these victims raise their voices, sharing their experiences, and create awareness in getting justice, it cannot be said that justice was brought only by the means of social media but social media has played a greater role in supporting the movement. The very foundation of the movement started with a social media post by the victim, so it can be said that social media has been an effective tool in this movement towards bringing justice. The opportunity to bring justice through social media by the people created unity among them for a cause.

Another great example of using social media as a tool for justice was the Nirbhaya and Disha that happened in India. These heinous crimes created a country-wide outrage. The protests were also taken place with crowd gathering but the news was spread more actively

through social media and created a great amount of pressure on the concerned authorities to take action more quickly and find the culprits. The campaigns that were carried out subsequently on social media create a great impact towards a change in the law system of India. Another campaign called #TheUglyTruth was created to make people aware of the ongoing situations of sexual exploitations, prostitution, and trafficking that were taking place in the United States. The campaign is widely targeted at revealing the dark myths of such situations. According to UNICEF, There is an estimated 1.5 million victims of human trafficking across the U.S, and 27 million worldwide [5]. According to Shorty Awards, the campaign garnered around thirty-three million two hundred fifty-thousand five hundred twenty-eight impressions which is a great number for a campaign.

### **Conclusion**

While social media can be used as a tool to call for justice which will create an impact on the issue but a simple opinion cannot be said Justice because most of the opinions are based on prejudice and person bias which according to the law is not Justice. Social Media is a tool for the activist to create awareness for a specific issue which in turn will make a positive impact and highlight or it provides the assistance attaining the Justice from the Court of Law earlier. Collective efforts are to be made to ensure the safety of anyone being assaulted, new strategies are needed to be developed to ensure justice has prevailed. Social justice is a long-standing concept used to justify government intervention and the distribution of resources. It is a policy that is intellectually substantial, being based in its modern form on the Rawlsian theory of justice [6].

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