The Beacon of Collective Hope: Mixed Method Study on the Participation of Indian Youth with Regard to Mass Demonstrations Fueled by Social Activism Media

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Abstract : Rarely does the human mind look at the positive fallout of highly negative events. Positive psychology attempts to emphasize on the strengths and positives for human well-being. The present study examines the underpinning socio-cognitive factors of the protest movements regarding the gang rape case of December 16th, 2012 through the lens of positive psychology. A gamut of negative emotions came to the forum globally: of anger, shame, hatred, violence, death penalty for the perpetrators, amongst other equally strong. In relation to this incident, a number of questions can be raised. Can such a heinous crime have some positive inputs for contemporary society? What is it that has held people to protests for long even when they see faded lines of success in view? This paper explains the constant feeding of protests and continuation of movements by the robust model of Collective Hope by Snyder, a phenomenon unexplored by social psychologists. In this paper, mixed method approach was undertaken. Results confirmed the interaction of various socio-psychological factors that imitated the Snyders model of collective hope. Emergence of major themes was: Sense of Agency, Sense of Worthiness, Social Sharing and Common Grievances and Hope of Collective Efficacy. Statistical analysis (correlation and regression) showed significant relationship between media usage and occurrence of these themes among participants. Media-communication processes and educational theories for development of citizenship behavior can find implications from these results. Theory development as indicated by theorists working in the area of Social Psychology of Protests can be furthered by the direction of research.