

Program Profile

Program	Program name	The Political Economy of Facebook Contents on Property Rights of Hindu Women in Bangladesh as a Campaign Strategy
	Category	A8. Special Topic2: Support for Global Resilience

Summary of Program

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Abstract of Program	Historically, Hindu women have been overlooked when it comes to acquiring property. Women have always been depicted as submissive in Manu's Manusmriti, the creator of Hindu scriptures, and remnants of this can still be found. This research will look at the political economy of the content promoted on social media to advocate for Hindu women's property rights. The study aims to point out the political economy of social media content on Hindu women's property rights in Bangladesh as a campaign strategy. Using political economy theory and agenda setting theory findings of this study will identify how people's concepts about inheritance law are being formed, how they are being expressed, and how they are being disseminated by social media content about inheritance law. The study will scrutinize the political economy of social media content of three Facebook groups.

Details of Program

Planning

Background	The background of the study is related to the notion of the Hindu Women's Rights to Property Act. The struggle of Hindu women for property rights is not new. The law, which has been in effect since 1937, has been amended in India and Nepal but not in Bangladesh, resulting in Hindu women being deprived ever since. Girls are not permitted to inherit property under the Hindu Act of 1937. When a woman becomes a widow with a minor child, she is only entitled to a house. This law has remained unchanged for the past 88 years. Widows have the right to both their husbands' agricultural and non-agricultural lands under the Hindu Women's Rights to Property Act of 1937. However, according to preceding conventions and patriarchal attitudes, widows would not receive property if they had a son, a grandson, or a great-grandson. In Bangladesh, it was decided in 2020 that Hindu widows would be able to own both their husband's agricultural and non-agricultural land. It's not a change in the law, but
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	rather the unveiling of what was already there; it's similar to unveiling a screen. According to the Hindu Women's Property Rights Act of 1937, a widow might have equal property rights with her son in her deceased husband's estate. However, in Bangladesh, the rights are limited to the house where the husband resides; there is no right to any other property. According to Hindu law, the fifth heir of the father's property is his daughter, and a daughter can get the property only if the father's son, grandson, great-grandson, and widow do not exist. In the absence of a son, the unmarried daughter has a higher priority than the married daughter. A married daughter can only inherit property if she has a son. Jugantar (2022, 22 January) addresses that the Supreme Court of India recently upheld the Hindu Succession Act in a landmark decision. According to the ruling, Hindu daughters will have full ownership of their father's property. The verdict also stated that if no will or testament is left before the death, the daughter will inherit all of the Hindu father's assets. In addition, they will be entitled to the father's acquired property and other assets. Hindu girls will now have priority over other family members when it comes to their father's property, according to the 51-page decision. Even if the father dies before 1958, the daughter is still entitled to exercise her rights. According to the law, succession certificates were first used in India in 1956. As a result, the court stated that this order applies to all cases filed before 1956. Furthermore, the judges made it clear in their decision that if the father is a member of the extended family, the daughters will have the same rights over his acquired property as the daughters have over his (father's) property as a member of the extended family. Despite belonging to the same religion, there are different laws in the two countries, resulting in clear signs of women's deprivation in Bangladesh. Moreover, Facebook generates various discourses that play a role in shaping people's perspectives.
Purpose/Goal/Objectives	The objective of this research is to investigate and analyze the political economy of content about Hindu women's property rights in Bangladesh. Specifically, the study aims to: 1. Investigate the nature and the origin of social media posts supporting or opposing Hindu women's inheritance rights. 2. Examine the political and economic interests of individuals or groups participating in the campaign.

		3. Assess how inheritance law campaigns are operated, the arguments made for and against reform, and the underlying motivations of various allies. 4. Examine what kind of public engagement and counter-narratives these campaigns face.
Subject (Names & titles)	Initiator(s)	Sushmita Chakraborty
	Leader(s)	Sushmita Chakraborty
	Team Member	-
Environment	Nature/society	Addresses gender inequality, women's empowerment, and social justice in Bangladesh.
	Industry/market	Impacts media activism, digital campaigning, and legal reform advocacy sectors.
	Government/others	Relevant for policymakers, women's rights organizations, religious leaders, and NGOs advocating for law reform.
Resources	Human requirements	Researchers in media studies, activists, legal experts, and data coders for Facebook analysis.
	Financial requirements	Minimal costs for digital tools, field visits, transcription, and survey administration.
	Technological/other requirements	Access to Facebook analytics, content archiving tools, and qualitative data analysis software
Mechanism	Strategic options available	• Analysis of Facebook groups' content. • Interviews with activists, journalists, and lawyers. • Surveys of engaged audiences.
	Their relative importance	The Facebook discourse analysis is central; interviews and surveys provide depth.
	Their sequences for execution	Document review → 2. Questionnaire & sampling → 3. Data collection → 4. Analysis (themes, discourse, agenda-setting) → 5. Final report & advocacy.
Content		• Focus on Facebook campaigns related to Hindu women's inheritance rights. • Analysis of three groups: <i>Hindu Law</i>, <i>We Want Hindu Law Reform</i>, <i>Committee to Prevent Hindu Law Change</i>. • Theories: Political Economy of Communication & Agenda-Setting. • Methods: Thematic analysis, discourse analysis, political economy mapping, engagement metrics.

	• Sample: 200 comments (2021–2022), 5 interviews, 3 Facebook groups post. • Output: Mapping interests, arguments, and public reactions.
Key Points to highlight from Content	• First-of-its-kind study in Bangladesh. • Links digital activism with legal reform. • Exposes political & economic power structures behind campaigns. • Builds media literacy on agenda-setting via Facebook.
Doing	
Launch date	July 2025
Responsible organization	World University of Bangladesh
Progress as of today	Proposal stage, data collection planned.
Problems in implementation	• Accessing private Facebook content. • Sensitivity of religious debates. • Possible bias in responses.
Approaches to solve the problems	• Use purposive sampling of public groups. • Ensure anonymity of informants. • Apply mixed-method triangulation for reliability.
Completion date, if completed	April 2026
Seeing	
Impacts on students	• Exposure to digital activism and political economy research. • Hands-on training in social media analysis
Impacts on professors and university	• Academic recognition for innovative interdisciplinary research. • Opportunities to publish in gender studies, communication, and law journals.
Responses from industry/market	• NGOs and advocacy groups can adopt insights for campaign strategies. • Journalists and media can use findings for reporting on law reform.
Responses from government	May inform legal reform debates and policy recommendations.
Measurable output	• Research report + publications. • Workshops for students & activists.

	• Policy briefs on Hindu women's inheritance rights.
Cost-benefit analysis for effectiveness	• Costs: Research logistics, data analysis, interviews. • Benefits: Greater awareness, informed activism, gender justice, academic output
Future Planning	
Where does the project go from here?	• Extend study to other minority rights issues (land rights, religious discrimination). • Comparative study with India and Nepal. • Develop media literacy modules for students & NGOs. • Use findings to support law reform advocacy campaigns.