Understanding the discourse around **ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP** in India

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Social media analysis
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Citizen participation has played a pivotal role in building and improving democratic societies across the globe. Previously, institutions incorporated offline channels such as in-person surveys and panchayat meetings to ensure active citizen participation [1].

However, with an increase in digital adoption and internet accessibility, society has moved towards a more hybrid channel of citizen participation which integrates offline and online platforms [2]. The evidence of this transition is seen on social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and on search platforms such as Google.

Quilt.AI partnered with Aapti Institute, Porticus and Rohini Nilekani Foundation to study the shift in citizen participation. This study uses search and social media data to understand the four pillars of active citizenship in India: volunteerism, co-creation, claim making and resistance and mobilization.
This report aims to understand interest and online discourse around the four pillars of active citizenship—volunteerism, co-creation, claim making, and resistance and mobilization in India. The timeframe for this research is December 2019 to March 2022.

Within the digital ecosystem analysis, there is a national overview of the online discourse, as well as a focus on three geographical regions in India—Maharashtra, Delhi, and Karnataka.

These findings will be used to complement the offline study conducted by Aapti Institute on assessing the discourse on active citizenship in India.
Methodology

We used multiple data sources to ensure a **broad view** and **robust sampling**

01
Finalizing the hypotheses:
We brainstormed and finalized the hypotheses for each pillar with the teams at Aapti Institute, Porticus and Rohini Nilekani Foundation.
The demographic and geographical scope for each hypothesis was defined in consultation with all partners.

02
Extracting social data:
We extracted and studied 10,000 social media posts (from Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and Youtube) across all four pillars of active citizenship at a national and in three states: Maharashtra, Delhi, and Karnataka. We also curated a list of up to 400 keywords that make up to a total of 32,000,000 search data points to study search behavior around active citizenship at a national and state level.

03
Extracting Influencer data:
We extracted up to 6000 social media posts for a curated list of 30 influencers to conduct influencer analysis for investigating the digital evidence for respective hypotheses.

04
Extracting Institution & CSO data:
We extracted up to 5000 social media posts for a curated list of 50 institutions and CSOs to conduct an analysis for investigating the digital evidence for respective hypotheses.
Search data analysis:
- We categorized search data into behavioral categories suitable for the respective hypothesis to analyze the shift in their volume or rate of change (RoC) over a period of one year. Average monthly volume for each search term was extracted using the data provided by Google adwords.

Social media analysis:
- We studied the social media posts extracted for each query qualitatively to identify the online discourse around each pillar and collect evidence to assess the validity of the hypotheses at national and respective state levels. Urban/rural skew was determined by the difference in volume of posts from the rural and urban areas using the geotagging feature on Twitter. The gender and age skews were determined using the data from Twitter ads for specific queries.

Influencer analysis:
- We extracted the posts addressed to and from the influencers around the keywords curated for the respective hypothesis. We studied the posts qualitatively to ensure the relevance of the posts. We then analyzed the shift in the volume of keywords with respect to the influencer data to gauge the correlation between influencer participation and shift in user behavior trends.
Volunteering involves providing service to the most vulnerable and marginalized communities, and the individual contribution of time and resources towards a cause.
In Delhi, interest towards different types of volunteering is generally evenly spread among most categories ranging from college activities to NGOs.

College volunteering activities are the most popular among locals, making up 19% of all searches.

Some of the top interests include:
- Symbiosis (college students)
- Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (political groups)
- Isha foundation (spiritual and faith)
- Child Rights and You (NGOs)
In Maharashtra, interest is skewed towards spiritual and faith based organisations, college activities, political groups and NGOs, making up 70% of total searches on volunteering.

Most popular organizations within these categories are:

- Symbiosis (college students)
- RSS (political groups)
- Isha foundation (spiritual and faith)
- Art of Living (spiritual and faith)
- Child Rights and You (NGO)
In Karnataka, interest for volunteering activities is heavily skewed towards spiritual and faith based organisations, making up 44% of total searches.

Isha foundation and Art of Living have the greatest search volume, which grew by +206% and +69% from 2020 to 2022.

In other categories, political groups and NGOs that are popular include RSS, NSUI, Bhumi, and Teach for India.
In Delhi, college volunteering activities were observed to have significantly higher volume as compared to India overall, showing its popularity among locals as a channel to volunteer. Of this, Symbiosis has the highest search, growing by +8%¹ in 2021 and a further +12% in 2022.

Teach for India and Smile foundation are the most popular NGOs in Delhi, growing by +22% and +2% respectively in 2022.

Spiritual and faith based organizations have the lowest popularity in Delhi.

¹ Growth is calculated by comparing the average monthly search volume for volunteering searches in 2020 vs 2021 vs 2022.
Maharashtra: What are people searching for around volunteering?

In Maharashtra, college volunteering activities are observed to have significantly higher volume as compared to India overall. Similar to Delhi, Symbiosis also showed the highest search, and grew by +33% in 2021 and +23% in 2022.

Interest towards volunteering through government organizations, and general searches on volunteering are lower in Maharashtra compared to India overall. Examples of general search terms include: “volunteering opportunities”, “volunteer online” or “where to volunteering”.

- College students: +5.00%
- Spiritual and faith: +2.75%
- Clubs: +2.50%
- Volunteer driven initiatives: +1.50%
- Volunteering intermediaries: +1.25%
- Composite giving: +1.00%
- Youth groups: +0.75%
- International volunteering: +0.50%
- Movements and campaigns: +0.25%
- Corporates: +0.00%
- Civic action: -0.25%
- Volunteering based NGOs: -0.50%
- Community/political groups: -0.75%
- NGO with large vol base: -1.00%
- Govt orgs: -1.25%
- General: -2.00%
Karnataka: What are people searching for around volunteering?

In Karnataka, interest towards spiritual and faith based organizations far outweighs all other categories. Of this, Isha foundation and Art of Living have the highest search interest, and showed a growth of +133% and +9% respectively in 2022.

In Karnataka, interest towards volunteering in general is seen to be low, with most categories were observed to have significantly lower volume as compared to India as a whole.
**Hypothesis:**
Citizens prefer to volunteer from home using digital platforms over on-ground volunteering.

**Questions:**
Do citizens look for volunteer from home opportunities more than on-ground opportunities?  
Is this an emerging trend or just post COVID-19 behavior?

**Locations:**
India, Delhi, Maharashtra, Karnataka

**Language:**
English, Hindi, Marathi, Kannada

**Demographics:**
Age, gender, rural/urban
Covid has caused a shift from volunteering offline to online at home

The studied organisations and individuals adopt social media to show existing volunteering efforts. This is a way to raise awareness towards the availability of various volunteering programmes, their objectives and the importance towards the betterment of the lives of the underprivileged.

From the researched posts, it is observed that offline volunteering dominates: they are usually conducted offline initially, and posted online afterwards to educate the public and spur action towards increased volunteering efforts.

However, the pandemic has led to volunteering exercises to be held online at home, such as using android or IOS based applications to conduct online fitness classes to keep citizens healthy during the Covid lockdown.

Posts around online volunteering also grew by 111% during the lockdown period pan India.

Gender skew: Male
Age skew: 25-34
Geo skew: Maharashtra / Urban

Gender skew: Male
Age skew: 25-34
Geo skew: Maharashtra / Urban
Overall, India showed a surge of +71% in searches for online volunteering when the large Covid wave hit in March and April 2021¹

Rate of change of online volunteering keywords are listed below:

-51%
+195%
+71%

Overall, searches related to online volunteering showed a decrease of -51% from 2020 to 2022. However, interest towards online volunteering still showed a spike during the 2 intervals of Covid as indicated on the graph.

India showed a surge of +195% in searches for online volunteering during the first lockdown, which happened in early 2020¹ (March 2020 - May 2020)

Overall, India showed a surge of +71% in searches for online volunteering when the large Covid wave hit in March and April 2021¹

¹ This shows that COVID may have caused a shift from offline to online volunteering, especially during lockdown period. However, people prefer to go back to offline volunteering afterwards.
Maharashtra displayed the greatest interest towards online volunteering among the three states. Searches in Maharashtra makes up 43% of total searches in the 3 states, indicating a greater interest towards online volunteering there.

Maharashtra showed the highest surge in searches for online volunteering in the first half of 2020 (Jan’20 - Mar’20 VS Apr’20 - Jun’20), by +280%.

Karnataka showed the highest surge in searches for online volunteering during the Covid wave in 2021 (Jan’21 - Mar’21 VS Apr’21 - Jun’21), by +92%.
**Hypothesis:**
Citizens rely on online platforms to seek awareness about volunteerism and participate actively in volunteering exercises.

**Questions:**
What are citizens using the online platforms for when it comes to volunteerism?

**Locations:**
India, Delhi, Maharashtra, Karnataka

**Language:**
English, Hindi, Marathi, Kannada

**Demographics:**
Age, gender, rural/urban
Motivations sought for volunteering are similar across the three states

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Volunteering incentives</th>
<th>Search size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Helping others in need</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monetary incentives</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolster resume</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overseas opportunities</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological benefits</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On search, the three states showed similar distribution of interest towards different incentives of volunteering.

- **57%** Overall, helping others in need is the greatest motivation for volunteers. Search keywords include “volunteer opportunities near me” and “ngo near me to volunteer”

- **+75%** Volunteering to bolster resumes showed the greatest increase amongst other motivations from 2020 to 2022 by +75%. Search terms include “volunteer experience on resume” or “student volunteer resume”

- **-11%** Overseas opportunities is the only category that showed a decline in interest from 2020 to 2022 by -11%. Search terms include “volunteer opportunities abroad” and “volunteer abroad free”.

Overall, helping others in need is the greatest motivation for volunteers. Search keywords include “volunteer opportunities near me” and “ngo near me to volunteer”

Volunteering to bolster resumes showed the greatest increase amongst other motivations from 2020 to 2022 by +75%. Search terms include “volunteer experience on resume” or “student volunteer resume”

 Overseas opportunities is the only category that showed a decline in interest from 2020 to 2022 by -11%. Search terms include “volunteer opportunities abroad” and “volunteer abroad free”.
While most social media posts focus on the altruistic side of volunteering, citizens are also observed to seek incentives through volunteering activities. The evidence of this behavior is found on search data where searches related to incentive based volunteering opportunities are found to increase by 75% between Jan 2020 to March 2022.

A small group of people is observed to seek more holistic benefits, such as improved mental health from working together and interacting with new people on Twitter. On the other hand, majority of participants are looking for some form of financial incentive. This could be anything from a monthly salary to compensation on a per job basis. For students, the incentive of bolstering their resume while gaining related work experience is observed to be popular on social media.
Hypothesis:
What are different actions/activities being done as a part of volunteering? What are the different types of volunteering that people are taking up?

Questions:
Which categories/actions are trending around volunteering? Is there evidence for online to offline translation of volunteering?

Locations:
India, Delhi, Maharashtra, Karnataka

Language:
English, Hindi, Marathi, Kannada

Demographics:
Age, gender, rural/urban
Interest towards different types of volunteering on social media are evenly spread among several categories¹

1 Interest was calculated using search keywords that represent each type of volunteering activity: 21% means out of all the searches for different volunteering activities, 21% are related to participating in teaching programmes and education.

- Participating in teaching programmes for children from underprivileged families: 21%
- Packing and distributing food rations: 19%
- Caring for those with medical conditions such as disabilities, or the elderly: 16%
- Cleaning up, removing litter and rubbish from surroundings: 15%
- Recruiting members to join volunteering organisations as careers: 14%
- Donations and charity work: 11%
- Volunteering in animal shelters: 5%
Online platforms act as a gateway to offline participation

Information on volunteering programmes and initiatives are observed to get disseminated through social media platforms. Organizations and foundations are able to broaden their audience, share their visions and values with a larger audience through seminars, talks and talking about them online. At the same time, they are able to scale up their outreach and reach out for support and participation beyond their geographical barriers.

On the other hand, people are observed to seek out different volunteering opportunities that best suit their interests and goals on search and social media. Digital platforms are observed to act as a junction between the demand and supply for volunteering opportunities.
**Hypothesis:**
Citizens are inspired and influenced by social media influencers to participate in volunteerism.

**Questions:**
Has there been a change in trend before and after involvement of influencers in volunteering exercises?

**Locations:**
India, Delhi, Maharashtra, Karnataka

**Language:**
English, Hindi, Marathi, Kannada

**Demographics:**
Age, gender, rural/urban
Positive online testimonies are used to attract potential volunteers

One of the narratives observed to be used by volunteer seeking organizations is promoting positive testimonies by local/national prominent personalities to attract more volunteers and scale up the outreach.

These posts make use of communication cues that include slogans such as “they smile we smile” , “serving the underserved”— that are catchy and leave a long lasting positive impression on viewers.

Posts from these organizations and individual influencers are gain traction encouraging greater volunteering engagement and participation.
Rural areas are influenced by religious, political groups than individuals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender skew:</th>
<th>Age skew:</th>
<th>Geo skew:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>24-35</td>
<td>Delhi - Rural</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Posts in the local language (Hindi, Marathi, Kannada) were observed to talk mostly about local religious and political organisations and their leaders. This includes paying tribute to renowned leaders and contributors towards volunteering causes, or celebrating significant milestones of the organisations. Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) is the most frequently mentioned organisation in this discourse.

Mentions of volunteering activities in local languages were found to be initiated by religious or political organizations than prominent personalities (This observation is made excluding national political figures). The comment sections of these posts also observed sporadic underscoring of volunteering activities conducted by the organizations for ulterior political gains.
Correlation between influencers post and volunteering discourse online

**Search:**
We observed a surge in searches related to Sadhguru starting January 2022, followed by a surge in interest in the SaveSoil campaign led by him, starting March 2022. This indicates that influencers can act as a catalyst to generate greater awareness and interest towards a cause online.

**Twitter:**
We observed a surge in the number of tweets related to #SaveSoil between Feb 2022 to May 2022 after the start of the campaign by Sadhguru.
Volunteering activities promoted by faith based organisations are observed to garner most online traction

Faith based organisations
We observed a surge in the number of tweets for #Sharesmile and #CleanlinessDriveGurugram in March 2022, led by volunteers of the faith based organization, Dera Sacha Sauda. These tweets highlighted teachings of Saint Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh Ji and the influence from the organization that inspired them to participate in such volunteering initiatives.

NGOs
On the other hand, tweets related to NGOs were observed to not receive as much traction (likes, retweets, comments) compared to faith based organizations online. One of the reasons for this could be that faith based organizations launched a digital outreach campaign (including personalized hashtags) along with the offline drive to attract attention on social media.
Volunteerism on social media: in context

Key stakeholders:

Organizations:
NGOs
Government organisations
Spiritual and faith based organizations
Community groups

Participants:
College students
Individuals volunteers

Associated activities / sectors:

Online:
Online tutoring services
Online classes and workshops
Campaigns, recruitments, seminars

Offline:
Packing and distributing food rations
Healthcare, Coronavirus related initiatives: in kind distribution of masks, sanitizers etc.

Hashtags:

Hashtags:
There are no particular hashtags that stand out as they are specific to the volunteering organization/event. For example:

Organisation: #delhirainbowhomes, #IVNFightsCorona, #SmileOnWheels

Events: #RationDistribution, #IndiaFightsCorona, #SaveSoil, #Home2HomeVolunteering,
Concluding summary:

- Although offline volunteering is preferred by locals, the pandemic has caused a shift from offline to online platforms. This is reflected in the rise in both searches and social media posts related to volunteering online. Main activities conducted include online classes, tutorials, and workshops.
- Even though volunteering activities are most often conducted offline, citizens use social media to seek information and opportunities for volunteering. On the other hand, volunteering organisations are also using social media to recruit more like minded individuals to join their cause.
- Despite most people joining volunteering programmes to help the needy, there is still a big number of people who use it for personal benefits. This is mainly monetary incentives and, for students, bolstering their resume.
- Testimonials online act as a positive influence to drive more citizens to volunteer. In addition, the involvement of influencers in a cause further spurs their followers to join the same cause.
Co-creation involves citizens in the production process of public services by creating relevant processes and institutional structures.
Hypothesis:
Citizens are inclined towards using Youtube, Instagram, and Twitter as platforms for co-creation

Questions:
Which topics in citizen led co-creation are dominant on the social media?
Which platforms are citizens using for co-creation quantitatively?

Locations:
India, Delhi, Maharashtra, Karnataka

Language:
English, Hindi, Marathi, Kannada

Demographics:
Age, gender, rural/urban
YouTube is the go to platform for co-creation

Research suggests that India added approximately 19M new Youtube users between 2020 and 2021 [1]. India is reported to have one of the highest number of YouTube channels with million plus followers in the Asia Pacific region [2]. Apart from music and entertainment, co-creation related topics such as politics, news, and education were observed to be a few of the most viewed topics on YouTube in India [3].

Apart from Youtube, our research suggested prominent usage of Twitter for co-creation related activities such as posting live videos as a part of active journalism or discussing institutional to local level reforms under the relevant Twitter threads initiated by political bodies, social advocacy organisations, and influencers.

A deep dive into the state level co-creation patterns indicated that Maharashtra contributed with the highest number of YouTube videos and Delhi with highest number of tweets.
*Numbers represent the number of videos and channels on education / journalism / structural reform in the past 1 year (June 2021 to present).

Source: [https://mattw.io/youtube-geofind/location](https://mattw.io/youtube-geofind/location)

*Numbers represent the number of posts related to education / journalism / structural reform in the past 30 days (as of 6 June 2022). This is obtained by using proxy keywords such as “educational”, “#news”, “policy” to find number of posts related to them.

Source: [https://ads.twitter.com/](https://ads.twitter.com/)
MAHARASHTRA - CO CREATION PLATFORMS

*Numbers represent the number of videos and channels on education / journalism / structural reform in the past 1 year (June 2021 to present).

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Source: [https://ads.twitter.com/](https://ads.twitter.com/)
KARNATAKA - CO CREATION PLATFORMS

*Numbers represent the number of videos and channels on education / journalism / structural reform in the past 1 year (June 2021 to present).

Source: https://mattw.io/youtube-geofind/location

*Numbers represent the number of posts that are related to education / journalism / structural reform in the past 30 days (as of 6 June 2022). This is obtained through using proxy keywords such as “educational”, “#news”, “policy” to find number of posts related to them.

Source: https://ads.twitter.com/
INDIA - CO CREATION ON INSTAGRAM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Co Creation</th>
<th>Hashtags / engagement (number of posts)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>#educateindia (14,902)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#educationindia (12,514)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#educateindiankids (372)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journalism</td>
<td>#newsindia (97,544)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#newsdelhi (623)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#newsmaharashtra (103)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#newskarnataka (4,755)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structural reform</td>
<td>#indianpolitics (425,263)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#indiapolitics (10,649)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#politicsindia (2,495)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We are not able to target by specific location on Instagram unless it's captured in the hashtag (eg. #educatedelhi, #newsmaharashtra etc.) Therefore, we gave a broad overview on India in general, since hashtags like #educateindia are more commonly available and with higher numbers.
Hypothesis:
Government institutions are using social media platforms to facilitate co-creation.

Questions:
What kind of structures are created by the government institutions for co-creation using social media? (eg: policy making, feedback)

Which platforms dominate in government led co-creation?

Locations:
India, Delhi, Maharashtra, Karnataka

Language:
English, Hindi, Marathi, Kannada

Demographics:
Age, gender, rural/urban
Promoting government initiatives online became a stimulus for greater offline participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>Maharashtra - Urban</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Increased usage of social media platforms by institutions to promote government initiatives such as Swachh Bharat Abhiyan [1], COVID-19 vaccination drive is observed on Twitter during the study period (since March 2019).

The evidence of promoting government initiatives online translating into offline actions could be found on Twitter where netizens are seen advocating for government initiatives. For example: The number of conversations around advocating vaccination increased by 125% between Jan 2021 to Jan 2022. Many user posts are observed to educate the public, through posts about their own experiences of vaccination, sharing vaccination dates, and latest vaccination-related news.
Government institutions were observed to use social media, especially Twitter, extensively to engage and communicate with the public. It has become an all-in-one platform for information exchange, launching initiatives, and gathering feedback.

Based on observations, the largest part of posts involved updating their followers with the latest news in the country, from different sectors such as politics, development, or healthcare; followed by launching initiatives and campaigns through social media posts - using their online reach to improve notability and effectiveness of these programmes (eg. #United2FightCorona).

A smaller number of posts studied involved getting feedback from citizens. Although most of these posts provided links to access actual government portals, there are some institutions that directly obtain feedback from the platform itself.
Social media is utilised extensively for job postings and recruitments

Government institutions are observed to use Twitter to advertise job postings otherwise published on government websites.

Any new vacancy is not only posted by the official social media handle, but also by people associated with the institution. Other common groups such as coaching institutions, student support groups, student forum handles etc., which predominantly cater to aspirants post the same.

Such postings are largely limited to government positions, as opposed to private/non-governmental jobs.
Hypothesis:
Civil society organizations are using social media platforms as a tool for citizen-led co-creation.

Questions:
What are CSOs using social media platforms for around co-creation?

Locations:
India, Delhi, Maharashtra, Karnataka

Language:
English, Hindi, Marathi, Kannada

Demographics:
Age, gender, rural/urban
Online and offline actions are undertaken collectively to augment citizens’ voices

The main focus for CSOs is resolving public issues around civic amenities and civic welfare by joining various causes, such as the Feedtheneedy50’s initiative in Okhla, to provide better education and cleaner environment for locals. Through engaging in such programmes collectively as a larger community—both online and offline—they are able to gain greater prominence and recognition.

In addition, some of such initiatives are also “reinforced” by calling upon a renowned activist, political member, or officer to endorse the cause. It is observed that the influencer participation garners more online and offline outreach for the initiatives promoted by the CSOs.
Social media platforms are the key channel for both citizens and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to either seek or disseminate information and provide services, aimed at building greater civic engagement and encouraging greater civic learning.

CSOs on these platforms were observed to post extensively around local issues ranging from flooding and vaccination updates, to connecting with their respective ward committees. These posts allow their followers to access important information and gain useful knowledge on their local civic life.

These social media platforms are also used by CSOs to introduce useful services, such as emergency reporting applications, or online discussion sessions. Through such interactions, CSOs are able to obtain valuable feedback from users while citizens get easily accessible tools at their fingertips.
Concluding thoughts

- Desk research on digital co-creation led by citizens indicated three major categories of created content: journalism, awareness & education, and structural reform (this included content commenting on bills, laws and policies).

- Studied government institutions were observed to use Twitter as a medium to scale up the outreach and adoption of government initiatives and schemes through citizen led co-creation such as sharing vaccination experience on the social media to increase vaccine uptake.

- Civil Society Organizations are observed to engage and promote co-creation related efforts using social media platforms— particularly Facebook and Twitter. CSOs focus more on co-creation related action for more local issues in the community such as floods, cleaning, local vaccination drives etc.
CLAIM-MAKING DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Claim-making involves citizens making claims for the fulfillment of their rights
Hypothesis:
Citizens rely on social media platforms for claim-making even after having digital claim-making platforms created by the government institutions such as government-run digital grievances portals.

Questions:
Which topics in claim making are dominant on the social media?

Locations:
India, Delhi, Maharashtra, Karnataka

Language:
English, Hindi, Marathi, Kannada

Demographics:
Age, gender, rural/urban
Civilians often seek government intervention through social media

Tweeting directly to the ministry with receipts / proofs (especially on Twitter) is observed to be a common feature. Civilians turn to government bodies for solutions to their various grievances, which are often associated with their rights as Indian citizens. These could range anywhere from issuing a passport, to seeking justice for high profile murder cases.

Such actions by the civilians are often seen on social media platforms - they put up posts tagging concerned authorities and sometimes even those higher up in the hierarchy who may not be directly involved in resolving these issues. The accounts of individual politicians and larger government bodies help facilitate the exchange of information and enquiries between the government and civilians seeking their help.

Gender skew: Male
Age skew: 24-35
Geo skew: Delhi - Urban

Company denied to give the signature on the joint declaration letter that is why I raised the complaint which was 18/03/2021. I want resolution...why r not taking action of this type of companies who doing dictatorship in democracy

Company denied to give the signature on the joint declaration letter that is why I raised the complaint which was 18/03/2021. I want resolution...why r not taking action of this type of companies who doing dictatorship in democracy

Gender skew:
Male
Age skew:
24-35
Geo skew:
Delhi - Urban
Social media as a feedback platform for poor services from organisations online

Social media is observed to be used as a tool to bring to notice how some services and regulations can be fraudulent or discriminatory despite them aiming to be more accommodating.

Citizens are seen sharing their experiences with bureaucracy or uncovering why some organisations are not working effectively.

Government and institution led social media pages are observed to become prominent in India as feedback platforms. Rather than being government-led, they are adopted by individuals to provide feedback and voice their opinions.
Expressing displeasure towards the electoral system on social media

We observed that one of the leading topics for expressing displeasure are politics & elections. Online conversations reflect the locals’ increasing displeasure towards India’s political system, with rising number of criticisms directed towards the leading political party, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). This mainly stems from the concern, that BJP is causing the downgrading of India’s democracy, with India heading towards an electorally autocratic system.

The uproar on social media, led by nationalists who aim to eradicate this backsliding of democracy takes on several forms, including:

- Individuals expressing grievances and distress online
- Publicly criticising and condemning BJP’s actions
- Rallying supporters to stand against the suppression of democratic rights of citizens by BJP

Gender skew: Male
Age skew: 35-49
Geo skew: Delhi - Urban

Gender skew: 
Age skew:  
Geo skew: 

High time to cleanse the politics in India to save our Constitution and Democracy. Read my article in Deepika newspaper today.

No more democracy! Electoral Autocracy! Indian Democracy is over and Autocracy begins under BJP.

India now as autocratic as Pakistan, worse than Bangladesh: Sweden institute’s Democracy Report

After Freedom House report said India is only ‘partly free’ now, V-Dem Institute’s Democracy Report has downgraded India from ‘world’s largest democracy’ to ‘electoral autocracy’.

By Shubhangi Misra • 11 March 2021
Deprivation of basic rights by the government is a common grievance expressed online

| Gender skew:     | Age skew: 24-35 | Geo skew: Delhi - Urban |

Claims of the government depriving citizens of basic rights are seen explicitly on social media, where many express their grievances and frustrations. This is reflected in the farmers protests: using excessive force against protestors and humanitarian organisations leading to escalation of human rights violation by the government, causing widespread outrage in the online community.

Another prominent group in this narrative are the minorities, such as Dalits or refugees from neighbouring countries, who faced continuous suppression by the government as per the social media. Neglect, mistreatment, and assault of minority activists are further highlighted online to show injustice from the Indian government.
Hypothesis: Government institutions are adopting social media platforms to improve the access of citizens to claim-making.

Questions: What kind of structures are created by government institutions for claim-making, using social media?

Locations: India, Delhi, Maharashtra, Karnataka

Language: English, Hindi, Marathi, Kannada

Demographics: Age, gender, rural/urban
Like co-creation, the Indian government has set up a similar structure to facilitate claim-making through Twitter and Facebook. Through these platforms, users are able to get access to their various grievance and feedback portals.

Here, Twitter is the go to platform for users, when they seek information from the government or contact official government institutions. This can be gauged through higher engagement on Twitter posts and higher number of followers on Twitter pages compared to Facebook or Instagram.

Through social media, government institutions aim not only to give citizens the freedom and convenience to access their services online, but also create a structure where they can directly provide followers with the most events and news such as official Q&A sessions, and fake accounts committing fraud online.
Hypothesis:
Citizens in urban areas utilize social media platforms for the purpose of claim-making more than the citizens in rural areas. Is this increasing in rural and peri-urban areas with an increase in digital adoption?

Questions:
What is the frequency of using digital platforms in urban and rural areas for claim making?
How is the trend of using social media for claim-making in the rural area changing?

Locations:
India, Delhi, Maharashtra, Karnataka

Language:
English, Hindi, Marathi, Kannada

Demographics:
Age, gender, rural/urban
Citizens in urban areas utilise digital platforms far more than those in rural areas

- Among the 3 states, Delhi has the highest share of urban digital platform users.
- For digital platform usage in rural areas, Maharashtra showed the greatest increase among the 3 states:
  - Delhi: +6%
  - Maharashtra: +81%
  - Karnataka: +13%

*Search was conducted using keywords for government claim making organisations (eg. India portal, National Human Rights Commission India)*
Digital platforms are utilised by citizens from Delhi and Maharashtra in similar ways, for claim-making.

- Maharashtra has the highest number of searches related to claim making on social media among the 3 states.

- Delhi showed the highest growth in search interest towards claim-making on digital platforms from 2020 to 2022, compared to Maharashtra and Karnataka.
  - Delhi: +30%
  - Maharashtra: +21%
  - Karnataka: +24%

*Search was conducted using keywords for government claim making organisations (eg. India portal, National Human Rights Commission India)*
Twitter is used extensively by citizens in all three states for claim making, while usage of Instagram is not prominent.

*The data was collected using search keywords around government claim-making organisations (eg. “India portal twitter”, “National Human Rights Commission India facebook”).*
Concluding thoughts

- It is observed that social media has become one of the leading avenues for citizens to express their grievances online, despite having official government grievance portals. They use it not only to raise problems they encounter, but also to seek intervention from related stakeholders (such as the Prime Minister, Home Minister, etc.) directly or indirectly involved in the matter.

- Most of the grievances expressed online are related to exercising their rights as citizens. Many users seek intervention by higher authorities for denying or delaying their rights as citizens.

- Claim making through Twitter was predominantly observed in urban areas as opposed to rural areas, and Twitter was observed to be the dominating online social media platform for claim-making related activities.
Resistance and mobilisation includes sustained efforts by individuals, groups, or movements, to assert their rights and fulfill their responsibilities. This involves activities in the domain of resistance, advocacy, protest movements, and journalism.
Hypothesis:
Online mobilisation in India is more inspired by the national issues than local issues. However, local issues have started receiving prominence.

Questions:
What is the quantitative reach of online national issues as compared to local issues?

Locations:
India

Language:
English, Hindi, Marathi, Kannada

Demographics:
Age, gender
Farmers protest conversations reflect dissatisfaction towards the government online

The farmers protest has gained attention from media all over the country. While protests are happening on a large scale offline, conversations on social media have also gained traction over the months—from 2020 to present.

While posts online shared news and updates around the farmers protests happening around the country, many of these conversations have taken a supportive stance towards the farmers, showing sympathy to their plight.

At the same time, criticisms have been directed towards the BJP, for “betraying” and mistreating the farmers. Other local organisations such as the media, have also been accused for their biased reportage.
Injustice against a Hindu saint led to mass protests offline

The case of the prosecution of Sant Shri Asharamji has been keenly followed by civilians within the country. The general sentiment is that the Hindu Saint was wrongfully accused, detained and mistreated by state officials. This led to protests by the public, seeking justice and criticising local government bodies.

These protests are seen to be largely led by women offline. At the same time, pictures and videos of these protests were posted on social media platforms to spread awareness towards the issue. These posts are often accompanied by hashtags such as #justiceforbapuj, #womenforjustice, and #womenstand4bapuj. The scale of these protests have also expanded to include international events such as international women's day, where women from around the country gather to raise their collective voice regarding the injustice against the religious figure.
The Citizenship Amendment Act protests have seen the unification of civilians against government bodies in the country. Since the Anti CAA movement [1] resulted in the arrest of multiple activists, police brutality and torture, civilians have since “formed an alliance” against the government, and sought justice for those that have been wrongfully captured and abused.

Such unification is not only seen offline, but online as well. Social media users have used hashtags such as #StopCAA #StopTargetingMuslims etc. to not only spread awareness towards the issue, but also call a stop to acts of violence against the protestors.

Unification of civilians against the government seen through online citizen-led campaigns

Gender skew: Male
Age skew: 24-35
Geo skew: -
Local issues lack notability, but quickly gain prominence through sharing online

We observed that certain local issues also gained prominence online, and received attention from users around the nation.

The Karnataka Hijab Row [1] is a local issue that escalated online - since it involved the religious freedom of minorities in the country i.e. Muslims. Posts reflect not only the support of citizens all over the country towards the Muslim minorities, but also anger towards violence and brutality against the protestors.

Local issues such as the Karnataka Hijab Row are not as widely discussed online compared to national issues, but they are observed to gain significant traction: although local issues are less prominent online, they quickly gain attention on social media through likes and shares by citizens.
Social
After comparing a national issue (Farmer's bills) with a state level issue (Karnataka Hijab ban), we observed that the number of tweets for local issues were significantly lower than that of national issues (18,000 vs 5,800 at the peak). It needs to be noted that many other factors may play a role in the outreach of social issues apart from the geographical jurisdiction such as internet accessibility, political, cultural, religious environment at the time of event etc.
RESISTANCE AND MOBILISATION

**Hypothesis:**
Resistance on social media platforms behaves as a trend on social media platforms ensuring awareness more than the impact on the topic of interest.

**Questions:**
What is the life cycle of hashtags linked with the event of online mobilisation?
Does online mobilisation translate into offline action?

**Locations:**
India

**Language:**
English, Hindi, Marathi, Kannada

**Demographics:**
Age, gender
Social
There are 2 peaks seen in tweets related to farmers protest: December 2020: which could be attributed to talks by farm unions and the central government during that period, and February 2021: following the violent clashes between protestors and Delhi police during India's Republic Day. These peaks reflect the public's response to these events, and raising awareness of them on social media.

Search
On the other hand, searches related to farmers protest related news and farm bills peaked around December 2020 and dropped since. This shows information around significant events is disseminated and obtained through social media conversations in compared to search.
On the other hand, searches for Anti CAA protest peaked around Dec 2019, and dropped sharply in the next 2 months, again reflecting that citizens are more likely to look to social media as a main source of information during these significant events.

Conversations for Anti CAA protest peaked in December 2019, before sharply dropping afterwards (although rising slightly in February 2020). The higher number of conversations during these 2 dates could potentially be caused by the “intensity” of the event, wherein violence protests and deaths occurred.

Social

Search

Anti CA protest search

Protests erupting at multiple locations in the country [1]

Kapil Mishra’s Pro-CAA rally related violence [2]
RESISTANCE AND MOBILISATION

**Hypothesis:**
The intensity of resistance is amplified by the involvement of influencers on social media platforms.

**Questions:**
What impact is created by involvement of an influencer in mobilisation efforts?

**Locations:**
India, Delhi, Maharashtra, Karnataka

**Language:**
English, Hindi, Marathi, Kannada

**Demographics:**
Age, gender
Positive correlation between number of influencer posts and regular posts indicate that involvement of influencers acts as a catalyst, spurring conversations among the public.

Both influencer and regular posts increased in the second quarter and fell since.

Both influencer and regular posts peaked in the first quarter and fell since.
Concluding thoughts

Issues of national interest such as Central government related laws and policies facing resistance are observed to garner attention more number of times on Twitter, unless the issue is around a particular heinous event such as minor gangrape, death due to police brutality etc. Local issues that garner attention on social media and turn into trending posts are observed to blow up, leading them becoming national issues such as the Karnataka Hijab row.

Evidence of online mobilisation translating into offline action could be observed on Twitter for the studied events. However, a correlation between the two does not suggest a causal relationship. Further research would be recommended to gauge the possibility of causation.

Evidence of higher volume of online discourse around higher influencer participation could be observed through the data. However, this does not necessarily indicate higher offline action.
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WEBSITE
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Instagram
## Appendix A: Links

| Overall discourse | List containing the following keywords
|                  | Volunteerism |
|                  | - Search Keywords |
|                  | - Social Media Keywords |
| Co-Creation      | - Search Keywords |
|                  | - Social Media Keywords |
| Claim Making     | - Search Keywords |
|                  | - Social Media Keywords |
| Resistance and Mobilisation | - Search Keywords |
|                  | - Social Media Keywords |

| Influencers      | List of influencers |
| Institutions     | List of Institutions |
**Volunteering Ecosystem Map**

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**Volunteering Ecosystem Map**

- **Volunteering Intermediaries**
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  - ConnectFor
  - Goodera
  - iVolunteer

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  - LetsEndorse
  - United Way

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  - NSS and NYKS
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- **NGOs with large vol-bases**
  - CRY
  - Educate Girls
  - Project Mumbai