Tweeting Reproductive Justice (RJ) Advocacy through #AbortionMeraHaq[*]

A Social Justice Analysis of Digital RJ-Counterpublics

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ABSTRACT

The international reproductive justice (RJ) hashtag activisms are under-explored even though the technical communication scholars have investigated several hashtag activisms generated in the United States centering the western women's perspectives. This study offers a triangulation of counterpublics, RJ, and social justice theoretical frameworks to analyze the #AbortionMeraHaq movement initiated in India by two digital counterpublic groups. Results suggest that the activists recognized, reinterpreted, revealed, rejected, and attempted to replace abortion injustices and responded to the backlashes through digital storytelling and coalition and confianza building. The future RJ-activists can learn digital abortion advocacy and backlash counteraction strategies from this movement.

CCS CONCEPTS

• **Human-centered computing**; • **Human computer interaction (HCI); Interaction techniques; Text input**; • **Information systems**; • **Information systems applications; Collaborative and social computing systems and tools; Social networking sites**;

KEYWORDS

Reproductive justice, Social justice, Counterpublics, Abortion, Triangulation

1 INTRODUCTION

The #AbortionMeraHaq (translating to "abortion is my right) hashtag activism on Twitter offers a prime example of social justice approach of coalitional action to fight reproductive injustices [1]. This reproductive justice (RJ) hashtag activism was initiated in India

in 2019 by two digital activist groups, Asia Safe Abortion Partnership (ASAP) and Feminism in India (FII), to fight against abortion injustices. Their activism served multiple activist technical communication functions [2], among which the most prominent was that they "intentionally [sought] marginalized perspectives, privilege[d] these perspectives, and promote[d] them through action [the hashtag activism]" to serve people, specifically, the abortion seekers [3]. In addition, their activism was committed to produce change in health policies and societal and political mindset through social action [4]: the major impact of their movement was the extension of the upper gestation limit from twenty to twenty-four weeks for special categories of women in the Indian Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Amendment Bill, 2020.

Several scholars in our technical and professional communication (TPC) field investigated many hashtag activisms and digital counterpublics, for example, #MeToo, #BlackLivesMatter, #YesAllWomen, and #YouKnowMe, previously [5–8]. However, most of the previous studies centered on the western women's marginalization perspectives, rather than the non-western women's experiences and the activisms generated outside the United States, in their hashtag activism studies with few exceptions [9]. The scholars further focused on analyzing the digital abortion stories in RJ-hashtag activism, like #YouKnowMe [10]. In this study, I intend to extend this scholarship by drawing attention to a non-western RJ-hashtag activism, #AbortionMeraHaq, and its activists' efforts. I further intend to respond to Novotny, Hertogh, and Frost's [11] recent call on extending the rhetoric scholarship of RJ to digital public and civic contexts.

I triangulate the counterpublics, RJ, and social justice frameworks to investigate this movement; I assume that this triangulation might reveal the connection between RJ and social justice and the bottom-up strategic communication that the digital activists adopted and exercised to center social justice in addressing the reproductive injustices. This article primarily focuses on how these digital RJ-activists used Twitter for abortion advocacy and awareness spreading. More specifically, I looked at how these RJ-activists used the social justice frameworks, primarily the 4Rs (recognize, reveal, reject, and replace) [1], to bring change in societal mindset and institutionalized policies. I argue that these #AbortionMeraHaq movement can inform the future RJ-activists about the social-justice strategies of digital abortion advocacy and counteraction of backlashes experienced from the anti-movement members.

1.1 Abortion background in India and #AbortionMeraHaq

Unsafe abortion is the third leading cause of maternal deaths globally, and every day thirteen women die in India due to unsafe abortion-related causes [12]. Interestingly, in India, abortion has been legal since 1970 through the MTP act; still, unsafe abortion takes place due to women's, specifically the multiply marginalized group's (women, poor, illiterate or uneducated, migrants, slum dwellers, and trans people), relying on non-experts or quacks instead of expert and trained medical practitioners to seek abortion-related assistance [13–17]. The public health scholars [13–17] unanimously agreed that the unsafe abortions are the results of lack of knowledge of the abortion legality, the layers of procedural problems in the government facilities, and the abortion stigma; stigma is created due to social, cultural, religious, economic, and gender-related biases [15, 18]. A simple medical procedure to terminate an unwanted pregnancy, i.e., abortion, is masked under silence, shame, misinformation, and secrecy in India [19]. Moreover, the MTP Act's "physicians only" status and the mandatory spousal approval norm and the inappropriate link between the Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PNDT) for prohibiting sex determination and the MTP Act for ensuring safe abortion led to unsafe abortion rampantly in India [12, 14].

To break the traditional Indian abortion rhetoric portrayed as stigma, sin, disgust, crime, and immorality [14, 18], to normalize abortion as a fundamental human right, and to inform about abortion laws and procedures, the ASAP and FII started the hashtag activism—the creation and proliferation of digital activism to showcase collective thoughts, ideas, arguments, and experiences stamped with a discursive and user-generated hashtag [6]—called the #AbortionMeraHaq on Twitter in 2019 [19]. On one hand, the ASAP aims to reduce unsafe abortion and maternal morbidity in Asia by promoting and advancing safe abortion access services [20]; on the other hand, FII serves as a one-stop platform for everything, like feminist resources, jobs, and research publications, related to feminism in India [21]. Collaboratively, these two groups claimed that, as a fundamental human right, abortion access should not be impeded by restrictive laws, misinformation, and social stigma [19]. Therefore, they brought individual embodied stories of reproductive injustices to unravel the impacts of societal repressions in their movement; furthermore, they discussed the hidden facts of abortion laws and rights by involving experts which are not usually discussed in the mainstream media publicly and link them to the collective for the purpose of movement building [19].

1.2 Theoretical framing: Counterpublics, reproductive justice (RJ), and social justice

I explore this #AbortionMeraHaq movement through the lens of the counterpublics theory primarily; however, I complement this theory by incorporating the RJ and social justice frameworks. In this section, I discuss how triangulating the concepts of RJ and social justice, specifically, the 4Rs framework, with the counterpublics theory can help in identifying how the #AbortionMeraHaq digital RJ-activists counteracted the deep-rooted traditional abortion rhetoric in India. The counterpublics theory has expanded from the public sphere theory originated by Habermas [22]: Habermas'

bourgeois public sphere concept is limited in many aspects among which one of the primary constraints is centering masculinity and excluding women and other gendered minorities from the public sphere. In order to include minority and marginalized groups into a public sphere, Fraser and Spivak conceptualize the subaltern counterpublics [23, 24]. Warner states that the counterpublics are subordinate groups, like women, LGBTQs, workers, and people of color, who "invent and circulate counterdiscourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of the identities, interests, and needs" [25]. Simply speaking, the counterpublics, as "spaces of withdrawal and regroupment" and "bases and training grounds for agitational activities" [23] challenge the dominant public discourses and socio-cultural norms and illuminate differential power relations among diverse publics of a public sphere characterized by multiplicity [26–28]. Through the hashtag activism, the counterpublics strategically ally with the broader community to "advocate for social change, identity redefinition, and political inclusion" [5] ultimately to counteract the dominant narratives and publics and to address unique community needs and interests. I consider the #AbortionMeraHaq activists as digital counterpublics because they attempted to bring the historically oppressed groups' viewpoints and embodied experiences (counterdiscourses) to the attention of larger society through coalitional action digitally on Twitter [29, 30].

In exploring these digital counterpublics, the concepts of RJ and social justice are supportive because the activists' goal was to fight against the reproductive injustices faced by women and trans people in India and to establish justice in society. The term RJ, first invented in 1994, can be defined as "the human right to maintain personal bodily autonomy, have children, not have children, and parent the children we have in safe and sustainable communities" [31]. SisterSong emphasizes that RJ is "about access, not choice," i.e., for example, abortion can be legal in a country but a lack of knowledge about the legality and access to the nearest clinic creates abortion barrier, and "not just about abortion," i.e., for example, many times people are unaware of alternative birth options and domestic violence assistance [31]. In the similar vein, one of the health workers in Bloom-Pojar and Barker's study state that RJ "means not only having access to reproductive health care [services, for example, abortion and birth control] but also to livable wages, housing, education, safety, and more" [32]. In any RJ-related community-engaged works, two concepts are essential: confianza, i.e., necessary elements for relationship building, for example, trust and confidence [32], and tactical, flexible coalition building [33]. In coalition building, public writing and storytelling can be used as communication strategy tools in local RJ campaigns. The storytelling, however, should center the marginalized voices and can be presented as "counterstories" [34] or counternarratives so that the patients' lived experiences become prominent, not the dominant societal structures' narratives governed by White supremacy and oppressive culture [35, 36].

This RJ concept is related to social justice frameworks. Jones and Walton [37] define social justice research as "investigat[ing] how communication broadly defined can amplify the agency of oppressed people—those who are materially, socially, politically, and/or economically under-resourced" [quoted in 3]. The social justice turn in the TPC field "looks to supplement critical description and analysis with action research committed to also producing

change" [4]. In other words, the social justice approach invites and brings the marginalized groups to the forefront and involves them into critical dialogue by "bridg[ing] from diversity to inclusion" [3]. In order to amplify the oppressed people's agency, Walton, Moore, and Jones offer us the 4Rs framework to build coalitional action: the framework helps recognize, reveal, reject, and replace injustices and unjust and oppressive acts with "intersectional, coalition-led practices" [1]. The 4Rs can be broadly defined as follows [1]:

1. **Recognize:** Identification of daily mundane activities and injustices perpetuating oppressions.
2. **Reveal:** A call to action for the hearer(s) to strategize for tangible change.
3. **Reject:** Refusal to support injustices and adoption of a stance to stand against oppressions and offer solutions.
4. **Replace:** Implementation of solutions to challenge power relations, gather necessary resources, and reorganize institutionalized policies and procedures.

Both these RJ and social justice concepts helped me explore how the #AbortionMeraHaq digital counterpublics recognized, revealed, rejected, and replaced abortion injustices by building confianza and coalitions and exercising digital storytelling (or bringing counter-discourses) in their hashtag activism.

2 METHODS

In order to identify the #AbortionMeraHaq's unique features and dynamics, I placed emphasis on four factors:

1. how the digital activists advocated for abortion,
2. why and how the anti-campaign members opposed the movement and pro-choice ideology,
3. how the activists handled the backlashes, and
4. what types of rhetorical momenta were generated: I define the rhetorical momentum as the time and context when a tweet has invited various people to assemble (for example, coalition building) and disassemble (for example, backlashes). Or, the rhetorical momentum in this study's regard can be determined through the time and context when the #AbortionMeraHaq space got deterritorialized (withdrawal of the abortion advocators from the #AbortionMeraHaq space) and reterritorialized (regroupment of the abortion advocators with the pro-life or anti-movement members) [38]. On Twitter, this rhetorical momentum can be understood by the trending topics or the hottest emerging topics or discussions through affective reactions, such as a huge number of likes, shares, and replies.

To understand these four factors, I employed a textual analysis drawing on the multimodal discourse analytical framework and using the 4Rs as a coding scheme. Before I explain my data analysis, I briefly discuss the data collection and data clean-up processes.

2.1 Data collection and clean-up

Public Twitter data, i.e., tweets, comments or replies, and hashtags, of the #AbortionMeraHaq movement was collected through an open application programming interface (API) sent between May 2019 (when the movement began) and December 31, 2020 (when I began my research for this study). This resulted in a total

of 150 tweets and 115 replies. The sample was further narrowed down based on pageviews, likes, and interactions to determine the activism strategies. Only those replies were considered which gave rise to significant rhetorical momentum of coalition building from the activists' sides and support and/or backlashes from the participants in my analysis. My final sample contained a total of 101 tweets and 55 replies. All tweets and replies were written in English except for three replies. Being proficient in Hindi writing, reading, and speaking, I myself translated those three replies into English, which were written in Hindi. For data clean-up, the tweets and their associated replies and hashtags were downloaded into an Excel spreadsheet.

2.2 Data analysis

In the multimodal discourse analytical framework, visual images are also understood as texts or "imagetexts" [39], and, therefore, both the texts and images are presented, read, and analyzed together. Furthermore, we can determine the intersemiotic relationships between texts and paratexts (for example, hashtags and emojis) through this framework. This concept helped me identify when and for what purpose the activists tagged other hashtag activisms and the impact of that tagging during the movement. While textually analyzing the imagetexts (for example, the tweets and replies along with the hashtags), I proceeded with both deductive and inductive approaches. Deductively, I coded the tweets by applying the 4Rs to determine how the activists recognized, revealed, rejected, and replaced abortion injustices [1]. However, during my analysis, I kept myself open to the emerging concepts—a criterion for inductive analysis. Through this inductive approach I attempted to uncover tweeters' intent beyond the level of anecdote and discover the digital activists' driving force behind using Twitter as a tool and creating a space for building coalitional action to protest the institutionalized oppressions, for example, the MTP act. Ultimately, this inductive analysis helped me identify two more "Rs," i.e., reinterpret and respond. I discuss the 6Rs in detail in the "Results and Discussion" section. We should note here that revealing is inseparable from the other *Rs* in any digital movement because on Twitter the activists reveal through their tweets whatever they recognize, reinterpret, respond, reject, and replace. Therefore, I categorize these 6Rs based on their intent of revealing a certain *R*, for example, what abortion injustices the activists *recognized* in their movement. Throughout my analysis, I took a *constant comparative method* [40] or a close reading protocol to search for commonalities and repetitions of RJ-advocacy strategies on Twitter.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, I discuss how the #AbortionMeraHaq digital counterpublics applied four steps through 6Rs, i.e., recognizing and/or reinterpreting abortion injustices, revealing abortion injustices, responding to the abortion injustice advocates, and rejecting and/or replacing oppressions, to fight against abortion oppressions prevalent in India. I further discuss how they adopted three distinct strategies through 6Rs: digital storytelling, confiana creating, and coalition building. Although these three strategies overlap most of the time in all the steps, still digital storytelling was primarily prevalent in the recognition and/or reinterpretation steps and coalition

and confianza building was in the responding and rejecting and/or replacing stages. In the revealing stage, a combination of digital storytelling and coalition building was predominant in which the activists called for coalitional action by curating digital stories.

In this #AbortionMeraHaq space, the digital storytellers were not only the abortion survivors who shared their personal stories and accounts regarding oppressive mentality, but also those digital activists and other members who represented somebody else's abortion stories by reinterpreting and reorganizing it. Therefore, the digital stories in this space had two aspects: more organized, curated stories used for digital abortion advocacy by the digital activists and other pro-choice members and less organized, more organic personal abortion experiences and stories shared by the victims. In this study, I primarily present how the digital activists used the curated stories to advocate for abortion justice. Regarding coalition building, as I mentioned earlier, the two groups, FII and ASAP, built coalitions to challenge the dominant abortion rhetoric in India. However, because I did not employ any field methods, like observations, to work with these two groups, I could not comment on their coalitional activities behind the scenes. Rather, I primarily present how these two groups built coalitions with others during the hashtag movement on Twitter for three purposes: to show solidarity, to respond to the anti-campaign backlashes, and to co-construct knowledge.

3.1 Recognizing and/or reinterpreting the victims and places of abortion injustices

The digital activists recognized the following in their #AbortionMeraHaq movement:

1. most marginalized or multiply marginalized people, i.e., the youths, unmarried women, rape victims, and transgender and binary folks, who got impacted severely by the abortion injustices: the idea was to deliberately find, privilege, and promote marginalized perspectives [3] and "center [abortion] community needs and voices" [32], which are at the heart of both RJ and social justice movements.
2. the abortion injustice types and processes among which the most prominent examples are as follows: portraying abortion as a crime, sin, and adultery by the mainstream society, exercising stringent medical protocols that dehumanize women's health, but humanize the fetus, imposing the doctors' personal prejudices on the patients, offering misinformation about abortion pills, and recommending abortion procedures (surgical or medical) based on the conveniences and choices of the doctors, but not the patients.
3. the oppressors and the places of oppressions, for example, the medical practitioners, the hospitals, and the health institutions, and the legal MTP act.

In order to recognize abortion injustices, it is first important to reinterpret each situation, instance, individual (for example, the abortion survivor), and context in a new light or a different way [1]. This reinterpretation unravels the hidden intent, processes, and impacts of abortion injustices that lead to oppressions. Oftentimes, in this #AbortionMeraHaq space, the activists separately tweeted their reinterpretation and recognition of abortion injustices. For example, they brought the stories from the multiply marginalized
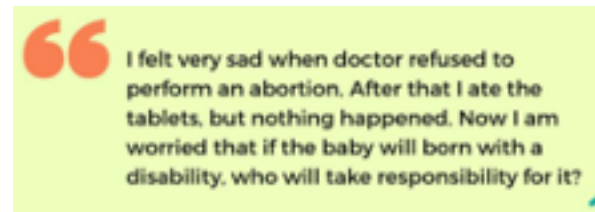

Figure 1: Screenshot of a digital story recognized by the activists showcasing abortion injustices from medical practitioners.

people who were oppressed and that indicated the medical practitioners' complicity in abortion injustices (for example, the first and third figures)—an instance of recognition. The second and fourth figures illustrate the examples of reinterpretation through which the activists revisited that story's impact from a broader angle.

The activists brought a digital story shared by an abortion seeker (Figure 1) to recognize how she experienced a cold shoulder from a doctor regarding abortion. This recognition is an instance of Hartline, Crowley, Faraguna, and McCarthy's call for "stepping up to read other's words" and centering "the lived experiences of community members who deal with these [abortion-related] issues everyday" [33]. In addition, this story is an example of counterstory that challenges the experts, i.e., the medical practitioners, who are never questioned by the mainstream media [33, 34]. Figure 2 illustrates an example of reinterpretation through which the activists showcased how the medical practitioners or experts, who should assist their patients in need, turned their back to responsibilities; their intention is to create awareness and change in the community through this reinterpretation [33]. Their reinterpretation helps us understand that the medical system works in a top-down model, where the patients are always on the receiving end. The doctors not only ignore the patients' mental needs, but also the reproductive needs. While forcing people to abort is an injustice, pushing someone to carry their pregnancy is also an injustice. Through their reinterpretation, the activists showed that the bigger negative impact of this kind of enforcement could be that the abortion seekers will try to solicit other avenues for abortion, for example, the non-medical facilities. In those facilities, the patients might even lose their lives in the hands of the non-experts or quacks.

In another tweet, the activists recognized how a doctor recommended the abortion procedure according to his/her/their conveniences without keeping the patients in loop by bringing a story (Figure 3). Figure 3 is an example of the recognition of a multiply marginalized woman who suffered oppressions from multiple angles [1, 33]: the abortion seeker experienced an unwanted pregnancy; she did not have family support; and her voice was unheard by the doctors

Another tweet (Figure 4) illustrates how the activists reinterpreted this digital story.

Figure 4 is an example of reinterpretation through which the activists unraveled how the medical practitioners oftentimes prioritized their conveniences and ease ignoring the patients' needs; the doctors even misinform the patients regarding the treatment

Figure 2: Screenshot of FII's tweet reinterpreting the impact of medical practitioners' irresponsibility on the abortion seekers.

Figure 3: Screenshot of one digital story recognized by the activists showing how the doctors ignore the patients' agency and choices.

Figure 4: Screenshot of FII's tweet reinterpreting how the medical practitioners misinform the patients.

procedure. Their reinterpretation of this story is an example of analyzing the health-institutionalized power systems which suppress the patients' voices.

3.2 Revealing abortion injustices

In order to reveal the marginalized people's oppressions, the activists called for coalitional actions from various organizations, and, in order to build confianza [32] and to substantiate their calls, they used digital stories. Figures 5 and 6 illustrate how the activists sought coalitions in one of their tweets and what kind of digital story they used to build coalitions respectively.

In the tweet (Figure 5), the activist tagged many like-minded organizations/hashtag movements who advocate for feminist issues, for example, reproductive injustices and domestic violence, to serve two purposes: to educate the public about the abortion legality and the unnecessary prejudices of the physicians and to invite/engage (or to build coalitions) other organizations. They invited others to ultimately recognize how the lack of awareness about abortion legality in India perpetuates health injustices to women from the so-called "trustable" hospitals [1]. The activist further presented a digital story (Figure 6) of how the doctors prioritized their personal prejudices over a legal medical procedure, abortion. This story acted as a tool for confianza building with the invited coalitional

members by centering shared community concerns and experiences [32]: all the invitees' shared goal is to advocate for pro-choice ideology, disrupt the institutionalized oppressions, and establish RJ for women and trans people.

3.3 Responding the abortion injustice advocators

When counterpublics reveal an injustice, they can certainly expect backlashes from the mainstream publics. In other words, within the counterpublic digital space, the counterpublics have to experience various other kinds of opposition/oppression discourses which are sometimes completely different from the mainstream publics' primary oppositions. For example, the mainstream publics' primary opposition was that the #AbortionMeraHaq counterpublics were violating the social and cultural norms by facilitating a pro-choice mentality in India. However, during the hashtag movement, the mainstreams' concerns shifted towards the activists' other activities, like the activists trolled the film industry and mainstream media and attempted to take the role of a physician. In this kind of situation, responding to the mainstream publics (or in this case the abortion injustice advocators) or addressing their criticisms takes the prominence before even rejecting and replacing the oppressive policies, mentality, and laws. If backlashes are not responded properly and timely, the counterpublic sphere might get deterritorialized and dismantled: on one hand, the abortion advocates might develop trust deficiency with the activists and leave the particular digital counterpublic sphere and group with other sphere [38]; on the other hand, the anti-members' oppositions might dominate in the digital sphere that can ultimately break the movement. In this responding step, coalition building becomes even more essential to take a stance together and oppose the dominant ideologies and publics. Figure 7 illustrates what kinds of tweets led to severe backlashes in the #AbortionMeraHaq space.

Figure 7 shows that the activists suggested two medicines that could naturally abort the fetus at home without going through any surgical procedure. This tweet ignited not only the anti-abortion members, but also the pro-choice and other supportive members. In other words, some of the pro-choice members joined the pro-life and/or anti-campaign members due to differences of opinion and doubts on the activists' intent; this act led to deterritorialization of the #AbortionMeraHaq space [38]. The opposition members accused the activists of trying to take a physician's position.

Similar kinds of backlashes and deterritorialization happened when the activists targeted the Bollywood industry (see Figure 7): they brought an example of an actress's character in an Indian Bollywood film, where she was portrayed as an ambitious and bad

Figure 5: Screenshot of one tweet seeking coalitions in the revealing step.
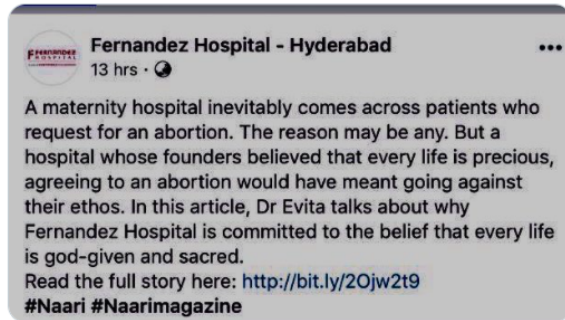

Figure 6: Screenshot of one digital story that the activist used to build coalitions.

woman because she wanted to abort her child. In this case, the opposition members accused the activists of putting a negative character (the actress's) into positive light because of their feminist ego. The anti-members claimed that the actress ultimately married a rich businessman for money and power after aborting her child and leaving her boyfriend, which is an unethical act. These two examples suggest two different kinds of oppositions the activists faced in the process of trying to reconstruct the abortion policies and dispel abortion stigma. In addition, the backlashes might be the result of the activists' ignoring the indigenous mentality and offering decontextualized information, whether it is the medical information without properly backing it up with expert opinion or it is the improper representation of an Indian actress' story [41]. Therefore, we understand that although the counterpublics' choice of stories and moves is opposite to mainstream society, still their activism should consider the local perspectives: it is not about jelling with the mainstreams, but it is about acknowledging their presence and mentality.

To respond to these severe backlashes, the activists first had to re-establish their credibility (ethos). They tweeted the following to show that their RJ-movement was supported and guided by practicing gynecologists, so their opinion could be considered as an expert one (Figure 8):

This tweet (Figure 8) is also an example of coalition building with the experts (the gynecologists) to keep the flame of the movement alive. In this responding step, the activists often had to call for coalition building, exactly like the revealing step, so that the other like-minded organizations and individuals could come back together to show solidarity for the main cause, i.e., abortion justice for women and trans people, without any distraction and to oppose the backlashes. In response to that call, many disparate and similar kinds of organizations and individuals joined the movement, for

example, Ipas Development Foundation and Youth advocacy group. The disparate groups came together because they also considered themselves to be counterpublics, who fight against the mainstreams to advocate for their agencies and have similar kinds of oppression experiences [27, 42]. To respond to the backlashes, the coalitional members tweeted primarily focusing on the importance of safe abortion and the digital activists' contributions to establish abortion justice. Figure 9 shows various kinds of solidarity techniques the coalitional members extended to support the abortion justice cause.

Twitter's features of tagging and mentioning of the activists' contributions for RJ-issues specifically afforded the members to mobilize the movement in the digital counterpublic sphere. In this mobilization phase, the digital activists also co-constructed knowledge and meaning with various types of people: the like-minded organizations and individuals (primarily the pro-choice and pro-campaign members), the medical practitioners, and even the anti-choice members. One of the characteristics of counterpublics is that the members deliberately ignore their individual ego and prioritize their group ego [42]. Therefore, the RJ-activists did not hesitate to co-create ideas with the anti-campaign members to mobilize the movement. For example, in consultation with an anti-campaign member, the activists organized health conferences to subside the backlash impacts.

3.4 Rejecting/replacing abortion injustices

Most of the time the activists employed both rejection and replacement of abortion injustices together in their movement because both these steps are closely connected: rejection is about vehemently opposing the injustice and finding out solutions to curb that injustice and replacement is about practically working on those solutions (the real action). In order to execute both these steps, the activists resorted to both coalitional utterances and acts with other abortion groups or similar kinds of organizations to show solidarity against abortion injustices. While the activists' positionality could never allow them to change the laws and policies established by the government, they continued to challenge the power relations in order to push the government to restructure the MTP act. In this step, the activists built coalitions with the prestigious mainstream health organizations and institutes to obtain a platform where they could present the reproductive injustice issues—an example of initial withdrawal from the wider publics and regroupment or reentry into the same public sphere [23, 27]. This finding suggests that although the counterpublics have their own transcripts and identity formation within their sphere, in order to communicate the marginalization to the larger society, they sometimes have to approach the mainstream publics for agency. They further attempted to interview the victims who suffered abortion stigma to know

Feminism in India ✔
@FeminismInIndia

Medical abortion has revolutionised the access to safe abortion! These two pills, Mifeprestone and Misoprostol, are used in medical abortion. @asapasia.
#AbortionMeraHaq

Feminism in India ✔ @FeminismInIndia · May 24, 2019
Replying to @FeminismInIndia
Priyanka's character is driven and ambitious & very clear about not wanting a child. She exercises her agency to get an abortion but is then portrayed as the "bad" woman & Akshay Kumar, the self-righteous hero, moves on to a woman who was ready to bear his child. #AbortionMeraHaq

💬 54   ↻ 25   ♡ 14

Figure 7: Screenshots of the tweets that led to severe backlashes in the #AbortionMeraHaq space.

ASAP @asapasia · May 17, 2019
...undergoing unsafe abortion and risking their life.
The side effects of these pills 'cramping and bleeding' are same as a natural miscarriage. Reminding everyone here again to trust the validity of information as this campaign is supported by a PRACTICING GYNAECOLOGIST.
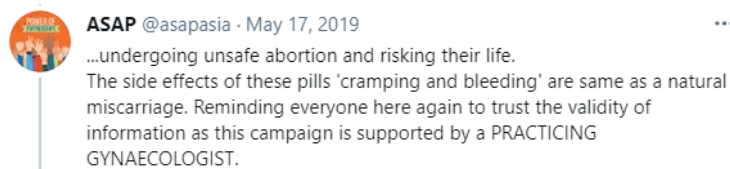
Figure 8: Screenshot of the activists' tweet to both pacify and answer the suddenly generated oppositions against the RJ-activists' trying to take the physicians' positions.

IWRAW Asia Pacific @IWRAW_AP · Jul 27, 2019
"When we stigmatise abortions, we are not reducing the number of abortions, only the number of safe ones." This video by @FeminismInIndia and @asapasia examines a range of opinions from the streets of Delhi: youtu.be/8MyJmaO0ysE **#AbortionMeraHaq** #SRHR

Ipas Development Foundation @IDFtweetz · May 10, 2019
Why must women be made to feel ashamed of taking decisions concerning their own bodies? #Stigma associated with #abortion needs to be removed. Women's #ReproRights need to be reinforced. #SafeAbortionSavesLives **#AbortionMeraHaq**

Youth Deliver @YouthDeliver · Sep 28, 2020
Through her digital campaign **#AbortionMeraHaq** w/ @asapasia, @asmitaghosh18 of 🇮🇳 helped educate Indians on medical information, stigma, & laws about abortion. Her most popular video garnered ~50K views & started crucial discussions around #ReproRights.

Figure 9: Screenshot of various coalitional members' tweets to support the #AbortionMeraHaq digital activists.

Riya Surekha Mishra @riyamishra110 · May 3, 2019
Abortions are better than bringing unwanted children into this world and giving them bad lives. **#Abortionmerahaq**

Figure 10: Screenshot of an activist's tweet showing an utterance to reject abortion injustices.

more about community needs and jot down additional resources [1]. Figure 10 illustrates one of the examples of an utterance to reject abortion stigma.

Figure 11: Screenshot of the tweets showing rejection and replacement strategies.

Figure 11 showcases how the activists progressed with their rejection and replacement of abortion injustices steps, for example, they presented how media's specific affordances can amplify abortion rights and empower women and trans people, how their movement got noticed by the Indian government, and how they gathered resources to challenge the dominant narratives.

4 CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Technical communication teachers, scholars, activists, and professionals working in RJ-activism and RHM scholars should benefit from understanding the RJ-hashtag activism strategies adopted by the Indians in the #AbortionMeraHaq hashtag movement. The activists' adoption of a social justice framework to address RJ-issues offers examples of the following:

1. how to communicate the marginalized people's health and medical needs,
2. how to center the vulnerable communities'—multiply-marginalized people's (women, trans people, illiterate/uneducated, and poor) lived experiences [1],
3. how to educate women and trans people about their basic health rights,
4. how to fight oppositions from the anti-campaign members through digital storytelling, co-construction of knowledge, and coalition building, and
5. how to build confianza to mobilize a digital counterpublics movement.

Moreover, their four social justice coalitional action steps through 6Rs—recognize, reinterpret, reveal, respond, reject, and replace—to strategize change in abortion policies and spread general abortion awareness could be adopted by other RJ-activists.

In addition, my findings suggest the types of backlashes any RJ-activism can expect and the RJ activists' strategies of counteracting those backlashes in the digital counterpublic sphere. Based on my analysis, I suggest the technical communication RJ-activists the following:

1. Because relations can break or make a public sphere [43], any activism, specifically digital counterpublics movement where the boundaries are blurred and the gatekeeping is unrealistic, should prioritize confianza [32, 44].
2. Tweets should be localized: a lack of critical audience, cultural, and contextual awareness [41] and a leniency to show respectful gesture to indigenous mindset and perspectives can invite severe backlashes from both general society and anti-activism members.
3. As Twitter allows a maximum of 240-character in a tweet, the RJ-activists should acknowledge how much information they are providing since it is nearly impossible to discuss all the abortion problems, medication information, and legal scenarios in one tweet.
4. Finally, while we cannot ignore the importance of lay medical expertise [45] or citizen technical communicators [46], the RJ-activists like the doctors (who have a noble profession) have special obligations towards their audience: sensitivity towards women's and trans people's health should be prioritized before taking the role of physicians. In this regard, the RJ-activists and the physicians should work together to satisfy the marginalized people's health needs.

In addition, this #AbortionMeraHaq hashtag activism can also bring an international and intercultural perspective to the technical communication classrooms: the technical communication educators might be inspired to include more non-Western RJ or other types of activisms in their curricula to motivate their students to engage

in unfamiliar contexts [2]. As our TPC field has taken its turn towards social justice, we, the technical communication educators, should try to bring more people of colors' works, activisms, and scholarships and non-western or international movements in our research, teaching, and practice to ultimately help our students think globally.

This study is limited in terms of having just explored one hashtag activism, the #AbortionMeraHaq, generated in one country to understand the RJ discourse on Twitter. Future scholars might compare the RJ-digital discourses in the western and non-western public spheres. Furthermore, they might focus on specific traits in any digital movement, for example, backlashes and coalition building. Additionally, future studies might explore the digital activists' use of paratexts (for example, emojis) to mobilize the counterpublics movement on digital platforms. In addition, future scholars should consider including more than one coder or analyst to report some measures of inter-rater reliability for the tweets' more objective analysis and classification.

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