

Role of Social Media in Mobilizing the Anna Hazare's Social Movement during August 2011: An Empirical Study

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ABSTRACT

Anna Hazare is a renowned social activist in India. Hazare began an indefinite hunger strike against the then government for passing the Lokpal Bill, which had been pending for more than four decades. The movement started in the April, 2011. Lakhs of people gathered in the Ramleela Ground, Delhi to support the movement. People took leaves from their offices to support the cause. Undoubtedly, mass media's role was remarkable throughout the moment in mobilizing people but social media also played a critical role. The beauty of social media is that, it fulfills the social need of people. Social media connected like-minded people who wanted to go in a group to support Anna Hazare. The present study is empirical in nature with a sample size of 215 volunteers and experts, who supported Anna Hazare. It was investigated in the study that how social media connected or motivated them to become a part of this movement. The sampling method is judgment sampling, where, only those respondents were selected which were the part of the movement or connected to the movement in any form. The data analysis tools were mean and multiple regression.

1. Introduction

Anna Hazare movement was started in the year 2011, when the notable social activities and Pandam Bhushan award winner sat on hunger strike against the corruption and pressurized government for passing the Jan Lokpal Bill. Lakhs of people gathered in the Ramleela Ground, Delhi to support the movement. People took leaves from their offices to support the cause. Undoubtedly, mass media's role was remarkable throughout the moment in mobilizing people but social media also played a critical role. The beauty of social media is that, it fulfills the social need of people. Social media connected like-minded people who wanted to go in a group to support Anna Hazare.

1.1 Role of Social media in Mobilizing People for Anna Hazare Movement:

Shah, Sahil collected and reporting some interesting data in the context of the Anna Hazare movement and reported the following facts on 8th April, 2011:

- I. More than 116,000 people on Facebook joined hands to support the movement. The growth of the page is organic.
- II. The interaction rate on the Facebook page is 0.7% which is about 4 times more than the interaction rate of the top 10 Facebook Pages in India
- III. There have been more than 60 posts on the page in the last 24 hours
- IV. In all major parts of the country, people have started "Candle Light Support" rallies showing their support for Anna Hazare. Cities like Mumbai, Bangalore, Delhi, took part as well.
- V. Over 1,000 photos and videos were uploaded by supporters on the fan page itself
- VI. The movement has got close to 15,000 users uploading a badge on their display picture via PicBadges
- VII. A Facebook event called "2500,000 Missed Calls" has already gotten support from over 9,000 people

attending the event. About 600,000 people have already supported the event by leaving a missed call on a government telephone number

VIII. Anna Hazare himself has gotten more than 25,000 fans on his fan page and 45,000 people on the event page to garner support

The Anna movement was also made popularised on social media by the notable celebrities. Any comment, tweet or post by celebrities has a multiplier impact because their followers react to that. During Anna movement, Anupam Kher tweeted "On my way to Jantar Mantar, Delhi from Pune to pledge my support to Anna Hazare and more than One Billion INDIANS against corruption.:". Similarly, Farhan Akhtar tweeted, "I support Anna Hazare. Our country has suffered from corruption for too long... NOW is the time we get together and do something about it." Renowned investor and stock market tycoon, Rakesh Junjunwala tweeted that Sharad Pawar has quit the GoM. I think he requested Anna Hazare to reduce his burden.

2. Literature Review

In the modern age, the new communication technologies have given new dimensions to the interactivity of the media, which is now being used for massive campaigning through internet more precisely through the social networking sites. A great number of researches are being carrying out continuously to prove that interactivity is the key variable for studying the applications and impact of the new media technologies. The ability for message receivers to respond to message senders has developed into a principle component of the conceptualisation of interactivity (Wang, 2006).

Prabhudesai (2011) reported that 100s of Facebook pages were showing support have garnered over 200,000 likes in just couple of days. Not only Facebook, but twitter is also abuzz with messages showing support for Anna Hazare's campaign. Infact, on Thursday, #Anna Hazare, #corruption,

and #Jantar Mantar, were the top trending words and phrases on Twitter. Even a simple search shows that messages are being posted at a very fast clip. He further explored that in few seconds over 25 – 30 messages were being posted on twitter.

Rani (2011) found that it was evident that communication has played an effective role in promoting and strengthening the movement. All forms of media gave ample coverage to the movement which helped in garnering the support of the masses. The core members of team Anna were middle –class icons which the masses were able to identify themselves with .These members also had a good public image like Shanti Bhushan, Kiran Bedi Arvind Kejriwal etc. The personality of Anna was equated to that of a crusader for a genuine cause for the masses. From the various evidences it presented in this study it was clear that culture and communication have played an effective role in promoting, sustaining and strengthening the Anna Hazare anti-corruption movement.

Goswami and Bandyopadhyay (2013) made some valuable comments about The Anti-Corruption Movement in India: The movement largely symbolized an explosion by the Indian citizens against an inactive State suffering from acute inertia in addressing a burning social issue like corruption, promptly and stringently. In that respect, the Anna movement has been successful at catching the imagination of a large section of people on one level. In fact, the methodologies adopted by the Anna Team like Twitter updates, SMS campaigns, candle light vigils and media management – all have successfully blazed the idealism of the 21st century India’s conscious and informed masses, especially the middle classes Hardly any movement in the recent past has been able to attract the masses to such a great extent.

Parashar (2012) found the role of new media in the Anna Hazare’s anti corruption movement. 2-3 hours a day on social networking sites. An effort has been made that how much time people generally devoted on social networking sites and the average result is 2-3 hours but it varies according to the age group. The survey revealed that 78% people were mobilized for active participation in the mass movement while 64% people spread the message online and 20% did not make any response. The study revealed that 74% people found the new media as an effective way for the success of mass movement, 17% people did not think it as effective tool while the rest did not say anything on the issue.

Martolia (2012) found that many youngsters, who joined protests or fasted in solidarity with Hazare, said in television interviews that they first learned about the issue from social media” (Anna Hazare: Support comes in form of tweets, ‘likes’). It is such youth who constituted the offline support base of the movement in India’s metropolises. For instance, according to Mayank Gandhi, Mumbai coordinator of India Against Corruption (IAC), 90% of their volunteers were obtained through Facebook (cited in Web’ssocial sites).

Harindranath and Khorana (2012) found that anti corruption movement’s twitter feeds suggests, the movement had a strong presence on social media, which was ostensibly translated into online activism in the form of demonstrations and big turn out in public meetings in New Delhi and Mumbai. Our preliminary look at sample Twitter posts suggests the reiteration of several themes including calls for Gandhian strategies, participation in the drafting the Janlokalpal Bill, civil unrest, and social networking platforms. On the other hand, these are indicative of an inchoate civil society movement with a designated leader in the form of Anna Hazare, assuming the Gandhian mantle of people’s leader, and being ascribed Gandhian associations in the social media.

3. Objectives and Methodology

3.1 Objectives of the Study:

- [1] To find out the magnitude of the role of social media in the Anna Hazare movement.
- [2] To find out the impact of social media role on overall effectiveness of Anna Hazare movement.

3.2 Methodology:

The present study is empirical in nature with a sample size of 215 volunteers and experts, who supported Anna Hazare. It was investigated in the study that how social media connected or motivated them to become a part of this movement. The sampling method is judgment sampling, where, only those respondents were selected which were the part of the movement or connected to the movement in any form. The data analysis tools were mean and multiple regression.

4. Data Analysis and Interpretations:

Demographic Profile of the respondents

Table 1 shows the demographic profile of the respondents. It may be observed from the profile that there are 39% females and around 61% males. In fact it is a true representation of the population of the various categories of respondents that have been selected.

Table 1 Demographic profile of the respondents

Category	No. of Respondents	% age
Gender		
Females	84	39.07
Males	131	60.93
Total	215	100
Age		
25 – 40	75	34.88
40-55	100	46.51

Above 55	40	18.6
Total	215	100
Respondent Category		0
Political Expert	40	18.6
Volunteer	68	31.63
Social Media Expert	50	23.26
Journalist	57	26.51
Total	215	100
Experience		
Below 10 years	84	39.07
10-20 years	69	32.09
Above 20 years	62	28.84
Total	215	100

35% of the respondents are between the age group of 25-40, 46% are between the age group of 40 to 55 and rest 19% are above the age of 55. In the respondents' category it has been seen that 18% are political experts, 32% are volunteers,

23.26% are social media experts and rest around 26% are journalists. Finally, regarding experience, it may be found that 39% are below 10 years followed by 3% who are 39% and finally around 29% are above 20 years.

Table 2 Role of social media in Anna Hazare Movement

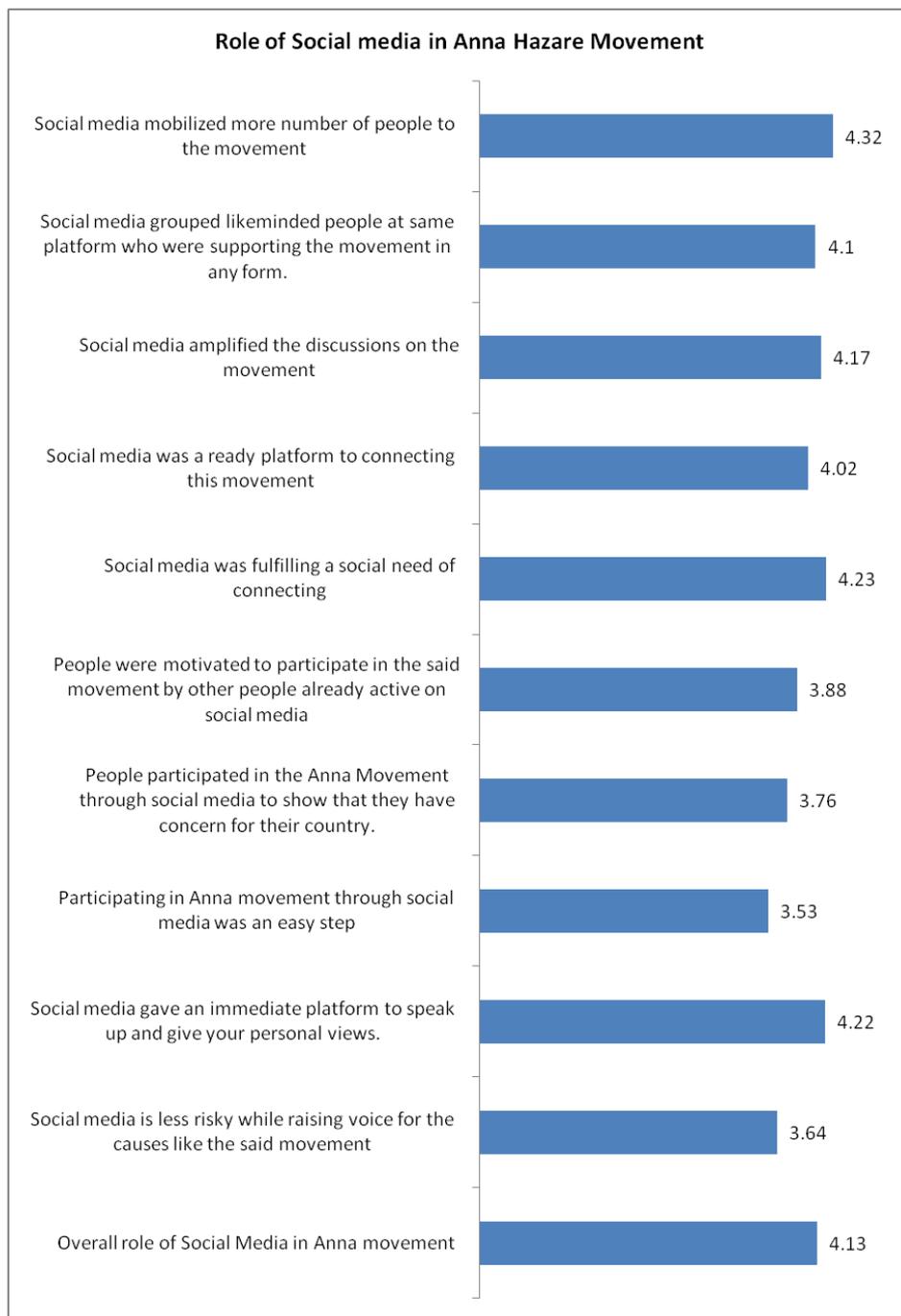
SL. No.	Statements	Mean Value
1	Social media mobilized more number of people to the movement	4.32
2	Social media grouped likeminded people at same platform who were supporting the movement in any form.	4.1
3	Social media amplified the discussions on the movement	4.17
4	Social media was a ready platform to connecting this movement	4.02
5	Social media was fulfilling a social need of connecting	4.23
6	People were motivated to participate in the said movement by other people already active on social media	3.88
7	People participated in the Anna Movement through social media to show that they have concern for their country.	3.76
8	Participating in Anna movement through social media was an easy step	3.53
9	Social media gave an immediate platform to speak up and give your personal views.	4.22
10	Social media is less risky while raising voice for the causes like the said movement	3.64
11	Overall role of Social Media in Anna movement	4.13

Table 2 shows the role of social media in Anna Hazare movement. The most important variable comes out here is the Social media mobilized more number of people to the movement with a mean value of 4.32. Hence, the most important role of social media in Anna Hazare movement was mobilizing the people. This role is followed by the other variables such as Social media was fulfilling a social need of connecting (mean value 4.23) and Social media gave an immediate platform to speak up and give your personal views with a mean value of 4.22.

Another important role of social media is amplifying the impact of movement (mean value 4.17), Social media grouped

the likeminded people at same platform (mean value 4.10) and Social media was a ready platform to connecting this movement (mean value 4.02).

However almost all the other variables had a good mean value but it was found below 4. That is why; other roles of social media during Anna Hazare's movement were considered above average but not so remarkable. Respondents for the statement / role of social media such as Participating in Anna movement through social media was an easy step and Social media is less risky while raising voice for the causes like the said movement during Anna Hazare's movement, was found average.



Impact of various aspects of social media on Overall effectiveness of role of social media in Anna Hazare’s context:

Table 3 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.993 ^a	0.987	0.986	0.48775

The table 3 shows the model summary. The R square value is .987 and adjusted R square value is .986. Hence it may be concluded that the model explains around 99% of the variance.

Table 4 ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3692.993	9	410.333	1724.809	.000
	Residual	49.007	206	.238		
	Total	3742.000 ^d	215			

Table 3 presents the value of ANOVA and F value. The value in the significance column of the table 3 is .000 which means that one or more variables significantly affect the overall perception. The impact of independent variables on overall perception has been explained in the table 5.

Table 5 explains the impact of various social media roles on the overall effectiveness of social media during the Anna Hazare Movement. The null hypothesis was set up as below:

Ho There is no impact of various social media roles on the overall effectiveness of social media

Ha There is a significant impact of various social media roles on the overall effectiveness of social media

In the table under significance column the value of significance is given. Wherever the value is below .05 the null hypothesis is rejected, which means that there is a significant impact of various social media roles on the overall effectiveness of social media. However, and wherever it is above .05 the null hypothesis is accepted, which means that there is no impact of various social media roles on the overall effectiveness of social media.

Table 5 Coefficients (a)

Model		Un-standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	B	Std. Error
1	Social media mobilized more number of people to the movement	0.381	0.084	0.298	4.112	0.01
2	Social media grouped likeminded people at same platform who were supporting the movement in any form.	0.394	0.079	0.38	4.871	0
3	Social media amplified the discussions on the movement	0.404	0.08	0.4	5.049	0
4	Social media was a ready platform to connecting this movement	0.235	0.078	0.233	3.002	0.003
5	Social media was fulfilling a social need of connecting	-0.146	0.064	-0.127	-2.28	0.024
6	People were motivated to participate in the said movement by other people already active on social media	0.018	0.041	0.013	0.428	0.669
7	People participated in the Anna Movement through social media to show that they have concern for their country.	0.189	0.071	0.173	2.667	0.008
8	Participating in Anna movement through social media was an easy step	0.063	0.058	0.054	1.087	0.278
9	Social media gave an immediate platform to speak up and give your personal views.	0.156	0.066	0.14	2.359	0.019
10	Social media is less risky while raising voice for the causes like the said movement	0.115	0.084	0.112	1.374	0.171

A. Dependent Variable: Overall Impact

It was found from table 5 that Social media mobilized more number of people to the movement , Social media grouped likeminded people at same platform who were supporting the movement in any form, Social media amplified the discussions on the movement, Social media was a ready platform to connecting this movement, Social media was fulfilling a social need of connecting, People participated in the Anna Movement through social media to show that they have concern for their country and Social media gave an immediate platform to speak up and give have significant impact on the overall effectiveness of Anna Hazare’s movement. Hence, for all these aspects the null hypothesis is rejected and alternate hypothesis is accepted - **There is a significant impact of various social media roles on the overall effectiveness of social media**

However, other aspects of social media have no significant contribution impact on the effectiveness of the Anna Hazare Movement. These aspects are People were motivated to participate in the said movement by other people already active on social media Participating in Anna movement through social media was an easy step Social media is less risky while raising voice for the causes like the said movement. For these aspects the null hypothesis is accepted - **There is no**

significant impact of various social media roles on the overall effectiveness of social media.

5. Conclusion

The present study finds that there was a huge role of social media in the Anna Hazare movement in 2011. Media played a special role in provide a unique platform that was immediate, quick and where people could find likeminded people for sharing their views and grouped. Everyone was with the movement of Anna Hazare and as it was against corruption. The study finds that social media platforms were not only quick but ready to made platforms wherein there was a great chance to fulfill the social need. This was the biggest reason that people connected to this movement.

Further, it may also be concluded from the study that there was a great degree of synchronization between the movements and social media platforms. In fact the movement led by Anna Hazare was also a social movement and not a political one. The major objective of this movement was to get the Lokpal Bill passed, but in fact any movement wants to mobilize as many number of persons as it can. That is why, social media played a significant role in the Anna movement.

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