

SPACE 2.0

Human Rights, social justice, feminism & ICTs

Exercise: Understanding impact of human rights & rights based approach

Group 1

Time available: 20 minutes

Objective: The objective of this exercise is to develop an understanding on how human rights are impacted by the internet and digital technologies, both positively and negatively, and how to analyse ICT issues from a human rights-based approach.

Instructions:

Please ensure that all the people in your group are present.
Read the questions below carefully and take 5 minutes to think about your responses.
Take turns to respond to each question in the group.
Paste your answers in the exercise sheet once there is consensus among the group.
Please ensure all participants in the breakout have a chance to be part of the discussion.
It is completely alright if you cannot get through all of the questions.

Exercise:

Internet shutdowns

Communal tensions have flared up in your state. A lot of these tensions have been stoked over social media, with majoritarian voices engaging in threats against women belonging to minority groups with some prominent women in the community being doxxed online. The violence has escalated offline in one neighbourhood, with an armed mob gathering outside the house of an outspoken activist and threatening violence. The commissioner of police announces that initial investigations have indicated that WhatsApp groups and social media is being used to spread misinformation, private details of persons and for coordinating these attacks. They fear that other women might be targeted as well. Although the violence is restricted to a single city, the police

call for a 48 hour internet shutdown in the entire state. The Ministers for Religious Affairs and Gender Justice welcome this move.

The decision is made possible as a result of the new Communications and Multimedia Act in your country, which states that the government can enforce internet shutdowns for up to 30 days without judicial oversight on grounds of "national security" or "public order". The law has been severely criticised by activists, who have called internet shutdowns illegal, citing UN reports, and a violation of human rights. Your country is a signatory to the UDHR, ICCPR and ICESCR.

Responses:

Conduct an analysis on this situation.

I.

What are the various human rights that are impacted by the decision of the state to impose an internet shutdown for 48 hours? List the positive or negative impact to these rights.		
Rights	Positive impact	Negative impact

II.

Who are the different stakeholders who are impacted by this internet shutdown? What has been the impact felt by each group - either positive or negative?			
Stakeholder	Rights improved	Rights deteriorated	Rights unimpacted

III.

Does the intervention of the state empower those affected to claim their rights? Why or why not?	
Stakeholder	Analysis

IV.

Do the provisions of the Multimedia and Communications Act comply with international human rights standards to which the country is subject? Why or why not?
Analysis

V.

Does the law take into account the impact to rights holders, particularly those most subjected to discrimination, marginalisation and vulnerability? Why or why not?
Analysis