Media, Communication and Secure Online Communication Training Report

Venue: Raigarh, Chhattisgarh
Date: 6th November 2016

INTRODUCTION

Digital Empowerment Foundation conducted one-day training on use of ICTs, Social Media and Secure Online Communication for environmental human rights defenders in collaboration with Amnesty International India in Raigarh, Chattisgarh. Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) were trained on tools and strategies to use traditional and digital media in their activism

There were about 40 participants (35 male & 5 female) belonging to tribal community who are fighting against illegal coal mining. Most of them had little or no knowledge of how to use internet and social media for their advocacy and smartphones for effective communication.

The first hour was dedicated to an ice-breaking exercise aimed at establishing a level of comfort amongst the participants and between the facilitators and participants.

SESSION 1:   USE OF EMERGING ICTS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

The first session was on the "Use of emerging ICTs and social media for human rights monitoring, campaign and advocacy". The idea behind the session was to give a comprehensive overview to human rights defenders on digital technologies which they can use in their campaigns and advocacy.

The session was conducted by Mr. Ravi Guria, *Head Media and Communications, Digital Empowerment Foundation*, who spoke about better outreach and deeper dissemination of information/activities using social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter. He added that the winning formula is to have a storyline with character, conflict or desire, even if it's very short.

Various group activities were conducted during the workshop to introduce the participants to integral components of digital storytelling and digital communication skills. The interactive sessions throughout the workshop threw a spotlight on social media management, strategies, digital content creation & curation, research & analysis for content, learnings from best practices, and knowledge of emerging technology & applications.

The discussions and exercises helped encourage participants to apply social media tools and learnings of the workshop for personal and professional purposes. The participants also shared examples from their experiences and explored how they could social media to make those campaigns better.

SESSION 2: SECURE ONLINE COMMUNICATIONS

This session aimed to educate the participants about digital security. This session was conducted by Ms. Ritu Srivastava, Head – Research and Advocacy and Ms. Eshita Mukherjee, Officer – Research and Advocacy, Digital Empowerment Foundation.

The discussion started with discussion on privacy and why it is important for human rights defenders.

Most of the participants were not aware of the basic privacy and security settings on various social media platforms and search engines; they were taught how to enable privacy settings and secure their content.

They were also educated about the importance of connecting to website over secured channels (HTTPS) and were introduced to Signal which is a smartphone-based secure messaging applications. The participants were sensitised to the importance of using anti-virus software to increase their digital security. The importance of secure data deletion was also introduced along with the practical application of CCleaner.

Hands-on trainings was provided on how to generate a secure passphrase instead of a password. Various group activities were conducted to highlight the importance of safe and secure passphrase creation.

At the end of the workshop, participants left with the understanding and need to integrate Facebook and Twitter for all external communication to maximise reach and impact. The participants also left with better knowledge on strategizing effective social media presence. It helped build confidence among the participants to efficiently manage their online channels, curate and publish quality content to increase their reach and create impactful and effective content. . They were also provided hands-on training to protect themselves online.