

TRIBE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH EMPOWERMENT AND TECHNOLOGY

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Abstract: The tribal communities are deep-rooted in the forests of southern India who are dependent on forest for their livelihood and striving for alternative sources of income to overcome vulnerability (Bijoy, and Ravi, 2003). Once the social evils in the tribal societies are removed, Mahatma Gandhi believed in the gradual empowerment of this honest and sincere group and their assimilation in the national stream through the generation of able leadership (Bina, 2017). The literacy of tribes is improved, and the tribes embrace the adoption of technology, like access to Direct to Home (DTH) and mobile phones. Technology could be made possible because of Central Government mobile network coverage in the hamlet areas. Tribes are mostly self-educated by nature and their capability to overcome natural calamity is very high. In South India, satanic worship (black magic) is deficient in the tribal community and uses of ayurvedic herbs as well as modern medicines are becoming popular. Lifestyle is gradually being modernized among the new generation, but at the same time, the barter system is continuing in the community. This article presents the critical observations and findings to assess the strengths and focuses on empowering the community through adoption of technology.

Keywords: Tribe, Empowerment, Technology.

Introduction

The Scheduled Tribes constitute 8.6% of the total population of India. 89.97% of them live in rural area and 10.03% in urban area. This community is advancing by the adoption of technologies like smartphones and the use of Dish TV which are creating an impact on the changing lifestyles and thus empowering the tribe community. 60% of women are working for their livelihood, and they save money. But the awareness of handling finance and availability of microcredit facilities are unknown to the community. They possess a unique skill set within the tribal population in the form of self-education by nature for sustainability. The community strongly believes in their values and enforces their decisions. Even though the literacy rates are improving in the new generation of the Tribes, the education level is shallow

in rural areas (Nedungadi et al., 2018). Many of those who have higher education are expelled from their hamlets, for various reasons. Gandhi played a prominent role in uplifting the backward classes through multiple means to improve their living conditions. Ashram Shalas, residential schools for tribes in rural areas were promoted by Mahatma Gandhi to spread education and spirit of freedom in the rural and tribal areas of the state. The laws prevailing in the society for their betterment is not being taken advantage of this community due to their lack of awareness. Very few who attempt to get benefitted and come out of the area have not been back again. Hence it's essential to change the mindsets of the people to accept the learners into their community back with educational attainment and also educate the community by various modes of communication devices and empower them for sustainability.

Objectives

- To identify the current technology adoption in the tribal area.
- Government guidance and exploratory in the tribal community.
- To identify Sustainable factors among the Tribe Community.
- Humanistic Values among the Tribes.

Literature review and research gaps

The schedule tribes community is characterised by a distinctive culture, primitive traits, hesitation in contact to public, geographical isolation and social and economic backwardness. Low literacy among scheduled tribes is a result of inadequate facilities, illiterate home environment and non-recognition of tribal languages (Anju, 2018). There is a need for a Tribal Council that comprised of education, articulate and young leaders who could lead the islands towards active development by taking advantage of benefits offered from the government (Simronet et al., 2018). Findings from a study conducted a study to understand the prevalence of substance abuse and awareness about ill effects of the substance abuse after training area) 64% of the reported responses said their fathers were addicted to alcohol. b) 40% did agricultural work, and 11% were engaged in MGNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi, National Rural Employment Guarantee Act). It is observed that alcoholism and illiteracy of parents adversely affect their children (Nishanth et al., 2018). School atmosphere of de-notified children is also not favourable to withstand the attention of the children in the studies (Vijay, 2017).

(Prema, and Raghu, Feb. 2017), in their investigation identified that available technologies in Remote schools with poor internet connectivity and lack of infrastructure facilities adopted tablet-model to reduce absenteeism of teachers in and improve student's performance with teaching techniques. There are various schemes available for the upliftment of tribal communities. Education is considered a pivotal element in determining the socio-economic development. Mithra and Singh (2013). Multiple Government Schemes exist for, and the ministry has sanctioned 184 Eklavya model residential schools with an objective to provide quality services to the tribal poor (Radhakrishnan, 2018). The Digital India campaign run by GOI has an aim to strengthen the electronic service and Government services. Forests provide wood and non-wood forest products like pulpwood, medicinal plants, fibres, flosses, resins, honey, wax, etc. which helps them with the alternative sources of livelihood (Sivaram, 2000)". There are many problems and challenges faced by the tribal community (Hugara et al., 2009). It is essential to identify the threats to the community development and encourage the well-being of the community by providing opportunities for growth and advancement. "Once the social evils in the tribal societies are removed, Mahatma Gandhi believed in the gradual empowerment of this honest and sincere group and their assimilation in the national stream through the generation of able leadership".

Methodology

The data collected for the study is through Primary and secondary sources. The primary data is gathered through interaction with the tribal community as a volunteer during a disaster response. Interviewed a social worker working for satisfying the needs of these community people. The data is also collected from the community heads to know a brief history of their lifestyle and the values and customs practiced. The secondary information is collected from the research papers for understanding the support over decades for great leaders and their role in community development. Data is also received from Census report, 2001 and 2011 for obtaining the statistics on the Tribal community population, educational attainment, technology users, and accessibility to various communication sources.

Data Representation

Table 1.

Data collected from 144 families, in three different hamlets in and around Western ghats, are studied

DATA REPRESENTATION							
Hamlet – No of Family's	Adult Numbers	Total Mobile User	Smart Phone	Keypad Mobile	Unknown to Operate	Television with Satellite Dish	Aadhaar Enrolment
A-28	72	52	17	35	0	23	100%
B-73	127	87	34	53	7	56	100%
C-43	105	42	17	25	4	34	100%
144	304	181	68	113	11	113	100%

The data presented above is a primary data gathered for the study. The data shows that out of total female population 29% of women are using mobiles and out of total male population 92% men are using mobiles.

Data analysis

1. Comparison of Hamlet wise mobile users

In Hamlet A $52/72 * 100 = 72$, in Hamlet B $87/127 * 100 = 68\%$, in Hamlet C $42/105 * 100 = 40\%$ adult population is using mobiles. In Hamlet C, women are probably more.

2. No. of Televisions with Satellite Dish

Hamlet A-82 %, B-76%, C-79% the population using Televisions with Satellite Dish is almost same in all Hamlets, not much difference. It shows that there is a satisfactory improvement in tribal community empowerment – one technology helps another technology, and that leads to sustainable development – Gandhian philosophy is achieved to a certain extent.

3. No. of persons unknown to operate is very small (negligible) in all hamlets, which shows that human approaches (learning from each other, helpful, supportive, feeling of self-reliance etc.) are playing a major role and they are responsible for sustainability.

Technology + Humanistic approaches lead to the empowerment of tribal community and hence sustainability development (Singh et al., 2018). Aadhar enrollment is also 100% – shows the tribe's awareness, self-actualisation, which are again humanistic, approaches to nation's development.

Table 2.
SWOT Analysis

SWOT		
	Helpful	Harmful
Internal	<u>Strengths</u> Organic Resources Self sustainably Identification Technology adoption Promoter support	<u>Weakness</u> Awareness of the market Trend Mingle with other society Finance handling & Fund utilization Ostracism
External	<u>Opportunities</u> Women Empowerment Technology awareness and training Creativity Education Infrastructure & Health	<u>Threats</u> Alcoholism Child Birth Ratio Technology security

In SWOT analysis, “mingle with other society” is one weakness, which can be used as one human approach (that is acceptance of tribal community by other urban communities for country’s sustainable development). Tribal community is hesitant and not willing to come out into society due to their incompetent factors such as low educational attainment and completely different livelihood. Thus, Other communities can go to these weak sectioned people provide them with the required support and bring them out into the society gradually. Ones who come out and benefit from various schemes and measures can further motivate and support their community wellbeing.

As Alcoholism is a Threat, it may be because of lack of awareness. Campaigns can be organised to create social consciousness from the perspective of the community’s wellbeing.

Sustainably enhancement factors – The Strengths of the Community are the true ingredients for sustainability development in the current scenario.

- Organic Resources.
- Unique skill sets.
- Self Reliance.
- Identification.
- Technology adoption.
- Promoter support.

Tribal community though they are vulnerable, they possess certain unique features which help them towards a sustainable livelihood organic resources like fruits and vegetables from their home gardens, naturally available fruits in the dense forests, fibre and other products, medicinal herbs (vattamulyam) at their hand stretch for medicinal purposes etc. These medicinal herbs are highly expensive and are being exported. They also possess a specific unique skill set like learning by nature, experiencing the art of earning a livelihood by practising nattuvaidhya (traditional tribal treatment).

The community is self-reliant concerning their confidence, independent gaining by household women, income earned by women run most of the families. They are well versed with few techniques of protecting themselves from the consequences of disasters. During

disasters this community though it lacks the capacity resources to withstand the danger but it was quite surprising to know that this population was not much affected, they climbed and resided on the tree branches during floods and landslides and survived with the available fruits in those trees. 70% of the total population is accessible to the Satellite Dish network, and 70% shows the usage of mobile phones. There are instances like people are upgraded and hold android sets too. This basic knowledge can be made use of to empower them for attaining literacy rates (Neelam, and Devi, 2015). The government has issued the tablets for few people, but further support concerning directions of usage for said purpose is not achieved. This shows that they are interested in the modern lifestyle, but they are dependent on a few individuals who know to operate these devices.

Due to lack of literacy level, people are unaware of the societal updates regarding benefits available to these communities. The government can organise the programmes through satellite means to spread education and also provide local schools with essential amenities for their development. The statistics show 100% Aadhar (12-digit unique identity number for residents of India) enrolment which is not found even in a civilised society in urban and semi-urban areas. This reveals the fact that they are aiming at the benefits that can be availed by possessing a unique identity number. But they strongly uphold their values and are reluctant to cross the boundaries of their dwelling places. Tribal community possess the unique skill of identifying and cultivating medicinal herbs (one-time medicine) for peculiar diseases. Those ideas can be nurtured and promoted by the Government support during disasters. Most of the women are self-employed on small occupations and earning but are unaware of savings. These women can be empowered by spreading the knowledge of savings and variety of schemes for their benefit.

Findings

Due to the adoption of technology, literacy rates of rural tribes are increasing gradually. Rural area network coverage from the government telecommunication service providers is helping to access the technology for betterment. Affordable phones within low range are helping tribes to buy mobile phones. Access of satellite TV in the rural area is beneficial to the tribes in improving their lifestyle and getting connected to the Unique society identification (AADHAR) card is available for all, for getting benefits like ration and grants from the Government.

Suggestion and conclusion

Usage of interactive technology will improve the quality of education in the tribal area. Providing technology awareness is very important for tribes, to safeguard them from exploitation. Satellite television can play a significant role in communication. Within the tribes, ostracism (Expulsion from the society) is an issue, and enforcement of the law is needed. Early marriage in tribes are barriers for their new generation development.

Scope for further study

Study about internet usage in smartphones and the use of mobile applications among the tribes. Research on television channels with audio-visual most at the comfort zone of rural tribes. Tribal product marketing under e-commerce.

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