Empowerment of Tribal Community Through Technology: In Perspective of Time

Savita Singh Bhaduria *

*Visiting Lecturer, Department of Sociology, Barakatullah University, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India

Abstract

Studies on tribes in India began during the colonial period with different purposes, But Indian interest visibly emerged in the first decade of the 20th Century. Literature on tribal studies in India has grown to a large extent in the last two decades. The importance of technology in the present age is commensurate. Technology is currently connected to all types of work and human life has become increasingly dynamic. The uses of technology are one of the most important means of development of any place or any society whether it is urban, rural, or tribal. Panna district's total population is 10.17 Lakhs while ST is 16.8% of the total population based on district census report 2011. Almost all areas are rural in nature in Panna district present. This article presents sociological data on the families of villages like Khamri and Majhauli etc. The main concern of the present study is the impact of technology development (Education, smartphone use, and solar panels) on the tribal people in the Panna district of Madhya Pradesh. The result depicts that people of Gond, Rajgond, Sahariya, Raj Thakur, etc. communities are living here. The use of phones and smartphones are the companions of children in the rural area. In the era of modernization, this information technology has little effect on the lives of indigenous people. The way in which digital India a smart City and smart village is been expanded is a modern example. Does technology change their position at home? Does it allow them greater independence and power within the family? How technology empowers them? This study looks into some of these questions.

Keywords: Empowerment, Families, Digital India, Modernization, Knowledge System, Tribal studies, Technology, Women.

Corresponding Author's email id. ssinghmuskan45@gmail.com

Introduction and Background

In India, whether it is land, water, or forest, it has been owned by the residents there. The rights of forest animals, nomadic tribes, and forest dwellers over forests have been recognized by traditions in India. In our social organization, there was a system that a clan, group, or caste group should have a special relationship with the same kind of natural resource sources. There should be a systematic classification of some from the land, especially from animals, some from birds, some from forests, and some from water. There were widespread social law prohibitions, which were universally accepted Humans started using technology with the transformation of natural resources into simple devices (Arnold and Guha, 1995). The discovery of wheels in early civilization was the major invention of mankind's technology. With

the passage of time technology has become very important for human beings for the survival and development of knowledge. Modern communication has separated time and distance. Today, our scope of social relations is not limited to any village or any street in the city.

Many of the science and technology breakthroughs of 20-30 years ago are part of everyday life today. Not only urban women, rural and tribal women in most parts of India have also benefited especially through greater access to information. It offers many solutions to many challenges faced by tribal women. The development level of any society is the measure of how efficiently the society is utilizing the benefits of different development and welfare programs initiated by the governments. Tribals in India have been deprived of opportunities because of many factors. It is widely acknowledged that information and communication technology play a vital role in personal, educational professional for youth in political, economic, and social development (Beteille, 1980).

The first Forays of British colonists into North and Central India in the late 18th century got them in touch with several non-agricultural communities. All these communities were dependent on both land and forest resources for survival and often came into conflict with their rulers in order to meet their needs (Beteille, 1975).

Studies have shown that early British accounts in the region suggest the complex interrelations between Pre-Colonial regimes of natural resources management in the Maratha Period (Cohn, 1987).

In this contact, it is important to remember that the term "Tribe" has been used very loosely for communities which were existed in the "pre-class society." In keeping with this definition many communities that were later described as peasant by Britishers were termed tribes by the accounts of the medieval period. An early article by Chetan Singh describes the role of tribal chieftains in the Mughal administration and clearly identifies warrior and ruling classes of Indigenous kingdoms as period tribal linkages.

The notion that tribes were the original and isolated inhabitants of the forest was useful to colonial officials in their endeavour to take over the fertile planes and Valleys of different parts of the country. (Arnold, 1983) In keeping with this image, they were also described as rather timid, shy, and well-behaved. For example, Briggs remarked in his 'Lecture on the Wild Tribes', "*that they were the best-behaved wiled tribes*". Next, official images in the early and mid-19th Centuries were of the notion that these primitive tribes were essentially any missed forest people who hated the intrusion of outsiders into their lives. For Elwin, the primitive 'was a romantic category' which he described in the following way when he wrote that "*The life of a true aboriginal is simple and happy enriched by natural pleasures. For all their poverty, their days are spent in the beauty of the hills. Women carrying a load do the hilltop cause a moment to see the scene below her. It is the 'sweet forest 'the 'forest of joy and sandal' in which they live*". Various writings on tribal studies show how the colonial officials and the nationalists differed in their perception of tribes in India. Different states of opinion amongst both of them have also been spelled out. During the colonial period, Indian interest visibly immersed in the first decade of the 20th century to study tribes for National cause and define its scope in the Indian context.

Objectives:

This paper attempts to highlight the effectiveness of information

communication technology in improving livelihood and feeling of empowerment for tribal living in Khamri and Majhauli at Panna, and how through phone tribal people interact with and make themselves aware of health as well.

Khamri Village

According to Census 2011 information, Khamri village (Fig. 2) is located 21 km away from sub- district headquarters in Amanganj tehsil of Panna District in Madhya Pradesh, India. As of 2009, States Rampur is the gram panchayat of Khamri village. The total geographical area of the village is 812.01 hectares. Khamri has a total population of 353 people out of which the male population is 184 while the female population is 169. The literacy rate of Khamri village is 25.21% out of which 24.46% of males and 26.04% of females are literate. There are about 70 houses in Khamri village. Amanganj is the nearest town to Khamri for all major economic activities.

Majhauli Village

Majhauli village located in Panna tehsil of Panna district Madhya Pradesh with total 62 families residing has a population of 315 of which 169 are male while 146 are female as per Population Census 2011. Children with age 0-6 years are 41 which makes up 13.02% of the total population of the village. The average sex ratio of this village is 864 which is lower than the Madhya Pradesh state average of 931, the child sex ratio as per census is 1158 higher than the Madhya Pradesh average of 918. It has a lower literacy rate compared to Madhya Pradesh. In 2011 literacy rate of Majhauli village was 52.19% compared to 69.32% in Madhya Pradesh. Most of the village population is from scheduled tribes. Schedule tribe constitutes 93.33% of the total population in Majhauli village. There is no population of scheduled caste in Majhauli village of Panna.

In this village out of the total population, 287 were engaged in work activities. 4.53% of workers describe their work as main work employment or earning more than 6 months. Here, 95.47% were involved in marginal activity providing livelihood for less than 6 months. 287 workers were engaged in mean work. 13 cultivators were owners while zero were agriculture labourers.

Field selection is important to properly point out the objectives of the study and to see the area where to work on it. So, two tribal villages i.e. Khamri and Majhauli of Panna district were brought under study.

Panna Tehsil---Panna

SERIAL NO.	STATE	TOWN	POPULATION
01	Madhya Pradesh	Panna Muncipality	59,019
	VILLAGE	ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION	POPULATION
01	Khamri	Amanganj	353
02	Majhauli	Panna	315

The above villages have been selected to see how indigenous people especially tribal women and girls have been able to add themselves to the Education Empowerment & Exchange Information.

Focus and Scope of the Study

The central focus of the study is the usage of technology among the selected tribal village of Panna district in Madhya Pradesh (Fig. 1). The paper focuses on what are the devices that are used and how effectively they are using the devices. This paper focuses on tribal people but mainly tribal women and girls.

- To understand the smartness among the tribal people based on mobility and phone use.
- Does technology change their position at home?
- Does it allow them greater independence and power within the family?
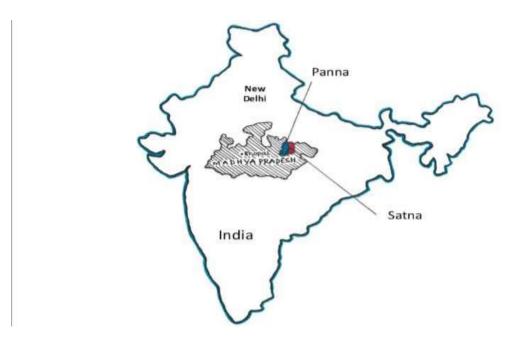- How technology empowers them?

Methodology

For this study, both types of data, i.e, primary and secondary, have been collected from various sources. Primary information has been collected through observational methods and personal interviews as well. During the study on 12th March 2022, a selected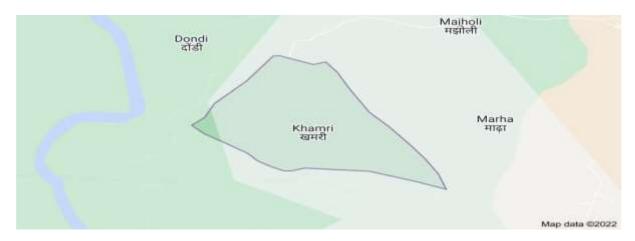 village of the Panna district was visited. A pre-design structure schedule was made to carry on a survey among the local people. All the study was based on observation method and quantitative and qualitative study as well. The observer herself was present at the spot, so she can study the events in depth and subtle and compile only those facts which are related to her study. The interviewer applied questions in the face-to-face situation with the interviewee to make the study Minute, Deep, and Purposive.

Importance of Education in the Empowerment of Tribal Community

This generation's children and youth are future engineers and entrepreneurs, so for development, it is really important to teach students in schools and the benefits of education. It is important for all citizens to have knowledge and information in a digital society although education is available to the city area it is also available to tribal people but not as much as they have the least interest in education but more interest in supporting their parents at work.

Picture No. 1, Village Panna in the Map of India. Source: www. google.com

Picture No. 2, Village Khamri in the Map of India. Source: www.google.com

Although many cultural societies have traditionally assigned some agricultural tasks to men and others to women. The boundaries have eroded as a result of migration or some other factors in search of labour. This has placed a heavier workload on women's adoption rates which are affected by their specific needs and their access to resources. As can be seen in picture No.3 below.

Picture No.3, Heavier Workload on Women's Adoption Rates. Source: Self-Photography

Education plays an important role in the career development of students, women, and children. The uses of mobile with the internet are growing day by day in almost business communication as a medium of grabbing information and for various other purposes or official operations, new technology tools are coming that help women to learn better.

It helps to understand technology that simply can't be seen as much in tribal areas like urban areas. Most tribal girls and women go to fetch water from handpumps or wells. Water connections are available but supply is unavailable.

Indigenous people across the world have been affected by the introduction of technology from foreign cultures for 100 years some have not dramatically changed their way of life, while others have completely changed self-identities and types of societies and World views. Modern technology especially telecommunication and computer technology allows indigenous groups to participate in the largest societies and economies around them As said by a villager, "*kuch yaha rah gaye kuch Dilhi chale gaye , kuch South chale gaye.*"

Picture No.4: Solar Panel, Source: Self- Photography

The tribal people of Majhauli Originally floating settlers migrated from place to place for land and employment. In the early period, they migrated from other places to Panna. The tribal communities in Panna are mainly engaged in agriculture, working as guards at Panna Tiger Reserve and small industrial activities. They are not isolated from the main communities gradually they are learning to cope with it.

After Independence, the situation has changed due to modernization which includes industrialization and urbanization and the implementation of some tribal welfare schemes taken by the central and state governments. To make them advanced and integrated with other people and to introduce themselves to the modern world many developmental programs have been taken, like the installation of solar panels (as depicted in Fig. 4). The welfare schemes inspired them to accept new and modern technology and changed their attitude of thinking.

Tribal societies are primitive societies living from the early period of human history. There has not been any change of tribes in their belief life cycle and religion. Modern communication has separated time and distance but they have their own social functions and festivals where they sing and dance in characteristic body movements in the same dress by girls and males playing on musical gadgets like drums metallic gongs, flutes, etc.

Bai, **"*5 acre khet hai kheti hamai aa karat hai"* new change is accepted. When it was asked aapki bacchi kaha hai?** She replied, "*KishanGarh me bachchi 13vi me padhat hai"* She meant to say, that in Kishan Garh, her ward is in residential college for completing her graduation. This shows women's empowerment in taking and making decisions for their development. So, once they assimilate and adapt a technology that suits them, adapt it to their own taste, then any external technology may become friendly. Is there something worth adjusting to the perception of Swadeshi? In any case, a decision has to be reached only after examining this matter very deeply and very carefully but our contemporary trends seem to be moving in the opposite direction from the direction of Swadeshi and Indianness.

Technology has affected the economy through direct job creation of new services, workforce transformation, and business innovation compared to the industrialized economies. The technology adopted in

tribal economy is much simpler and crude tools are either made by the user himself or acquired for free from craftsmen or from manufacturing groups.

The tribals have indigenous occupations most of which form of occupations over subsistence in nature. The tribes of *Khamri* used to practice several occupations before the introduction of modern technology or globalization. The main occupations of the primitive people were animal husbandry basketry, collection of forest produce, picking, and gathering. Every member of the family collects Charva and Mahua (each day per person one sack), after picking and collecting *Charva and Mahua.* Agents come to their door as it is in demand in the market. It shows that if the market is reaching them then tribals are not isolated. Technology and modernization have influenced the occupation of tribal people they have given up many of their traditional occupations to be influenced by modern technology.

Tribes were in religion which is very much separate from all the other traditional religions of the world most of the tribes in Panna believe that they are Gond, Raj Gond Hindus.

Modern communication technology mobile phones internet services have influenced many young people to alter their traditional occupations or to work with leisure many tribal people nowadays engage in diversified activities.

From the field observation, it is noticed that a household has small shops in their area So, few people are engaged there. Many young male workers now work in other provinces who are mostly engaged in construction work. A few people as now working in nearby Panna Tiger as in the watching tower as carpenters or masons.

For women, there has been a change in income-generating activities in the ruler non-farm actors both tribal and non tribes. These include the following such as Anganwadi karyakarta, preparing meals for the students at nearby districts.

Tribal people of village Khamri, District Panna are also being habituated with the modern means of communication technology. A few studies show that 58% of households have at least a single set of mobile phones. There are few motorbikes (as can be seen below in Picture No.5 behind the lady) by which transportation becomes easier, so many people can afford the nature of livelihood in the present scenario. Today technology is helping as a matter of searching doing and coping with new dimensions towards the development of self, in groups, in society, and as a nation as well. Mobility is seen in villages as old people are confined within their habitat because every human group is an innate and integral part of its district and its surroundings (Picture No.6).

Once, dropout in school was very common but now after the establishment of school up to eight standards. People are becoming educated which influences the rapid group of communication technology. Today, the scope of social relations is not limited to the streets of *Khamri* & *Majhauli* village or city. Modern communication has displaced our spatial relations and spread to the whole world.

Picture No.5, Modern Means of Communication Technology. Source: Self- Photography

Picture No.6, Discussion among Village People. Source: Self- Photography

When the interviewer asked them light to hai nahi fir kaise? She answered quickly *"Saur Urja hai naa hamare paas usese charge ker lete hai…"* As it was told by Bai "*AmanGanj se Gas Laltern le aat hai sanjha biriya ke bere aur" Kheti to tractor se ho jaat hai, ". Sabji bhaji hum khud laga lete hai* . It shows that technology has become the part of villagers. It is making their life easier. People adopt these technologies to improve their reach and reduce the traditional cycles of output deliverables.

Findings

Over the years, they have remained labours or workers and have not done much to effect occupational diversification modification due to modern technology has occurred but it is very limited for the tribes. The success of technology transfer is dependent on various factors particularly the infrastructure of providing motivation training finance processing and marketing. It is difficult for them to search for appropriate technologies on their own. To enhance their income, there is a need for facilitating organizations that can identify various technologies.

Conclusion

As Giddens said, "Modern planning of progress can also succeed", He considers modern society to be a "reflective society"

as well as an "information society." They call such a society a reflective society whose conscience is the same in all places. Mahatma Gandhi ji said, "Each village was a little republican, self-sufficient, enjoying maximum freedom to decide on matters of terrain".

Major occupational and technical cultural changes have taken place in both the tribal and non-tribal people's society. Tribal customs and values have been changed by modern technology not rapidly but slowly the ethnic cultures of tides are just dying and tribal groups draw their livelihood primarily from agriculture.

Women's traditional knowledge often is based on years of observation and experimentation it should be seen as a starting point for the introduction of new technologies. Research should be seen as a two-way process with the learning on the part of both the researcher and farmers.

The effect of time element on the life of an individual or society cannot be ignored. That means time is strong. This belief means that while studying any society or phenomena it cannot be kept within a small circle of time. Human behaviour is governed by circumstances. So, it can be concluded that modern technology has played a significant role in changing tribal society but upon the economy, it is quite

significant but they are fully packed with practical intelligence. As it was told above the study was focused on the role of technology which promoted change in their position at home and outside as well. The development of individuals (in empowering tribal communities) or the country is directly related to technology.

References

- Arnold, D. and Guha, Ramchandra, eds, (1995). Nature, Culture and Imperialism: Essays on the Environmental history of South Asia, Oxford Uni. Press, N. Delhi,
- Beteille, A. 1980 'The Indian Village: Past and Present' in E.J. Hobsbawm et. al. eds. Peasants in History: Essays in Honour of Daniel Thorner, OUP, Calcutta
- Beteille, A. 1975 'The Tribulations of Fieldwork' in A. Beteille and T. N. Madan ed. Encounters and Experience: Personal Accounts of Fieldwork. Vikas, Delhi
- Cohn, B.S. 1987, An Anthropologist among Historian and other Essays. OUP, Delhi
- David Arnold, Colonizing the Body, Medicine and Epidemic Disease in Nineteenth-Century India, Delhi, 1983