

Social Media Activism and Offline Campaigns in the Fight against Domestic Violence in Ghana. A Study of Selected Activists on Facebook

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Abstract

An emerging area concerning social media is how it can be used to champion a social cause through activism. Social media has demonstrated the potential for mobilising attention and accountability to women's rights and challenging discrimination and stereotypes. Also, social media has proven to be a powerful vehicle for bringing women's rights issues to the attention of a wider public. This study seeks to explore how social media activism and "offline" campaigns can be used in the fight against domestic violence in Ghana. With the use of cyber ethnography, interviews, and theories like the social capital, social network theory and the resource mobilisation theory, the usefulness of social media (Facebook) in amplifying the atrocities of victims of domestic violence was investigated. Purposive sampling and snowballing were the two major types of sampling used to arrive at seven activists who were interviewed and observed on Facebook. Social media was identified as an avenue for victims to vent, this offered them the opportunity to tell the whole world what they are going through. Also, the activists noted that the content of their posts on Facebook has been able to educate people on domestic violence. Facebook offers a ground for activists to network and share ideas on how to assist victims who reach out to them. Funding for activism was one interesting area that emerged in this study. This is when the activists can use SM space to raise money and other resources needed to boost the particular cause they are working on.

Keywords— Social media, Activism, Social capital, resource mobilisation, domestic violence

I. INTRODUCTION

Social Media Activism

Different scholars like Gyampo (2017), Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), Mukherjee (2016), Kapoor, et al., (2017), and Young (2009) have given their meaning and interpretation of what social media is but generally, social media can be expounded to the ease to which anyone can use the internet to publish and access information, collaborate on a common effort, or build relationships (Murthy, 2013). An emerging area concerning social media is how it can be used to champion a social cause through activism. Gretzel (2017) noted that social media activism is a form of cyber-

activism that takes advantage of social media affordances to reach its cause-related goals.

While some question the effectiveness of social media's ability to generate real-world change, over time we have seen social media play a critical role in movement-building. Online communities create a space for all voices, enabling visibility to those that have been historically overlooked or misrepresented (Haas, 2017). According to Compagny (2018), social media brings confidence to many people who are not scared anymore to say what they think. People are now able to tell their stories more than before. Hashtags have the power to bring attention to and mobilize a large population. Petitions, protests, letters to politicians and those in power are disseminated

through social media, but what brings attention to a movement or a hashtag is the high number of mentions of a hashtag, which is what brings it worldwide attention (Khan-Ibarra, 2015).

If going to the streets used to be the only way to protest, the rise of the Internet has changed the game. Today, 4.028 billion people are internet users and 3.196 billion are active social media consumers. This represents 53% and 42% of the world population, respectively (Compagny, 2018). It is, however, important to note that even though we have a huge number of the world's population using the internet and social media, it is not all of them who can be categorised as social media activists. As noted by Khan-Ibarra (2015), people who are activists offline tend to use social media activism as online and offline organizing strategies. They are committed to a cause, part of a movement and stick to the issue until there is change. It has been a major force behind many social changes, debates, mass movements and creating activist groups (Mukherjee, 2016).

Liou (2013) agreed that around the globe, social media tools have aided in fuelling social movements. Social media has been shown to strengthen social actors' ability to challenge and change power relations in society, providing platforms for debate, reflection, influencing and mobilizing people. Whether your objectives are uniting your supporters, educating the public, amplifying marginalized voice for success, starting well-informed conversations, seizing public attention around these issues, or raising mounting efforts, social media can be an additional technique to further your organisation's mission (Haas, 2017). Some of the social media campaigns that have been successful over the years include #MeToo, #TimesUp, #HeforShe #WhyIStayed #BlackLivesMatter, [#MenAreTrash](#), #EndSars, and in Ghana, #FixTheCountry. In Ghana, other groups like "PepperDem Ministries", "tell it moms", "tell it dads", "the StandPoint" et cetera, have also emerged in a similar direction so that the issues of violence in the home can be in the public domain and appropriate solution given. However, nowadays, social media and the internet are not adequate yet to create real

changes; even though they are crucial for a worldwide movement. Without the protest marches, the intervention of experts on TV sets or during radio shows, and the intervention of other media, there are few chances of getting reactions (Compagny, 2018).

Social Media and Hashtag Activism

According to Sharma (2017), the trivial means of keeping in touch with friends, sharing photos and jokes, has developed into a force for societal change which shines a light on subjects' previously unknown, deepening conversations and empowering citizens of the world to unite and effect change in several ways. Social media can now be seen as more powerful than it was perceived. Vardhan (2017) also added that social media has become so powerful today that in the face of any incidents social media becomes the voice of people. Everyone starts sharing, tweeting, '#hashtaging' their views, rage, and demand for justice on social media. There have been innumerable instances where social media activities have been the root cause of social concern, widespread debate and discussion, and social upsurge and where they have been the strongest tool behind all kinds of the social activism-based campaign (Mukherjee, 2016).

Activism mostly starts with one or a few people but social media has given it the platform to reach more people rapidly. Gretzel (2017) noted that the network ties visible in social media and the ability to identify and target like-minded others help activism spread more quickly. Also, Cammaerts (2015) maintained the fact that since social media has a wide reach, social media activism is extremely conspicuous to others and can rapidly spread beyond individuals and beyond local communities. According to Peuchaud (2014), the unsettling prospect of activism should not be taken for granted, digital activism carries real risk and enormous potential. This is mostly through getting the word out to a very large networked population and also social media can aid activists to attract hefty crowds to a protest.

Digital Activism is another way of describing social media activism and this according to

Mukherjee (2016), has completely revolutionized the area of ICT and has created a platform that is more interactive, participatory, trackable and measurable and most importantly a very strong tool of mass sharing of ideas and viewpoints, resulting in the formation of very strong and active opinion groups or activists or advocacy groups. Among the various meanings and interpretations given to social media activism is the one by Gretzel (2017); according to him, social media activism is a form of cyberactivism that takes advantage of social media affordances to reach its cause-related goals. Over the years, the users of social media have engaged in several campaigns and activism online but according to Kilgo, Lough and Riedl (2017), one of the most successful social media activism examples is the “Ice bucket challenge”. This campaign asked user of social media to upload videos of themselves pouring a bucket of ice over their heads or having someone else do it for them to raise awareness of the disease ALS and encourage donations. Anderson, Toor, Rainie and Smith (2018) added that the rise of the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag and others like #MeToo and #MAGA (Make America Great Again) initiated a broader conversation about the efficacy and viability of using social media for political engagement and social activism. Due to the evolution of technology, there are new forms of protest and activism that have emerged such as tweet-activism, hacktivism, among others (Briscoe & Gupta, 2016).

Social Media in Addressing Domestic Violence

The role Information Communication Technology (ICT) plays in the current generation cannot be taken for granted; according to Mirani, Pannu and Malhotra (2014), new ICTs have emerged as strong tools for social engagement. It plays a vital role in shaping social movements, raising awareness and ultimately giving rise to a voice-setting ground for activism and citizen journalism. Social media has transformed the landscape of how information is shared globally and the relationship between citizens and

governments (Shirky, 2011). Also, its explosion and exceptional use by women represent vital prospects to convey gender equality and women’s rights issues to the forefront of both policy-making and media attention (Loiseau & Nowacka, 2015).

Hashtags tend to spring up now and then to address one issue related to domestic violence. This is often used as a medium to get people involved in the discussion and possibly proffers solutions to the problem. As noted by Kangerea, Kemitare and Lori (2017), a global wave of awareness and action on violence against women (VAW) is emerging from campaigns such as #EverydaySexism, #UrgentAction4Women, and #EndFGM (female genital mutilation), opening new opportunities for feminist movement building. Another hashtag that gained popularity a couple of years ago was #WhyIStayed. This according to Sharma (2017), started at the grassroots levels.

Also, social media tools have helped female victims to share their experiences of violence with other victims, creating a space to exchange knowledge and information on their rights, legal processes and welfare services (Loiseau & Nowacka, 2015). This argument shows various views of researchers (Chakrabart, 2013; Kangerea, Kemitare and Lori, 2017; Loiseau & Lori, 2017; Mukherjee, 2016; Sharma, 2017; SATF, 2014 and Vardhan, 2017) on the fact that social media has given an avenue to the victims of domestic violence to make their stories heard. Smith (2014) also added that social media and particularly Facebook is one of the strongest platforms where amongst all world-wide issues, violence against women related issues find the most supporters.

According to Mukherjee (2016), a term that is highly being discussed on various platforms is violence against women. To Shirky (2011), social media activism is effective when it is used as a tool to coordinate real-world action rather than as a replacement for it. Tan et al (2013), Liou (2013) and Theocharis et al (2014) have all investigated how social media can be used as a mobilization tool. Mukherjee (2016) and Linabary, Corple, and Cooky (2019) have

both looked at the activities of feminists in digital space. However, few studies looked at how online activities translate to offline events and how the two can work together to bring change. Also, the focus of these studies was in America, Europe and Asia with little attention on Africa and Ghana. Few studies done in Africa like Ajayi and Soyinka-Airewele (2018), Uwalaka and Watkins (2018), Loiseau and Nowacka (2015), and Pratt (2015) even though explored various issues related to social media mobilization and activism, they have not fully addressed issues of domestic violence. This study, therefore, explores the collaborative use of social media in activism and offline campaigns in the fight against domestic violence in Ghana.

II. METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

The study seeks to describe how activists on social media make use of Facebook in engaging their audience on issues of domestic violence that they experience in their daily lives. Data was collected by examining posts (text, images, videos, and links) of activists on Facebook through cyber ethnography and analysing qualitative interviews gathered from respondents. This latter led to the creation of themes that furthered the analysis. These qualitative research approaches help to explore and understand the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem (Creswell, 2014). Similarly, various studies like Ajayi and Soyinka-Airewele (2018), Butler (2011), (Heise, Ellsberg and Gottmoeller (2002), Linabary, Corple, and Cooky (2019), Mukherjee (2016), Thakur and De (2016), and Uwalaka and Watkins (2018) on mobilisation functions of social media and domestic violence made use of qualitative approach and this offered the opportunity to identify, explore and explain the attitudes, actions and perceptions of people on the subject matter hence, this current study also used the qualitative approach. In qualitative data collection, purposeful sampling is used so that individuals are selected because they have experienced the central phenomenon (Creswell, 2009). This was the sampling method used together with snowballing.

In this study, post by the seven activists and feminists who were interviewed were gathered for onward analyses. As noted by Cresswell (2013), for qualitative studies, interviews with six to eight respondents are enough to elicit views and opinions from participants. Posts gathered are in various forms that are related to the study. Also, the study gathered posts that are related to domestic violence from the social media activist groups like the PepperDem and The StandPoint. Within the period of six months (Weinstein & Ventres, 2000), a total of 2,281 posts consisting of pictures, texts, pictures with texts, videos and links were gathered from the respondents' Facebook accounts. These data were analysed thematically based on the theories guiding the study; the social capital theory, social network theory and resource mobilisation theory.

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Attention was given to DV activists on Facebook. Facebook is one of the most broadly used SM network sites in Ghana. According to a study by Ocansey, Ametepe, and Oduro (2016), 93.5% of the respondents preferred Facebook to any other type of social media.

Facebook Posts

Table 1: Facebook posts related to Domestic Violence (January 2020- June 2020)

Respondents	Total posts	Posts related to DV	Per centage
R1	487	67	13.8
R2	384	44	11.5
R3	388	41	10.6
R4	322	54	16.8
R5	188	64	34.6
R6	102	39	38.2
R7	410	89	21.7
Total	2281	398	17.45

Source: Cyber ethnography on Facebook

Through the sharing of messages, some activists can achieve their aim of creating awareness. Ofori-Parku and Moscato (2018), noted that activists can broaden their reach through message gathering, modification,

rebroadcasting, or replying within the context of more extensive conversations. The study, therefore, gathered data through cyber-ethnography to know the frequency of posts by the seven activists interviewed. Also, a comparison was made between the total posts made and the percentage related to DV. As seen in the table, R1 had the most post; a total of 487. These posts were seen in various forms including just texts, pictures, texts and pictures, links and videos. Out of the total of 487 posts only 67 of those posts, representing 13.8% are related to DV.

These are posts either rebuking the act as done by someone or educating Facebook users on the causes and effects of DV. R7 also made a lot of posts within the period of study. As seen in the table above, 410 posts were made and only 89, representing 21.7% are posts related to DV. Even though R1 had the most posts within the period of study, posts by R6 had more content related to DV. As seen above, out of a total of 103 posts, 39 are related to DV. This represents 38.2% of the entire posts. The percentage here is quite higher than that of R1 even though 487 posts were recorded. This was closely followed by R5 who made a total of 188 posts with 64 (34.6%) being DV-related posts. R4 had 322 with 54 being DV-related, 388 posts were made by R3 and 41 of them were related to DV, R2 made 384 with 44 related to DV.

In total, 2281 posts were made by the seven respondents throughout the investigation and only 398 of these posts are related to DV. This is representing 17.45% of the posts. The implication of this is that, even though the activists may be active in mobilising people on Facebook to champion the cause of DV, their posts alone does not give a clear indication of their activities. Also, due to the existence of COVID-19 within the period of data collection, most of the posts by these respondents were around the global pandemic.

Posts that Demystify DV

As noted by Shirazi (2013), SM has made it possible for the oppressed and marginalized groups to voice their demands to bring changes in the legal, political and social scenario

through intense citizens' participation. In the Ghanaian context, patriarchy is visible as an underlying factor encoded in the various ways in which female victims of domestic violence have sought to explain the abuse they have endured (Ajayi & Soyinka, 2018). Patriarchy prescribes roles and power within the domestic setting, authorizes and legitimizes the use of violence. The relationship between such constructs and the normalization of domestic violence is quite obvious. Data gathered showed that most victims of DV have understood it as the norm because the man is allowed to behave in a certain manner considered as acceptable. This can be blamed on the cultural settings that we find ourselves in. In most communities of Africa, the husband is seen as the head of the family and the wife is seen as a subordinate so the wife is not supposed to report the husband regardless of the abuse at home. Hopkins and Ostini (2015) shared a similar view that, in dealing with issues of DV, there is the need to also address the broader cultural, gender and class-based predisposition that covertly blames and shames some victims for the "choices" they make in their real and virtual personal lives. Ellsberg and Heise (2005) have also argued that DV tends to be tolerated in societies where gender roles are harshly imposed and accepted, and where masculinity is conceptualised as dominance, honour and toughness. Also, the study revealed that families tend to encourage women to stay in the marriage as it is seen as a status earned hence must be maintained. In another post gathered from Facebook of R4, parents were encouraged to stop asking their daughters to endure the abuses they are faced within their homes.

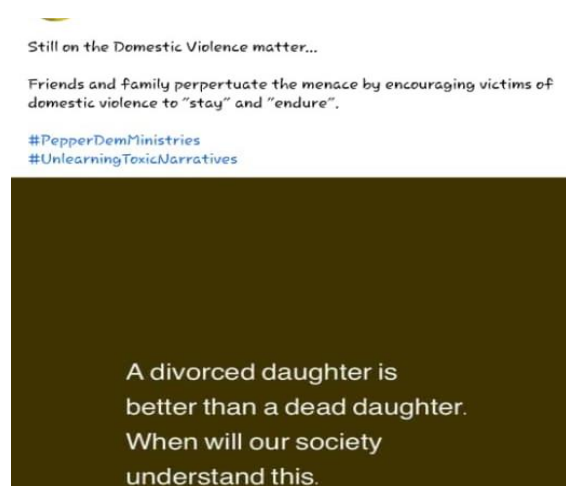


Fig 1: Demystifying DV

Indications from the data gathered showed that most of the victims are not able to identify when they are experiencing DV in their homes. To many, DV is only when your intimate partner physically attacks you. The way forward is to sustain the conversations as people often learn by repetition. This was made clear by all the respondents interviewed. According to them, the most significant way that SM can help in eradicating DV is when the conversation is sustained so that women will understand what truly constitutes DV and also recognize that the dominance of masculinity does not translate to DV. Gender awareness is the immediate concern of our society, where the shackles of the hegemony masculinity can be broken. Gender stereotypes thrive in society and are reinforced via several institutions and media stereotypes (Banerjee & Kakade, 2015). This situation is worsened by the institution of marriage which is perceived as a desirable and essential societal status in Ghana (Ampofo Adomako, 2008).

Another aspect of DV worth discussing is how religion can be used as a reason to initiate abuse on an intimate partner. From the interviews with the activists, they cited various incidences where victims have to remain in the marriage due to their faith and or religious orientation. From what was gathered, various types of religions do not subscribe to divorces in marriage hence they entreat couples to stay together regardless of what they are going through at home. Responses from most of the

respondents show that separations and threats of divorces have been reasons for some of the victims to stay in marriages that are not working. The reason for this is mostly due to the status associated with being married. The implication of this is worsened by the type of religious leaders we have. They often advise couples to stay married. Data gathered from the interviews with the advocates shows that some of the women are still in the marriage because they describe themselves as “Christians” and their faith does not encourage that. The findings of a study by Levitt and Ware (2006) confirms this. They posit that religious leaders possibly deter a woman’s decision to leave an abusive relationship. In a post of one of the social media activist groups shared by R3, the issue of divorce linked to domestic violence was raised. The post also raised how DV is enabled through religion.



Fig 2: Religion and domestic violence

A respondent also noted how her work on social media has helped make people know what DV is for them to seek the needed assistance.

“I have noticed that apart from the work that I have to do from the office which is the physical one, social media one has also been very helpful for me in the workplace like in terms of reaching more people and changing mindset and letting people understand some of the things that constitute violence and harassment”.

DV has been shown to exist in various forms in most societies throughout the world; indeed, it is a global phenomenon. Nonetheless, the acceptability of DV varies across cultural groups due to a culture's perception of DV behaviours (Kohlman, et al., 2014). The findings of this study were also in this direction. Most of the respondents shared their views on how the Ghanaian culture has kept women in abusive marriages and relationships. To some married women, they will rather stay in an abusive marriage than be a divorcee. The stigma associated with a failed marriage is often too devastating for them to handle so parents will rather encourage their daughters to remain in the marriage. According to Ahrens, Rios-Mandel, Isas and del Carmen (2010), the predisposition for several cultures to value family secrecy and prioritize the good of the family above that of the individual, denoted as familism, leads to the continued acceptance of abusive behaviour. In the interview conducted with R1, she shared the feedback she got from a victim.

"a Muslim victim once asked me to drop the case of abuse I was pursuing with her because she does not want to be divorced and disgrace her family. She said after speaking to her Iman, she now wants the case to be solved at home"

Funding Activism

The need for funds and resources is identified as vital in making sure that online activities translate to offline events. This is well explained by the Resource Mobilisation Theory (RMT) which puts resources at the centre of the analysis of social movement. It also stresses the movement member's ability to acquire resources and mobilize people toward achieving the movement's goals (McCarthy and Zald, 1977). There is therefore the need to use SM to connect not just with the victims of DV but also with resourceful people who can offer human capital, social capital and financial capital. RMT also assists in understanding how social movements turn bystanders into constituents (donors of resources), and subsequently constituents into adherents who are active participants of social change. As opined by

Mundt, Ross and Burnett (2018), social media can be used as a platform to connect with better-resourced groups and to put out appeals for donations or requests for precise resources desired for their events.

The finding of this study also highlights a similar issue as most of the respondents mentioned the usefulness of SM in assisting them to raise the resources necessary to organise events and or campaigns. Through the posts that are made by the activists, other interested people can reach out to them and offer the kind of support they can give. These supports according to the respondents comes in the forms of money and other pro-bono services. According to a respondent, SM has helped raise funds.

...this is how we can reach out; this is how we can build and ensure that what we do online translate offline. So, yea, SM is great for communication but it is also very important for the raising of money because the raising of money and raising of logistics is huge when it comes to dealing with DV cases.

A study by Sommerfeldt (2011) shows that activist groups utilize digital media to generate monetary donations for their work. This agrees with the responses derived from some of the respondents who are members of PDM. They made it clear that the group make use of social media to solicit funds for their works. Activists over the years have identified the role SM plays in raising funds and this has pushed individuals and groups to leverage on this. The emergence of funding websites like GoFundMe.com has made this a lot easier for activists. GoFundMe is a donation-based crowdfunding platform that permits individuals and/or groups to raise money for events ranging from life events such as celebrations and graduations to challenging circumstances like illnesses and emergencies (Akhlaghpour & Vaast, 2017). According to Mundt, Ross and Burnett (2018), some groups have now formalized fundraising platforms on their profiles through the introduction of "donate now" buttons and links to other donation sites. Below is the response from R6 on how social media is used for fundraising.

“Social media is a great way to bring people to donate money towards the issue of DV. Also, this is how you know a lot of people online are getting involved in what we do as activists. When there is a particular issue that we want to do something further about, this is how we can raise money, this is how we can reach out, this is how we can build and ensure that what we do online translate offline”

Another method of soliciting funds from users of Facebook is through the use of mobile money. This is when a particular phone number is given out to people who are willing to send their contributions. Monies gathered in this manner are then used for the particular cause identified. In a post by a respondent, she reached out to users of Facebook to donate to the support of a particular victim of DV. This is seen in the extract below.

I am back again to ask for your help. This woman's situation has gotten worse and she is asking for your help via donations so that she can get her family to safety. No donation is too small.

Please share. ❤️

A mother of 4 facing increased abuse and violence on herself by her partner during this period is asking for the public's help in getting herself and her children to safety.

Kindly donate to momo # 05933790380, Account name is Majida Amadu.

Thank you!

Update: We have reached our target of 2400 cedis. We received 29 donations today. All these donations when added to the donations from the previous drive helped us reach our target. Thank you all for donating. 💜💜💜

Fig 2: Activist mobilising funds on Facebook

Collaborations and Advocacy

Some of the most effective movements utilised social media and online actions to amass support and combine it with “leg work” on the ground, not just talking the talk, but also walking the walk (Rees, 2020). It was evident that the works of feminists and activists do not end on Facebook. Most of the respondents mentioned that they meet either as a member of a group, an affiliate or a member of a feminist network. Through these meetings, they discuss pressing issues regarding the way women are enduring DV, strategies needed to help victims and generally to share ideas on the way forward to empower oppressed victims of DV. Also, due to the nature of the work of some of the respondents, they use their respective platforms

to give the issues of DV better attention. According to two of the respondents who are journalists and talk show hostesses, through their online activities, they are being invited to other traditional media like the radio and television alongside other experts to discuss issues of DV.

Through recognition of our online relevance, we've been able to convene meetings and host radio shows as well as engage traditional media and serve on panels aimed at addressing these and other issues of concern to women.

Another respondent, who has a talk show with a huge following mentioned how her platform has been helpful for a lot of activists and feminists in empowering women on the issues of DV and other related matters.

I give them a platform on my program “The Standpoint” to come and share whatever it is they do and some of the challenges they are facing in terms of groups that they need to reach out to. Aside from the kind of supports and collaborations the activists have with the media, they also work with other organisations and government institutions in assisting the victims of DV. From what was gathered, there are a lot of organisations that are interested in issues of DV and as such they come in to assist the activists in achieving their goals. The role of these organisations is considered to be very significant in the fight against DV. The interview with one of the respondents showed the kind of success her network was able to achieve through collaborations with other organisations. According to her;

We have joined forces with groups like the Coalition Against Sexual Abuse (CASA) in furthering various campaigns notable being the campaign to obtain justice for a victim who was raped and had her attacker exonerated supposedly by the gods in their town. We joined CASA in petitioning the Attorney General to step in the case to ensure justice is delivered while also raising funds to support the survivor and her family.

There is a tall list of organisations and groups that the respondents have been collaborating with on several causes related to DV. Among those stated are PepperDem Ministries (PDM),

FEMNET, The Domestic Violence Coalition of Ghana, International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA), Alliance for Women in Media, Africa (AWMA), African Women Communication and Development Network (AWCDN), Coalition Against Sexual Abuse, The African Women Development Funds, Ark Foundation, DOVVSU". All these groups and organisations also have social media presence hence monitor the works of these activists. Respondents made it known that some of these organisations reach out to them when there is the need to carry out a campaign. This according to them is done because of the huge followership the various activists have on SM. In making sure that the issues of DV are eradicated, the activists, in turn, work with these organisations too. In an interview with R4, she shared how she can work with some other organisations together with her group.

We do work with DOVSSU because we know that in as much as creating the awareness is important, we also know that we have to ensure that this translates to actions on the ground as well so we work with DOVSSU, Ark Foundation. So PDM works with Ark Foundation and DOVSSU to help victims. We also have a support base of lawyers that we touch base with especially when the rape victims need legal assistance, and they need it pronto. So, for the past three years, PDM has been able to build quite a network of resources and logistics that we can lean on when we need to help someone.

Through recognition of the online relevance of most of the respondents, they have been able to convene meetings and host radio shows as well as engage traditional media and serve on panels aimed at addressing DV and other issues of concern to women. Four of the seven respondents all mentioned several programmes they have been guests on. These are programmes that discuss general issues of women empowerment of which DV has always been part of the discussion. Also, a respondent mentioned how she uses her platform to assist other feminists and activists with their work. She mentioned that her talk show has allowed several people to come and talk about what they

do, raise awareness and share some of the challenges they face. This according to her is beyond the activities that are done online. Meeting with other activists through her talk show creates room for more networks to be built.

IV. MEETINGS

As contended by Valenzuela (2013), social movements need to make a connection between online and offline environments to realize the desired social change. One of the major ways in which this connection is made is through intermittent meetings held by the activists. It can be meeting among activists, meetings with victims or those in need of assistance, meetings with the general public, or with other agencies and organisations that they collaborate with. For individual activists who work with other groups or are members of a group, there are instances that they need to meet in person to deliberate on issues concerning their activism. However, due to the global pandemic; Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), most often, these meetings are done on the same SM space as Facebook. From data gathered from some of the activists who are members of PeeperDem Ministries, they made it clear that their meetings are no more regular due to the global pandemic of COVID-19.

At least before COVID-19, we have various meetings offline as well. At PDM we meet periodically, every once in a while, to touch base and see if we are doing okay. Activism is not easy work so we need to meet every once in a while, to make sure we are doing okay.

In a different interview, one of the respondents made it clear that whatever is done online does not end there. According to her, there is a need to meet offline and take strategic steps in achieving their goals.

I'm not one of those who believe that SM groups work just online you know you will have to transfer from SM to the physical meetings.

In trying to understand the importance of meeting offline, a respondent made it known that the activists meet normally to have discussions on a lot of issues. When they meet,

pressing issues with the group offline and online are discussed. Another form of meeting done offline comes in ways of assistance offered by the various organisations that collaborate with activists and feminists. Among the organisations mentioned by the respondents are DOVSSU, FIDA, Ark Foundation, AWCDN, and the rest.

V. CONCLUSION

The study establishes that the works of the activists have brought them into contact with a lot of victims of DV online. With this connection being established, the victims tend to develop some level of trust for them and therefore share their challenges with the activists with the hope of getting the sort of assistance that they need. Social Capital Theory suggests the importance of creating a network that is mostly built on trust and reciprocity. Also, only a few of the posts by the activists were focused on issues related to DV and this was mostly due to the period of data collection as the activists mostly shared posts related to COVID-19. Additionally, it can be concluded that SM is a vital instrument in funding DV activism. With posts and links shared, activists are able to gather resources that they use to assist victims. Finally, offline campaigns were identified as essential in achieving success in eradicating DV. Through meetings, collaborations, and advocacy, activists are now able to extend their works from online to traditional media and other forms of face-to-face meetings to yield the desired results.

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