Analysing Technological Dimensions for Engagement with NGOs on Social Media

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Abstract
Social Media has grabbed the attention of government and business organizations to make the use of it for accomplishing their respective goals. Non-government organizations (NGOs) in India can also leverage the advantage of social network informatics for improving engagement with NGOs on social media. The review of the literature on social media and non-government organizations illustrates that promotion of events on social media can enable NGOs to reach out to donors and supporters more effectively than ever before. Social media posts somehow influence the decision of supporter in engaging with NGOs in India. This research paper is an attempt to analyze the technological dimensions for engagement with NGOs on Social Media. Moreover, this research explores social networking sites as an evolving tool for engaging supporters for greater participation in NGO activities. These dimensions of the technological factor, emerging from the qualitative study may be useful in targeting the appropriate donor and supporter. Identification of technological factors for engagement with NGOs may be useful in improving promotional strategies as well as engagement on social media. NGOs may adjust their programs by focusing on these dimensions for information dissemination on social media.

Keywords: Social Media, Social Network, Donors, Supporters, NGOs

Compliance with Ethical Standards:
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1. Introduction
The task of development of an economy is so complicated that by just implementing government plans is not sufficient enough to fix problems of the society. To achieve this, a holistic vision and collaborative efforts involving various departments, agencies and even non-government organizations (NGOs) are required. The term NGO is a “not for profit organization registered as a Trust or a Society”. A Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) is an organization that is neither a part of a government nor a conventional for-profit business. Usually set up by ordinary citizens, NGOs may be funded by governments, foundations, businesses, or private persons. NGOs are formed with the intention to provide assistance or promote ideas to improve the lives of individuals or society as a whole. Nowadays, NGOs are facing financial crunch and are mostly run by the support of individuals.
or volunteers. NGO sector plays a crucial role in the growth of any nation. The Indian NGO’s are emerging to be a credible force in catalysing the nation’s social and economic growth, particularly for the masses at the ‘bottom of the economic pyramid’. India alone has around 3.2 million registered non-government organizations (NGOs). Non-government organizations can be in many different fields including education, healthcare, environmental protection, and faith-based charities etc. Non-Government Organizations have started using social networking sites to obtain detailed information on key personality features, hobbies, customs and culture of users. The identity of donors, their post, conversation, networking, podcasts, audio, video content, bookmarking, participation, voting, sharing, group, connections, feedback, evaluation, rating, photo sharing, forum, micro blogging, comments, likes, dislikes, message etc. can be used to define advertising and marketing strategies for their products and services (Fig1).

![Fig1. Diversified Usage of Social Media](Source: smarnad/ FreeDigitalPhotos.net/accessed on 03-02-2016)

In recent years, it is observed that traditional marketing and traditional media is in decline stage while there is an increasing trend of registration of NGO’s in India. Marketing change symptom is visible with the passage of time. Social media is in full swing boosting donor power and social interaction. Non-government organizations (NGOs) are fascinated with the presence of government and business organizations on social media. Non-government organizations, especially in the educational field, has been playing a major role in shaping modern society. Information virality in the form of tweets, retweets, likes, dislikes, shares, followers, new connections on social is affecting engagement with NGOs on social media. With this, the necessity arises for the NGOs to understand the technological factors for attracting donor engagement on social media. More importantly, social media could be a catalyst for engagement with NGOs in the education sector. This article explores social networking sites as an evolving tool for engaging supporters for improving participation in NGO activities. The qualitative study reveals the most important technological factors for engagement with NGOs on social media.

2. Literature Review

Almost this era is calling as the 21st century of Social Media. In the past decade, the evolution of social media has changed the way of communication by which people get information and share with one another. The increase in the number of social media users has given them greater access to the information available about the causes and events of non-government organizations. The supporters
are now either the consumers or contributors of the information related to NGO activities on social networking sites. The evolution of social media has attracted millions of supporters for connecting with the non-government organizations (NGOs). Social media has created new trends for information gathering, processing, and sharing of information by consumers which can also be applied in the area of social marketing (Mangold and Faulds 2009). Many non-government organizations have integrated social media tabs on the home page of their websites. We find many social media platforms like Myspace, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google Plus etc. available to connect with people around the world. A variety of social media platforms provides different opportunities and unique advantages for marketing use (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010). In this era of digital world, social media platforms are not entirely isolated from each other. Most of the social media platforms fine-tune their functionalities to offer supplementary services to their users. Different types of social media platforms are categorised basically on their capabilities and functionalities. Few examples of popular social media platforms based on different applications are shown in Fig2.

Fig2. Few Popular Social Media Platforms
(source: smarnad/ FreeDigitalPhotos.net/accessed on 03-02-2016)

Social media platforms are helping individuals in connecting with people of different gender, religion, and profession placed at different locations and share some common interests or activities. Donors are using social media to connect and interact with non-government organizations on a more personal level. Social media is a powerful communication medium for transferring information and knowledge (Castells 1997). Social media is communication platform to express our feelings, thoughts with others. Social media provides an opportunity to develop NGO brand and listen to the voice of the supporters. Social network sites are attracting new supporters to participate in NGO activities. It is observed that content which is disseminated through fans and is shared with online communities’ produces about fifty percent higher sales (Brafton, 2011). Social networks consist of peers with a certain relationship between them. This relationship may exist as a friendship or due to some common interest for sharing information on the social network (Yang et al. 2006). Social networking sites can be used to obtain detailed information of the peers on the network like their personality features, hobbies, and culture. People investigate the product related information and do online comparisons (Chen 2011). Fan community of the organization can be utilized to promote their products and services in a much more personalized manner (Sawhney et al. 2005). Excessive satisfaction or dissatisfaction of the supporter on social media leads to more online word of mouth behavior (Dellarocas and Narayan 2006). Electronic word of mouth creates positive information spread. Positive word of mouth focuses on the long term customer and organization relationships that encourage supporters for their positive behaviors and creates opinion leaders (Hong and Bing 2011). In a nutshell, the objective of social
marketing is to create social change for the well-being of the individual and society through the application of new marketing techniques (Sussman 2000). Another way of marketing communication is through “twitter” or “blogs”.

Twitter is based on micro-blog format which is used to receive small updates and advertisements from organizations. The followers of the organization receive periodic information through “tweets”. Blogs are mainly managed by either peer of the network or organizations. Blogs are the medium to promote brand awareness by floating and updating internal information about the products and services to the supporters. Blogs promote the exchange of ideas between peers of the network. Blogs also facilitate the posting of comments, allows fans and detractors to post opinions and questions to producers. Blogs promote dialog between individuals and organizations. A catalyst is always needed to trigger the start of community dialogue. These dialogues may be related to a specific issue or interest to the community (Figueroa et al. 2002). The information about supporters may help NGOs to increase engagement with non-government organizations. ‘Engagement’ represents a multi-dimensional concept comprising relevant cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions (Hollebeek 2011). “Customer engagement” is a “psychological process” that comprises cognitive and emotional aspects (Bowden 2009). Similarly, “civic engagement” is the involvement in voluntary organizations and the performance of volunteer work, facilitating the development of social networks (Jennings and Stoker 2004). Here “involvement” is defined as an individual’s level of interest and personal relevance in relation to a focal object/decision in terms of his or her basic values, goals, and self-concept (Mittal 1995).

Sometimes we use the word “participation” instead of “engagement” which is the degree to which customers produce and deliver service (Bolton and Saxena 2009). The emergence of social media platforms offers marketers inexpensive ways to create and implement marketing campaigns. Social media marketers typically focus on creating content that generates attention, as well as a motivational incentive for people to share it with their social network. Donors who receive recommendations from friends are much more likely to trust, and therefore, spend time on, NGO sites. Word of mouth is still the predominant means of expanding brand recognition and promoting user interest in products (Ellison 2007). Companies are encouraged to communicate with their customers as friends on a conversational level (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010). Once NGOs have made the initial engagement with donors, the trend will be to rely on those donors to engage with their friends, who will continue to do so, and so on and so forth. Through recommendations, such as Facebook’s like, Twitter’s re-tweet, and Google Plus’s +1, users proliferate the messages that NGOs want to convey. Presently, there is no source of information available to get data regarding how many NGOs in India use social networking sites. Marketing research indicates that social network sites are growing in popularity worldwide (ComScore 2007). This growth has encouraged many non-government organizations to invest time and money in a promotional campaign through social media platforms. The growth of social media usage indicates a shift in the non-organizational strategy for the promotion of products and services. The effectiveness of social media has opened the doors of non-government organizations to think about this communication channel.

3. Methodology

In the past few years, the methodology has been increasingly used as a pretentious substitute for method in social, scientific and technical contexts. Research methodology is a systematic way of solving problems. Essentially, it is the procedures by which researchers go about their work for describing, explaining and predicting new phenomena. It aims to give the work plan, design and action of research. Previously, researchers have suggested that qualitative study is undertaken when the situation at hand is not much clear (Bryman 2006). Therefore, an extensive preliminary work is needed to be carried out in order to gain acquaintance with the context. In this research, the qualitative method has been used to identify important technological factors for engagement with NGOs on social media.
The beauty of this research is a modern way of data collection using social media. The use of social media to aid research practice have become more popular these days. In fact, some believe that internet surveying and electronic data collection may revolutionize many disciplines by allowing for easier data collection, larger samples, and therefore more representative data. Social media channels provide data for innovation that is relevant, detailed, naturally occurring, and obtainable unobtrusively. By looking at the social media posts the organizations can understand the preferences of the supporters. These contents can be categorized into different classes to resonate the supporters. If the non-government organizations (NGOs) know how to use social media content then it can be a valued resource for them. The captured data provide NGOs with information on the likes and dislikes of supporter, their emotional attachment, and feedback.

The literature review was done to gather information that underlies the development of the Conceptual Framework for engagement on social media. Secondary data was collected from journals, articles, and white papers. Further, netnography was done for capturing comments, discussions, and views of supporters on social media engaged with NGOs. The period of capturing content was between 12-12-2013 to 12-12-2015. Mostly the comments active for longer duration were captured from Facebook, Youtube, and Blogs. While data collection, the potential respondents were identified through purposive and convenient sampling. During data collection, the respondents were selected on the basis of their active participation in NGO activities in India. The respondents were selected on the basis of their interest of participation in NGO activities. Identified respondents have supported NGOs in terms of monetary donation or time. The respondents have done volunteering in recent past. The information gathered from netnography was then further refined to develop global themes. Prominent authors have suggested that when software tool is used in analyzing qualitative data, the researcher could benefit a reduced analysis time, more systematic and explicit procedures, flexibility and revision during the analysis procedure (Budding and Cools 2008). Hence, NVivo10 has been used for doing the qualitative study. Content analysis was performed on the texts captured from social media platforms. An attempt was made to determine the technological factors for engagement with NGOs on social media. The entire data collection process served the purpose of development of the conceptual framework for undermining the technological factors for engagement with NGOs in India.

4. Content Analysis

After data cleaning, a word cloud of 500 responses was generated to represent the importance of various themes emerging from technological factors. In the word cloud, the size of the words is reducing in size with the reduction in the number of frequencies of their occurrences (Fig3). The bigger size of the word like children and education shows the importance of the context where supporters want to contribute with NGOs on social media. Through this word cloud, it is possible to predict supporter’s behaviour to support NGOs for child education.
While doing analysis, Technological Factor as a global theme emerged. The contents were then further classified into various subthemes of the technological factor for engagement with NGOs on social media. These contents based on the frequency of occurrence were clustered into the subthemes like advocacy, appeal, ease of use, status update, and voting. Summary of the content percentage of Global and sub-themes obtained from content analysis is shown in Table 1. Global theme (i.e. Technological Factor) covered the contents of Advocacy as 46 % (Table 2), Appeal as 26.5 % (Table 3), Ease of Use as 4.8 % (Table 4), Status Update as 11.45 % (Table 5), and Voting as 11.25 % (Table 6).

**Table 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Global Theme</th>
<th>Sub Theme</th>
<th>Content Coverage (in percent)</th>
<th>Total Coverage (in percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technological Factor</td>
<td>Advocacy</td>
<td>46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appeal</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ease of Use</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Status Update</td>
<td>11.45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voting</td>
<td>11.25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fig3. Word Cloud Generated after Content Analysis using Nvivo**
Table 2

Sub-Theme: Advocacy (Percent of Content Coverage 46 %)

| Help ……continue its efforts to create & maintain ……schools, ……… will launch its biggest campaign, racing toward ……….showcases the best diversity efforts & initiatives being made today,…… is a spiritual teacher, writer, & fundraiser, another brilliant initiative by ………, I just supported a …….to stop child labour, many companies are coming forward to support women empowerment and sustained social enterprise,…… digital learning promotes education with a purpose and ensures enabling environment to all children irrespective to their class, caste, gender and religion……we are joining hands with ………to educate and empower women, education dialogue makes it work,…… I have posted this on my Facebook, ………access to quality education is intrinsically linked to children being forced to drop out of school, ………do join for the run like a child campaign……..read an article by……..on how essential it is for an organization to integrate CSR into its DNA, by buying these products…… you will ensure children get their right to education and bring about a positive change in their lives and the community they live in,…… she taught two years for school's literacy program…….. seeks to improve the quality of education in India and to ensure that all children in India are not only attending but thriving in school, ………works to ensure lasting change in the lives of underprivileged children, ………recognize the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation, watch this…….. People vote out here for child rights…….. Volunteers organized a Flash Mob which emphasized every citizens role in ensuring lasting change for children……..A great event for a great cause……..transforming lives……..A Literacy campaign for India……..shared this……..Let us connect -story of small joy and big success……..let’s all……..go, ensure justice is given to all and the guilty are punished……..Plz support and donate……..Their work is an inspiration to many……..volunteers in Bangalore came together to celebrate it in a way like none other…….. they organized a storytelling session to motivate children to be in school……..Kolkata Volunteers celebrated …..children’s day with over 100 children from ….., …..was pleased to participate in this worthy community event, …..distributed solar lantern under their Yogdaan programme to support the education of poor students, volunteers added 15 new photos to the album…….. students of …..school made a special effort to make Christmas and Happy New Year Cards for their friends, what a wonderful, heartwarming experience it was…….Student's initiative can be spotted in this photograph………..Read it all……. When you educate a child……..you educate a country, you can see the results via a live webinar…….. was awarded ‘The Most Committed NGO of the Year Working for Young Children and Their Education’ by the ‘Early Childhood Association-India’ (ECA), We also had many volunteers and individual runners who participated and pledged their support towards ensuring every girl child has access to education……..Wow I regularly follow……. |
Table 3

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Theme: Ease of Use (Percent of Content Coverage 4.8 %)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plan of action etc could be added on the website for more information, site is not responsive, make it mobile friendly, Donate online to support the projects across India which encourage and change the lives of underprivileged children, One-Stop-Shop in India, What a wonderful window.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Theme: Appeal (Percent of Content Coverage 26.5 %)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stop Child Labor, Help child laborers, get back to school, Support, Let's support at invite your network to join us, Let's act to Stop Child Labor, Campaign to educate a girl child &amp; empower a underserved woman, Fund Raising Campaign for, let's pledge to ensure every child is guaranteed His or Her right to go to school and realize their potential, we have to support each n every girl So that they stand with us and make our Society more powerful, Send him your support to make it through the last 500 km of his 2,500 km journey, Donate now, Pledge your support to, Help 28,588 children go to school today on Universal Children’s Day, Donate online to, for supporting the projects across India which encourage and change the lives of underprivileged children, Explore World and the products displayed, Your support is vital to protect children rights, Provide education for underprivileged, Get our leaders to do more for children, Donation Appeal, Despite your busy schedules, you come forward and contribute your time, skills and resources towards ensuring lasting change for children, create awareness on their preferred causes on social media, help us spread the word on the issue, Support her journey, Fundraising Campaign, Share this with your family and friends to help, Hope many more can contribute their time and energy for this initiative, support the kids while they score goals, it would be great if you get involved with, and help us further reach out to more and more people, Help increase awareness about, increasing awareness of our education program, give the same help, Disgusted at how people keep child servants &amp; make them work for almost 20hrs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Findings and Conclusion

The content analysis shows that usage pattern of donors or supporters can be segmented into five subfactors Advocacy, Appeal, Ease of Use, Status Update, and Voting. The content analysis shows that most of the contents of supporters or donors of NGOs on social media were for Advocacy followed by Supporter Appeal, Status Update, Voting, and Ease of Use. The study shows that donors and supporters use social media to the greater extent for advocacy of any cause or program. The second most important subfactor came out was ‘Appeal’ to attract other peers on the network for volunteerism or donations. The result shows that preference of social media usage given by donors and supporters for a ‘status update’ and ‘Voting’ to an NGO or their program was almost the same. The last sub-factor emerged was the ‘Ease of Use’ to connect with the other donors or supporters of an NGO. Thus, these five sub-factors constitute the framework for Technological Dimensions of engagement with NGOs on social media (Fig4).
Fig 4. Framework evolved for Technological Dimensions of Engagement with NGOs on Social Media

This article explored the capability of social media for tailoring the advertising campaigns of non-government organizations (NGOs). NGOs can make a strategy to reach out to larger donor network by understanding the technological factors influencing engagement with NGOs on social media. It is pertinent that NGOs must remain fiscally solvent to remain in operation because profit is not the main motivation of non-government organizations. Non-government organizations have the intention to improve the lives of individuals or societies but have the limitations of funding and man power. NGOs provide service, a tangible good or promote an idea for the welfare of the society through social media. For example, the mission of an organization formed to improve public health would provide healthcare services to poor people. Through advertising on social media, NGOs may also provide a tangible good by providing humidifiers at cheaper rates to the poor children facing the problem of asthma. Sometimes, NGOs neither provide service nor products to the individual, they only promote important ideas on social media for prevention of healthcare. Unfortunately, NGOs are facing financial crunch to implement their mission successfully. These organizations do not have sufficient funds to run their operation leading to external financial support. Social Media inspires non-government organizations for advertising and promotion of their products and services. Social media have evolved as a new tool of communication for NGOs to connect with existing and new donors. Social media features are attracting NGOs to improve their mission successfully. Donor generated content on social media can influence the decision of other supporters or donors. The findings suggest that social media users are engaging with NGOs, mostly for the purpose of advocacy of NGO products and their services. The donors or the supporters of NGO activities prefer to appeal others on the social network to connect with the social welfare program. The donors express their concern by updating their status with others on the social network. They prefer to vote on social media for giving weight to any program or NGO activity. The result shows that social media users connect with NGOs and their programs due to their self-motivation and interest towards the social welfare plans. Supporters prefer social media for donation to an NGO because of the ease of use of social media technology.

6. Managerial Implications

Identification of technological factors for engagement with NGOs may be useful in improving
promotional strategies as well as engagement on social media. NGOs may focus on improving their websites and mobile applications for greater ease of use to the supporters. NGOs may identify the right supporters for advocacy of the programs and services of the NGO. NGOs can use social media to appeal individuals for participation in NGO activities. Status update of supporters on social media also increases promotion of NGO activities. Search engine optimization occurs with frequent updates on social media. Apart from this voting on social media also plays an important role. Vote bank on social media is used to listen to the voice of supporters. The vote may be for child right or for any campaign or for the creation of importance of any social issue. Thus, NGOs may take the advantage of these factors to make a difference in the society. The technological factors will help NGOs to adjust their programs to trigger better engagement on social media.

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