



Knowledge Brief

The Role of Digital Social Norms in Shaping Adolescent Attitudes Toward Gender Equity in India

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Table of content

Introduction and Background.....	1
Social and Gender Norms.....	1
Adolescents and Digital Media.....	3
Methodology.....	5
Using the Socio Ecological Model to shift digital social norms.....	5
Discussion and Conclusion.....	12
Way Forward.....	14
Key Recommendations.....	16
References.....	19
About SA-SNALC.....	23

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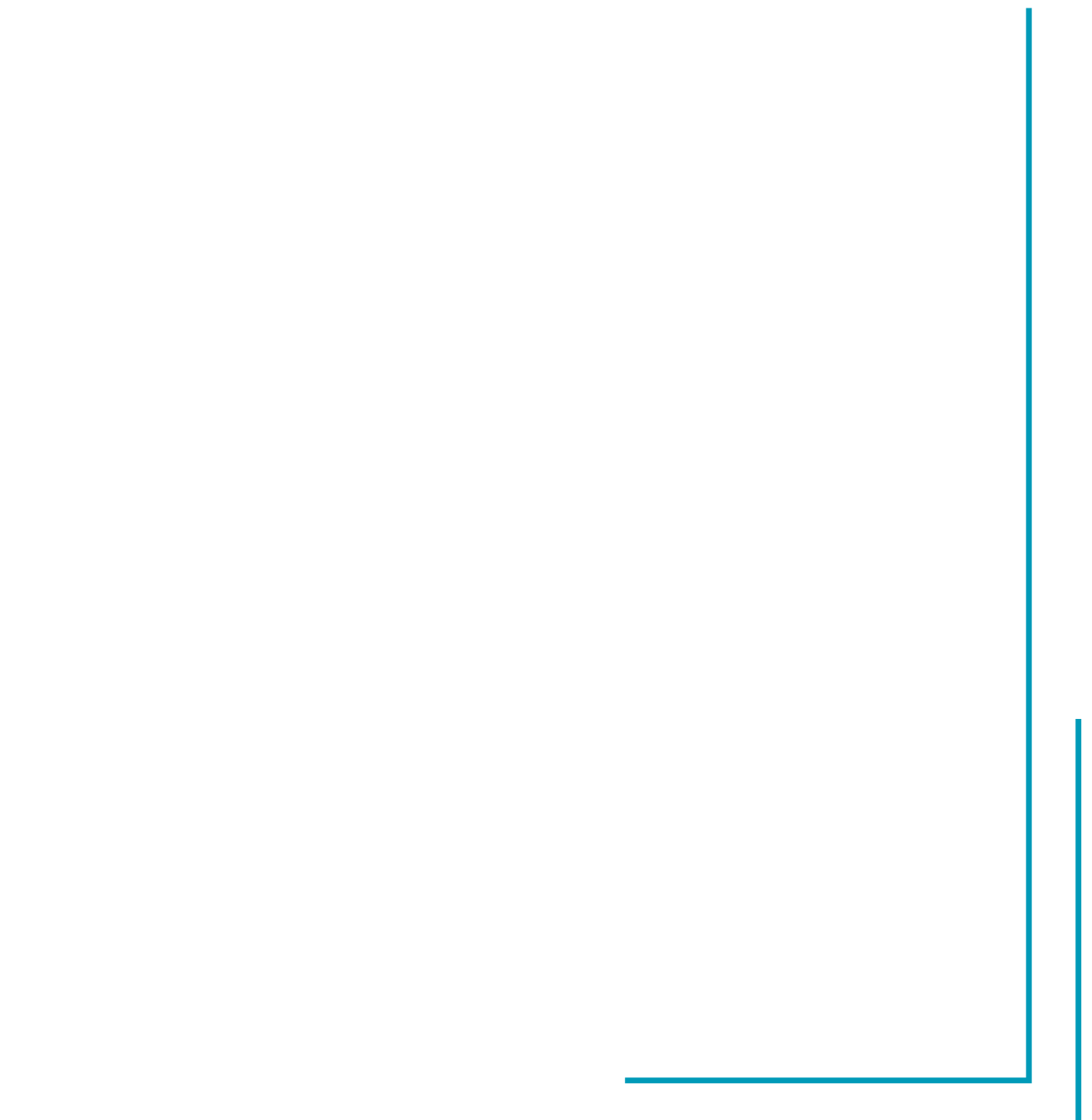
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Introduction and Background

Social and Gender Norms

Social norms are unwritten guidelines shaped by other people's actions and ideas about what ought to be. According to Bicchieri (2017), social norms are defined as, “a rule of behaviour such that individuals prefer to conform to it on condition that they believe that (a) most people in their reference network conform to it (empirical expectation), and (b) that most people in their reference network believe they ought to conform to it (normative expectation)”. People’s behaviour is affected by both injunctive (perceptions regarding actions preferred favourable within the community) and descriptive norms (perceptions regarding actions prevalent within the community). These norms dictate how people behave in their day to day lives conforming to their belief of what other people in their community are doing or belief about the expectation of certain behaviour/action.

Social norms that define behaviours appropriate for a given gender are known as gender norms. Harper et.al (2020) states that gender norms define how people of different genders are expected to behave themselves and with each other. Gender roles are learned behaviours considered appropriate by the society for one's gender, as prescribed by social and gender norms. Gender discrimination is any exclusion or restriction based on gender that causes difficulties for girls, boys, women, and/or men to recognise, enjoy, or exercise their full and equal human rights. Gender norms and gender roles have a symbiotic relationship, with norms informing and roles reinforcing each other. This cycle frequently results in gender discrimination, because the roles defined by these norms limit the opportunities of individuals, particularly women and gender minorities.

Social and gender norms can have negative consequences when they uphold unjust institutions and encourage behaviour that is harmful. Some social norms encourage the continuation of gender-based disparities in economic participation, sexual and reproductive health, gender-based violence (GBV), and political representation (Dalton et al., 2024). The detrimental gender norms constitute a significant obstacle to gender equality. Altering these norms is essential to transform inequitable dynamics and establish an equal society. Transforming harmful gender norms is a key priority in establishing a world where every woman and girl can live the life she chooses, and where men are free from the constraints of negative social standards and stereotypes of manhood and masculinity (UN Women & Kantar, 2021).

India-Specific Context: Factors Shaping Gender Norms and Digital Access

In India, gender norms and access to digital platforms are deeply influenced by a unique interplay of socio-cultural and economic factors. The caste system, a historical social hierarchy, often intersects with gender to restrict opportunities for women, particularly those from lower castes, reinforcing traditional roles that prioritize domesticity over education or technology use. Religion further shapes these dynamics, with patriarchal interpretations of practices in Hinduism, Islam, and other faiths sometimes limiting women's mobility and access to resources like mobile phones, perceived as threats to family honor (Barboni et al., 2018). Economic disparities amplify these challenges: while urban middle-class women increasingly engage with digital spaces, rural women—where 66% of India's population resides—face stark barriers due to poverty, inadequate infrastructure, and low literacy rates (NFHS-5, 2019-2021). For instance, only 24% of rural women have ever used the internet, compared to 48% of rural men, reflecting both material and normative constraints. These factors create a complex landscape where gender inequity and the digital divide are intertwined, necessitating tailored interventions that address India's diverse social fabric for meaningful change.

Adolescents and Digital Media

The United Nations defines adolescents as individuals between the ages of 10 and 19. Adolescents make up one in five people in India (UNFPA, 2014). Children start interacting with the world in new ways during adolescence, frequently via the influence of social and gender norms. During these years, gender roles may become more established (UNICEF, n.d.). Internet use among adolescents is growing at an increasing rate and two-thirds of Indian Internet users are between the ages of 12 and 29 years old, according to the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMA and Nielsen, 2019). Adolescents today have been called 'digital natives' as they have largely grown up in the digital world.

As the world becomes digitised, social and gender norms are also translated in the digital world. The way adolescents behave online, the way they interact with the content online is dependent on their offline attitudes as well. Online and offline spaces merge into one another, and adolescents' online experiences often reflect their offline lives (Koester et al., 2024). Bibizadeh et al. (2023) assert that the categories 'online' and 'offline' are outdated, as young individuals seamlessly navigate between these two realms. Although the distinction between 'online' and 'offline' lives is more ambiguous, some student participants recognised a divergence in their behaviour between these two realms, with norms considered acceptable in one context not necessarily applicable to the other.

Social media algorithms often work in a way where people are shown more of what they already believe in, thereby, reinforcing the harmful norms. By gathering behavioural data, feed algorithms categorise user preferences and provide consumers with accurate, ongoing information. This information matching progressively produces a strong motivating factor for group polarisation, which is quite likely to result in the creation of echo chambers by excluding alternative viewpoints (Gao Y, Liu F, Gao L, 2023).

The gender digital divide exacerbates the problem that algorithms and echo chambers generate. Adolescents who primarily participate in online platforms may cultivate a distorted perception of social dynamics and relationships, thereby undermining their offline social skills and interactions. This transition may further solidify prevailing gender norms, as boys and girls would be inclined to engage with information that perpetuates conventional roles or discriminatory perspectives associated with their gender. Girls may be more susceptible to the limited perspectives that algorithms perpetuate, which could reinforce traditional roles and stereotypes, if they are unable to interact with a wide range of online content.

The spread of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) is largely unequal in India (Philip, 2018). The National Family Health Survey-5 data (from 2019-2021) evaluated men's and women's internet use for the first time and discovered that barely 33% women in India have ever used the internet, compared to 57% of males. This divide is even more pronounced in rural areas with only 24% of women having ever used the internet as opposed to 48% of men.

Gendered social norms, price, geographical location, and digital knowledge all influence who gets to own and use the gadgets (Oxfam, 2022). The spread of ICT in India is restricted by access to digital infrastructure, broadband services, and digital gadgets. More than the access, digital skills are required to make sure those who have access are able to use it to its full potential. As a result of the existing gender inequalities in society, gender becomes a crucial factor in ownership and use of mobile phones and internet. Social norms dictate that women should maintain their fragility before marriage and thus adolescent girls face restrictions on their access to phones. According to Barboni et al. (2018), phones are viewed as a potential threat to women's reputations, and women's phone use is preferred to be supervised and not in public. Women without access to ICT are more likely to fall behind as change agents and leaders in a fast changing global society (Singh et al., 2019).

To address the urgent need for transforming social and gender norms, it is crucial to recognise the rigid roles that perpetuate inequality, often granting disproportionate access to resources and opportunities to one gender. As adolescents increasingly engage with the internet, their offline behaviours are being shaped by algorithms that create echo chambers, reinforcing existing inequalities. Notably, fewer women are online due to these systemic barriers. Girls' lack of access to digital resources, along with their lower levels of digital literacy, creates a negative feedback loop that maintains the gender digital divide. To break this pattern, bridging this gap must be prioritised, as digital platforms can be pivotal in facilitating a shift in these norms.

The following section will outline norm-shifting interventions that utilise digital platforms. It additionally discusses the efficacy of digital platforms as instruments for norm transformation and their potential to contest and redefine gender norms that affect adolescents' perceptions of gender equity. It highlights established strategies for closing the gender digital divide and discusses norm-shifting interventions aimed at altering social norms using a comprehensive, multi-tiered approach. Utilising the socio-ecological model (SEM) as a framework, the discussion presents examples of norm-shifting interventions at each level of the SEM. The discussion outlines the future trajectory and offers recommendations at individual, interpersonal, community and societal levels.

Methodology

A comprehensive literature review of published articles and grey literature have been carried out for this knowledge brief. A systematic search was conducted in the month of October, 2024 across multiple databases, including PubMed, JSTOR, SpringerLink, Sage Publications, Taylor and Francis and Google Scholar, to identify relevant peer-reviewed articles, research papers, and grey literature. The key search terms included 'Social Norms', 'Digital Spaces', 'Adolescents', 'Attitude', 'Gender Equity', 'Interventions', 'Digital divide'. Studies were included if they were digital interventions targeting social norms or related constructs and were implemented in India and in which the target population was primarily adolescents (10-19). Studies were excluded if they did not involve digital platforms, did not target social norms or related constructs and were not implemented in India. The study was restricted by the absence of comprehensive data to precisely quantify the specific changes in normative behaviours that resulted from the interventions. This presents a challenge in determining the precise extent of the influence of these interventions in shifting social norms. Numerous interventions have been implemented to facilitate norm shift through the utilisation of digital platforms; this brief serves as a compilation of typically implemented strategies across the socio ecological model, and how they work to address gender inequality and discrimination in both online and offline spaces.

Using the Socio Ecological Model to shift digital social norms

The socio-ecological model (SEM) was introduced by Urie Bronfenbrenner who sought to elucidate the ecology of human development, through the examination of the progressive, mutual accommodation between a growing human organism and its changing immediate environments. This process is influenced by the relationships that exist within and between these immediate settings, as well as the larger social contexts. The topological concept of the ecological environment is that it is a nested arrangement of structures, with each structure being contained within the next (Bronfenbrenner & Cornell University, 1977). According to the SEM, an individual's behaviour is part of a dynamic network that includes intrapersonal characteristics, interpersonal processes, institutional elements, community features, and public policies. The interactions between persons and their environment are reciprocal, which means that an individual is impacted by his or her environment, and the environment is influenced by the individual (Salihi et.al., 2015).

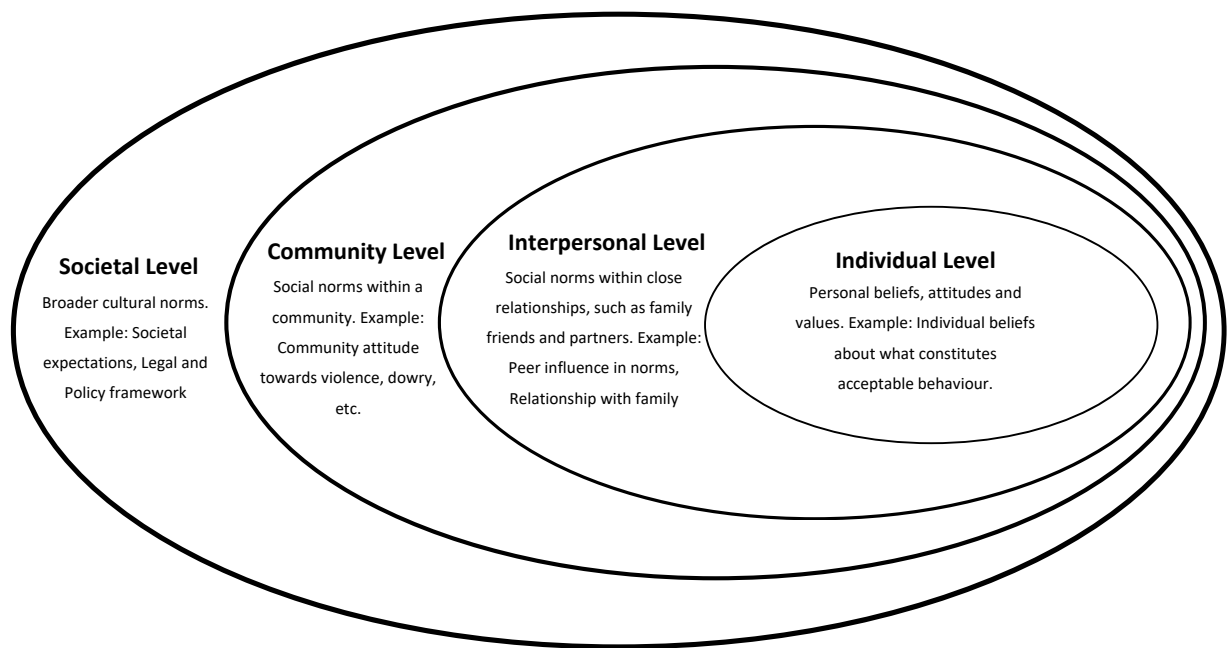
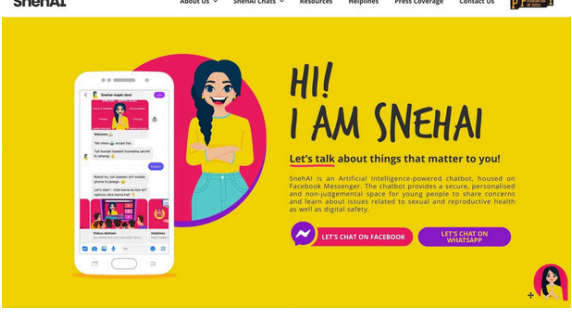





Figure 1: Social Norms across all levels of the SEM. (Adapted from: Frey & Cissna, 2009, Figure 1. The Socio-Ecological Model of Communication and Behaviour Change. (<https://breakthroughactionandresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/socio-ecological-model-of-communication-for-sbc.pdf>))

The SEM was selected for this study to investigate a diverse array of digital elements that influence and contribute to the attitudes of adolescents toward gender equity. The SEM helps in determining the manner in which digital social norms are influenced and reinforced within a particular cultural and social context by analysing the various levels of influence, from individual to societal. This comprehensive perspective enables the creation of targeted interventions that address the underlying causes of gender inequality, including discriminatory practices, detrimental stereotypes, and limited opportunities. Norm shifting interventions targeting social norms through an integrated, multi-level strategy are more likely to be effective (IRH, 2020). A study by Bott et al. (2005) examines multilevel interventions targeting gender-based violence, demonstrating the efficacy of addressing norms, attitudes, and beliefs across all societal levels. The SEM would therefore ensure that the intervention targets not only the individual but also the entire environment that shapes that individual's behaviour.


→ This study will investigate norm-shifting interventions across all levels of the SEM targeting individual behaviours, interpersonal relationships, community norms, and societal structures.

S. No	Level in SEM	Intervention	Implementing Organisation & Year of Launch	Social norm addressed
1	Individual	<p>SnehAI</p>  <p><i>SnehAI</i> is a Facebook Messenger chatbot driven by artificial intelligence (AI). The chatbot gives adolescents a safe, customised, and non-judgmental platform to discuss sexual and reproductive health and digital safety. <i>SnehAI</i>, with built-in Hinglish, employs stories, games, and videos to discuss sexual and reproductive health concerns (About Us – SnehAI, n.d.).</p>	Launched in 2019 by Population Foundation of India	Addresses norms related to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
		<p>Priya Shakti</p>  <p><i>Priya Shakti</i> was created out of a need to challenge patriarchal norms after the Nirbhaya case. The graphic series used Priya, a rape survivor as the superhero who uses her persuasion skills to instigate change within communities by resonating with audiences, particularly the youth, through an empathic story (About — Power of Priya, n.d.).</p>	Launched in 2014 by Rattapallax	Addresses norms around Gender Based Violence

S. No	Level in SEM	Intervention	Implementing Organisation & Year of Launch	Social norm addressed
2	Interpersonal	<p>Love Matters</p>  <p><i>Love Matters</i> India is a premier bilingual internet platform for youth focused on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR). It gives young people essential knowledge to help them negotiate difficult sexual and reproductive health issues. <i>Love Matters</i> uses creative media formats to provide truthful, honest, and unbiased information about love, sexual health, and relationships (DC, n.d.).</p>	Love Matters began in India in 2011, with support of RNW Media	Addresses norms related to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
		<p>MentorToGo</p>  <p><i>Mentor To Go</i> is a digital program offered by a non profit, Mentor Together. Mentor Together offers young people from underprivileged backgrounds inspiring one-on-one mentoring relationships that allow them to overcome inequality of opportunity (Mentor Together, n.d.).</p>	Launched in 2019 by Mentor Together	Addresses norms related to gender socialisation

S. No	Level in SEM	Intervention	Implementing Organisation & Year of Launch	Social norm addressed
3	Community	<p>#IWillGoOut</p>  <p>The <i>#IWillGoOut</i> campaign started in response to the harassment faced by women while accessing public places and the subsequent victim blaming that ensued soon after. It was started online using a facebook page and used the hashtag <i>#IWillGoOut</i> to assert women's access to public places. Along with the facebook message thread, the campaign decided to organise concurrent marches and activities throughout India.</p>	The campaign began in 2016 by a group of individuals and women's rights organizations	The campaign addresses the traditional gender roles that confines women to domestic spaces and limits their mobility
		<p>Chatkarey Zindagi Ke</p>  <p><i>Chatkarey Zindagi Ke</i>, an infotainment series could be another example of a norm shifting intervention on the community level. The series explores a broad spectrum of vital issues including health and nutrition during the first 1000 days of life of pregnant mother, newborn care, family planning and more presented in an engaging and amusing format (<i>Chatkarey (TV Series 2021–) Drama, Family, 2021</i>).</p>	JEEViKA in collaboration with PCI India	The series addresses health and nutrition norms as well as gender specific roles and responsibilities

S. No	Level in SEM	Intervention	Implementing Organisation & Year of Launch	Social norm addressed
3	Community	<p>Mai Kuch Bhi Kar Sakti Hoon</p>  <p><i>Main Kuch Bhi Kar Sakti Hoon</i>, launched in 2014, is a transmedia program that employs television, radio, the internet, and mobile platforms to empower women and influence public perceptions on social determinants of health. The cultural drama series challenges the enduring social norms that impede women's progress and motivates viewers to advocate for their empowerment through its captivating narrative ("Main Kuch Bhi Kar Sakti Hoon (I, a Woman, Can Achieve Anything)," n.d.).</p>	Launched in 2014 by Population Foundation of India	The program addresses several social norms related to child marriage, dowry, education, health and more
4	Societal	<p>SHe-Box</p> 	Launched in 2024 by the Government of India	This initiative addresses norms related to sexual harassment.

S. No	Level in SEM	Intervention	Implementing Organisation & Year of Launch	Social norm addressed
4	Societal	<p>The GoI's Sexual Harassment Electronic Box (<i>She-Box</i>) is an attempt to give all women, whether they are employed in the public or private sector, organised or unorganised, a single point of access to register sexual harassment complaints. Through this platform, any woman who has experienced sexual harassment at work can file a complaint. Following submission to the <i>She-Box</i>, a complaint will be forwarded straight to the relevant body with the authority to investigate the issue. (<i>She-Box</i> MINISTRY OF WOMEN & CHILD DEVELOPMENT GOI, n.d.) To ensure a timely reaction to complaints made on <i>She-Box</i>, each case is routed immediately to the central/state body with jurisdiction over the topic.</p>		
		<p>Bell Bajao</p>  <p>Breakthrough's <i>Bell Bajao</i> campaign could be an example of a norm shifting intervention at the societal level. In 2008, Breakthrough initiated its <i>Bell Bajao!</i> campaign to encourage men and boys, particularly the youth of India, to oppose domestic violence by executing a straightforward bystander intervention—ringing the doorbell upon witnessing domestic violence incidents.</p>	<p>The campaign was launched in 2008 by Breakthrough</p>	<p>The campaign addresses norms related to domestic violence and masculinity</p>

Discussion and Conclusion

Social Norms require communication among group members in order to be created, spread, and enforced (K. Wombacher et al., 2018). In this environment, digital interventions emerge to be potent instruments for norm changing. It can be a useful conversation starter, especially for sensitive themes that are typically avoided in traditional contexts. They provide an opportunity to explore topics that may be forbidden by community gatekeepers. Digital interventions are consistent with the interests of the adolescents providing a familiar and accessible style. These interventions are informal, easy to consume, and can be scaled to reach a wide audience while still maintaining a personal connection with each individual. Additionally, they offer a cost-effective solution for promoting social change. Furthermore, young men who are exposed to these messages exhibit altered attitudes and behaviours as a result of the exploration and scrutiny of formerly taboo debate topics in online public discussions (Philip, 2018). A study by Saha et al. (2022) found a significant association between social media exposure and SRH (Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights) knowledge. Similarly, the Centre for Catalyzing Change (C3) model of adolescent health and digital literacy in Gumla, Jharkhand found that combining digital skills training with life skills resulted in significant increases in adolescent girls' school attendance, educational goals and views about gender norms (South Asia Social Norms and Agency Learning Collaborative, 2023).

Individual-level interventions employing the digital medium, centre upon delivering media content or messages that are aligned with normative attitudes (Lutkenhaus et al., 2023). As mentioned in the previous section, chatbots like *SnehAI* and comics like *Priya Shakti* could be examples of interventions employing the digital medium to shift norms at the individual level. The results of a systematic search and literature review covering the past ten years (2013–2023) by Fetrati et al. (2024) show that chatbots are appreciated for their confidentiality, efficiency, and 24/7 availability and are thus useful tools in sexual health education, persuasion, and assistance. Lutkenhaus et al. (2023) contends that chatbots can be used to encourage information-seeking activities, offer support, change social media users' gender perspectives, and alter injunctive norms (such as utilising interactive quizzes to reinforce healthy sexual habits). The comic *Priya Shakti* makes use of well-known ideas of the legendary gods and goddesses so as to appeal to a large audience by means of familiarity. *Priya's Shakti* alters the perceptions of gender relations in modern Indian society by redefining the archetypal characterisations of gods (Shrivastava, 2018). Chattopadhyay (2017) conducted a study that determined comics as significantly contributing to raising awareness, particularly among younger audiences. Participants in the study asserted that comic books could effectively engage children in educational settings and rural populations through various communication channels; however, the active involvement of community stakeholders was deemed crucial for comic books to convey socially pertinent messages and influence awareness and attitudes.

The interventions at the interpersonal level involve peer interactions inside a closed group. *Love Matters* provides an example of how to implement the peer support technique. *Love matters* uses the social advertising strategy to reach their target audience that resonates effectively with their viewers. It establishes online groups to promote discussions aimed at transforming norms related to sexual health and pleasure through reflective communication (Lutkenhaus et al., 2023). Social advertising pertains to advertisements directed at individuals according to their social networks. The content of social advertisements is customised for individual consumers, using material that directly pertains to their social connections (Zarouali et al., 2018). The *Mentor To Go* initiative employs mentorship sessions to disrupt gender socialisation processes and actively reformulate the goals of women influenced by social and gender norms. According to the policy brief by Gupta (n.d.) grounded on a case study of the *Mentor To Go* initiative, a digital mentoring policy and practice ecosystem can help young women transition from higher education to economic empowerment and active participation in the workforce.

Strategies for altering community-level norms on social media utilise social interconnectedness inside online and/or offline communities to alter norms and engage target audiences. (Lutkenhaus et al., 2023). The *#IWillGoOut* campaign leveraged social interconnectedness to shift norms. Titus (2018) asserts that the campaign's facebook group supported the campaign in two ways. First, it enabled *#IWillGoOut* organisers to plan remotely and gather a massive audience in just a few days. Without a structured funding campaign, Facebook helped the cause spread organically throughout India. Second, Facebook assisted the *#IWillGoOut* movement in breaking down physical boundaries to women's conversations and establishing a community of young feminists. In a short amount of time, the campaign gained offline traction because of its large Facebook network. The edutainment series *Main Kuch Bhi Kr Skti Hun* (MKBKSH) also utilised the connectedness between online communities by engaging audiences through markers in their series and urging them to post their stories on social media. According to Lutkenhaus et al. (2022), as *MKBKSH* Season 3's social media outreach grew, audience members discovered several, low-barrier entry points for narrative involvement across various media platforms. In their study, Lutkenhaus et al. (2022) emphasise that a set of markers were introduced, included to the television series, and pushed on social media. Markers served as points of engagement for tracking how social norms change on crucial problems such as sanitation, family planning, and gender equality. Markers were provided in a variety of appealing and fun media formats, all of which were intended to encourage audiences to engage in meaningful ways. Markers can be used to promote meaningful audience interaction by connecting social media content forms to a corpus of relevant stories. Wang et al. (2021) notes that *MKBKSH* in its initial two seasons, attracted millions of viewers, and research reports suggest that there were changes in attitudes and knowledge. It was also arguably the first entertainment - education program to utilise an interactive voice response system (IVRS) to engage audience members in real time and at scale.

At the societal level, initiatives such as the *SHe-Box* and *Bell Bajao* tries to make a fundamental shift in attitudes and behaviours. *SHe-Box* can challenge entrenched gender stereotypes by allowing women to report harassment, increasing accountability and openness in the workplace. Breakthrough's *Bell Bajao* campaign's cohesive cultural, organisational, and media strategy aimed to incorporate the topic of domestic violence into mainstream discourse; enhance awareness and modify community perceptions regarding domestic violence and HIV-positive women; and transform individual behaviours (Balsarkar, 2021). The *Bell Bajao* initiative was a cultural, organisational, and media campaign rooted in community norms, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours about domestic violence and its intervention. Their communications were designed to engage the entire society, emphasising the modification of men's and boys' conduct. Lapsansky and Chatterjee (2013) observe that Breakthrough's formative research for the *Bell Bajao* campaign indicated that a limited number of individuals intervened upon seeing domestic abuse; nonetheless, of those who did, more than half were men. Through *Bell Bajao*, Breakthrough aimed to emphasise the constructive role of males by depicting their readiness to intervene in defence of women's rights. This depiction of a novel 'manly' behaviour corroborated Breakthrough's research, which identified a widespread yet unacknowledged activity among numerous males. Lapsansky and Chatterjee (2013) further argue that in methods for engaging male audiences and constructing male characters, a balance must be achieved to ensure that both genders are depicted as possessing agency in their decisions, including the formation of their gender identities.

Digital platforms offer an increasing number of opportunities to address and alter social norms, as adolescent engagement in social media continues to increase on a global scale. Adolescents' attitudes are also influenced by social media algorithms, as their online and offline lives frequently converge. For instance, adolescents who begin to consume misogynistic content are more likely to be exposed to such content due to the functioning of social media algorithms. This could potentially result in the radicalisation of their preexisting attitudes (Koester et al., 2024). Rather than viewing social media solely as a risk, Koester et al. (2024) suggest focusing on the specific hazards and positive potentials associated with different types of usage within a defined context. This necessitates comprehending how certain patterns of social media usage correspond with and influence other offline variables.

The convergence of digital interventions and digital literacy is critical in addressing the difficulties that adolescents face, particularly those related to taboo topics. Improving information accessibility and developing digital competencies empower adolescents to access the right information and function as powerful instruments for shifting societal norms. Adolescents, through their engagement with digital information, can contest and alter dominant perceptions around gender equity and health, creating a more inclusive atmosphere. Ultimately, this cultural revolution promotes beneficial societal change while also improving youth health and well-being.

In this landscape, a norm-shifting intervention is a deliberate strategy that aims to alter the social beliefs that motivate and perpetuate detrimental behaviours (Petit & Zalk, 2019). These interventions can effectively engage adolescents in the areas where they are most active by acknowledging the ways in which digital platforms can both reinforce and challenge social norms. Digital Norm shifting interventions require a multi pronged approach. The majority of the interventions discussed here combine aspects of different level approaches, and they make use of a variety of social media tactics that complement other offline program activities to not only change norms but also enhance knowledge, attitudes, and service accessibility.

Way Forward

The advancement of ICT must be enhanced to address the digital divide between genders and regions. Enhancing accessibility, affordability, availability, and awareness is essential to ensure that knowledge is disseminated to all individuals. Technology catalyses creativity and transforms societal norms and culture. Shifting social and gender norms requires changing the message about the kind of behaviour expected from different genders. Since the increase in communication via digital platforms, technology possesses the power of rapid communication and community building, thereby allowing us to highlight concerns like gender discrimination in the media.

Gaps remain in understanding how digital interventions are faring in terms of shifting norms. Limited scholarly attention has been devoted to the processes of designing and developing digital interventions, and how they function in practice. Measuring such interventions is complex, as it must consider the socio-cultural context to evaluate the efficacy of the initiative. Simultaneously, additional research is required to comprehend the societal norms regulating women's cell phone usage, as these norms may impede the developmental potential of mobile technology. There is also a lack of research on how to use algorithms in favour of positive norms.

Key Recommendations

Individual Level

- Equip adolescents with life skills and digital literacy through targeted programs.
- The Ministry of Education should integrate digital skills training into school curricula, focusing on critical evaluation of online content to help teens identify echo chambers and resist radicalization.
- Offer after-school workshops, empowering adolescents to leverage platforms for personal growth and challenge harmful gender norms.

Key Recommendations

Interpersonal Level

- Establish mentorship networks to provide adolescents with role models who guide them through social and gender norms.
- Design and implement digital mentoring programs, pairing youth with mentors who model egalitarian values. These networks can build social capital, connecting mentees to opportunities and encouraging families to adopt progressive attitudes, supported by funding from corporate social responsibility initiatives.

Community Level

- Leverage online and offline social capital to shift community norms.
- Launch campaigns like #IWillGoOut, using social media to engage large audiences in co-creating content (e.g., tagging, sharing) and organizing local events like marches.
- The Government of India can ensure rural communities are reached through mobile outreach units that combine digital access with norm-shifting discussions.

Key Recommendations

Societal Level

- Bridge the gender digital divide by ensuring accessibility, affordability, availability, and awareness of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT).
- Government should subsidize internet and device costs for rural women and girls, aiming to increase female internet usage by 20% within five years.
- Government should initiate nationwide digital literacy campaigns, training 10 million women by 2030 to use ICT for education and advocacy, while holding platforms accountable for curbing harmful content through stricter algorithm oversight.
- Government departments may prioritize digital competency programs for educators and youth workers, preparing them to navigate a communication-driven society.
- Tech companies must enhance platform accountability, not just removing harmful content but also refining algorithms to promote diverse, equity-focused narratives, with progress audited annually by independent bodies.

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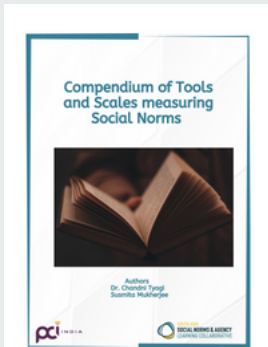
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ABOUT SA-SNALC

Working together to co-create and amplify learnings from social norms programming and research

COMPENDIUM OF SCALES AND TOOLS MEASURING SOCIAL NORMS



A heuristic compilation of scales and tools measuring social norms to aid researchers & practitioners in measurement & evaluation.

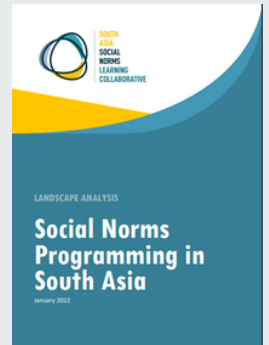
Includes an analysis of qualitative and quantitative tools by

- Suitability to research designs
- Length of the measure
- Key features and limitations

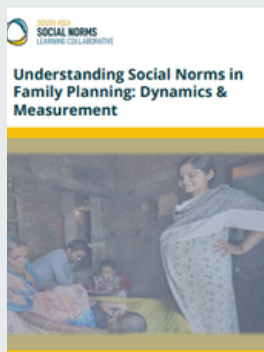
LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS FOCUSED ON

- WASH
- Health
- Nutrition
- Gender

This document has detailed some of the efforts in South Asia to improve the four themes through the lens of social norms programming



EVIDENCE BASED TOOLKIT TO



The report highlights how social norms, including gender roles and son preference, shape family planning behaviours. It discusses measurement methods and recommends SBCC strategies to promote positive family planning practices.

The South Asia Social Norms & Agency Learning Collaborative (SA-SNALC) is a platform of institutions and individuals who are researchers, practitioners, and enthusiasts working in the domain of social norms & agency.

OUR WORK

Events

Our events including webinars and workshops amplify evidence, learning and experiences.

Critical Conversations

Academics, practitioners, grassroots experts share their insight & best practices on social norms programming & research

Case Studies

Documented evidences that inform norm shifting interventions at the grassroots in the South Asia region.

Knowledge Products

Technical pieces, blogs, newsletters, etc that play a pivotal role in steering the conversations on social norms



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