

SOCIAL IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA**Dr Sudhir Narayan Singh***

ABSTRACT

This has been a considerably long journey for humanity from the stage of food gathering of early man to the hunting of stone age; moving ahead to the metal age of copper, bronze, iron and steel etc.; next step for the humanity has been of cattle rearing and agrarian civilization; leading to industrialization and finally the door bells of humanity is knocked at by the advent of technology which was further to be effectively upgraded and influentially intervened by the everyday emerging nascent technological advancements. Twenty-first century modern man is standing at the doorstep of Information and Communication Technology [ICT] where without technological integration a smooth completion of the journey of humanity to the next developmental phase is almost unimaginable. Obsessed with the numerous technology advancements and scaling the distances of planets one by one, Modern man seems to be rejecting and challenging his own faith in theology and God and propagating his convincing view that the work which is impossible for God is possible by technological advancements. Here, standing at the verge of the second decade of the twenty first century the modern man is not convinced with the views of worshipping the Moon and the Mars after putting his leg on the former and sending 'Curiosity' on the other.

Everyday changes of modern life are defying the structurally ordained segmentation of traditional Indian society which then consists of four sections namely Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Shudra, which was further compartmentalized in many smaller divisions. Advancements seem to be challenging the Marxist conceptualizations of Bourgeoisie and Proletariat, which was the bi-product of industrialization. Above all the Indian scenario is getting critical day by day as modern India is getting divided by the social digital divide where towards the second half of the twenty first century illiterate will not be those who cannot read and write; rather the very conceptualization of illiteracy will be redefined and e-drafted where literacy will be synonymous to cyber-literacy and illiterate will be those who will not have comfortable access to the highly complicated electronic gadgets and cyber devices. This study attempts to locate the above differences and divides surfacing slowly but consistently on the horizon of Indian society in particular and on the human civilization in general.

Keywords: ICT, Social Digital Divide, Cyber Society and Agrarian Bharat

*Assistant Professor, Department of English & Communication Skills, The Technological Institute of Textile & Sciences, Birla Colony, Bhiwani, Haryana, India

INTRODUCTION

The sociological horizon of Twenty First century opens a critically mixed colourful panorama consisting of the hued borders of optimism as well as pessimism. On one hand everyday emerging nascent technologies promising to human beings amazing possibilities regarding the optimizations of human aspirations and actualization of his dreams and on the other hand it has ignited many questions to be answered with regards to the uncertainties of human fate and the destiny of the persons living in the remote rural areas. Mobile cameras and other modern gadgets has made life different consequently life in society is demanding more emotional equilibrium at personal, cultural, social and psychological level.

Needless to say that rapid change in technology causes revolutionary changes in man and society but at the same individual and community both show resistance to change. Only a selected few who are exceptional in nature welcome the waves of change and readily and try to adjust with the new environment. Incidentally, it would be highly appropriate here to discuss one major historical instance here. During Nineteenth century when industries were started with the help of machines Luddites raised against and started questioning the very attempt of introduction of machines. In his futuristic article *The Year 2050 — Reflection of a Futurist*, Theodore J. Gordon contemplates:

Well before 2050 progress in artificial intelligence will certainly have caused us to re-examine what it means to be human. When machines which augmented human mechanical capability were first introduced at the onset of the industrial revolution, the Luddites, fearing the machine age, asked the question, “What's left for human?”...The answer at that time was that the human role is intellectual. Now there is the real possibility that machines will be able to perform intellectual tasks as well. Take any measures of human intellectual performance—IQ, recall, attention span, creativity. By early in the next century machines will be available which perform in these dimensions than human beings. The Luddites' question will be asked again... we might view the machine as a colleague, working with us to augment our own sensory and reasoning capacities.⁽¹⁾

Obsessed with the numerous technology advancements and scaling the distances of planets one by one, Modern man seems to be rejecting and challenging his own faith in theology and God and propagating his convincing view that the work which is impossible for God is possible by technological advancements. Here, standing at the verge of the second decade of the twenty first century the modern man is not convinced with the views of worshipping the Moon and the Mars after putting his leg on the former and sending 'Curiosity' on the other.

BENIFITS OF TECHNOLOGY:

This has been a considerably long journey for humanity from the stage of food gathering of early man to the hunting of stone age; moving ahead to the metal age of copper, bronze, iron and steel etc.; next step for the humanity has been of cattle rearing and agrarian civilization; leading to industrialization and finally the door bells of humanity is knocked at by the advent of technology which was further to be effectively upgraded and influentially intervened by the everyday emerging nascent technological advancements. Twenty-first century modern man is standing at the doorstep of Information and Communication Technology [ICT] where without technological integration a smooth completion of the journey of humanity to the next developmental phase is almost unimaginable. While speaking on the benefits of Unique Identity Cards (Adhar Cards) for Indian Citizens in the Second Annual Function organized on October 20, 2012 Indian Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh highlighted the benefits of technological interventions in Indian social life saying that “technology, specially information technology will help in reducing dishonesty, and assist in the establishment of transparency in the Indian social system.”⁽²⁾

SOCIAL DIGITAL DIVIDE:

Everyday changes of modern life are defying the structurally ordained segmentation of traditional Indian society which then consist of four sections namely Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Shudra, which was further compartmentalized in many smaller divisions. Advancements seems to be challenging the Marxist conceptualizations of Bourgeoisie and Proletariat, which was the bi-product of industrialization. Above all the Indian scenario is getting critical day by day as modern India is getting divided by the social digital divide where towards the second half of the twenty-first century illiterate will not be those who cannot read and write; rather the very conceptualization of illiteracy will be redefined and e-drafted where literacy will be synonymous to cyber-literacy and illiterate will be those who will not have comfortable access to the highly complicated electronic gadgets and cyber devices.

Surprising the technological interventions in India has largely been uneven where a modern metropolitan far ahead from the man struggling to survive in Indian society. This has given birth to an entirely different dimensional disparity among the people of India where such differences are surfacing in routine life. Even schooling education of this nation is not offering equal opportunities to the budding citizens of the nation. The differences of schooling education has already been surfacing and the differences are easily identifiable. In

metros schools are equipped with the ultra modern technological devices and concept of 'Smart-class' is an actual practice. Teaching-learning process is effectively intervened by the Information and Communication Technology whereas children of sub-urban and rural India are still being educating in semi-equipped, ill-equipped to non-equipped classrooms by age old 'chalk and talk' method. Highlighting these differences an article entitled '*Aakash' for all; Lofty Ideas and Ground Level Reality* published in an English daily *The Tribune*, on October 22, 2012 points out:

Our government schools in rural areas couldn't ensure basic facilities like classrooms, blackboards and chalk for millions of students in the last 65 years. In this context, the announcement by HRD Minister, Kapil Sibal, that budget tablet "Aakash" will be provided to all students within the next five years sounds a bit far-fetched. So far people have little clue about the kind of software that will be used in the tablet. How will the tablet meet requirements of diverse languages and varying level of intellectual growth, even for the same age group in different parts of India?⁽³⁾

Considering the above said uncertainties, availability of the qualified and trained staffs is another ailing concern to be addressed at the war footings. The article '*Aakash' for all; Lofty Ideas and Ground Level Reality*, further stresses on the teachers' issue by questioning that, "then, is there a well laid-out training programme for teachers in place, if by December 2013 all villages are going to be linked with fiber optics for a broadband connection? To cope up with the present emerging demands India will have to add 800--1000 new universities between present existing position and the year 2022. There are considerably less number of institute imparting higher education in India, as the minister suggests, this emerging load is supposed to be shouldered by private players by their quality participation whereas the existing private universities are turning out in shops. Commenting on the partnership of 'so-called private universities' the article taunts:

Going by the experience of private universities that mushroomed in India in the last decade, despite being accredited by various government agencies, the experiment did not bear the desired fruit. Many of these universities turned out to be teaching shops where quality became a casualty...The proposed Foreign Educational Institution (Regulation of Entry and Operations) Bill 2010 needs a fresh look if educational aspirations of 400 million youth have to be met. (*The Tribune*, on October 22, 2012, p-10)

These all ifs and buts are to be sorted out for the establishment of an egalitarian schooling academic system which may offer equal opportunities for education by ensuring well established infra-structure and ensuring sufficient numbers of qualified and ICT trained

teachers to bridging up the technological gap between the agrarian Bharat and technologically privileged India.

This gap has already been visible in the form of an ever widening 'social digital divide' as the result of it now Indian society is segregating into two major segments such as cyber citizens and agrarians. This gap matters a lot as towards the later half of the twenty first century illiterate will not be those who cannot read and write rather the very concept of illiteracy will be modified and illiterate person will be those who couldn't have a comfortable access to the highly complicated digitalized gadgets of the society emerging day by day.

INTRUSION IN PRIVACY:

Advancement in technology attacked the most adversely on the privacy of modern man and affected the man and the society at psychological level by leaving fatal indelible implosive scars in the psyche where privacy of a man became the pleasure of the society. While dealing with the the concept of privacy in his article *Putting out the Information and Communication Technological Flames: It's Ethics*, Ramesh Chandra Shukla mentions:

The legal right to privacy is constitutionally protected in most democratic societies. The Privacy Act (1974) in U.S.A. And the Data Protection in England. Privacy is an important right because it is a necessary condition for other rights such as freedom and personal autonomy. Thus we can say that there is a relationship among privacy, freedom and democracy....The duty to respect a person's privacy is furthermore a prima facie duty.⁽⁴⁾

Technology has enhanced the conceptualization of a glocal (global as well as local) society. Everything global is local and at the same time everything local is global. World is getting smaller day by day and privacy of man now means almost nothing. Twenty Four into Seven [24*7] almost everything is under scanner.

CONCLUSION:

Marvelous have been the journey of human civilization and its growth. Right from the food gatherer to the metal age; then from metal age to the agrarian civilization; and from agrarian civilization to the industrialization. Finally from industrialization to the information society where the advent of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) seems to be promising a lot to the man of Twenty First century society. Technology intruded in every walk of life (private and public both) and it is projecting a bright future ahead but it must not be misunderstood that technology is a double edged sword and if it is misused it will eradicate the human civilization and make the human existence extinct within no times and it is demand a more mature mind-set to handle it delicately for the wellbeing of the humanity.

Technology is the sole shelter of modern human civilization yet at the same time it can destroy massively. Used sanely, technology can heal, if insanely it can instantly kill. Technology has the immense potential and it can monitor the civilizational journey from the foothills to summit. Unrestrained use of technology can eradicate all advancements instantaneously and leave the whole civilization of so called knowledge society on this planet as worthless as onion peel.

WORKS CITED:

1. Gordon, J. Theodore, *The Year 2050—Reflection of a Futurist, English for Students of Science*, (ed.) A. Roy and P. L. Sharma, Orient Longman. 2003. p-p:5-6.
2. Singh, Manmohan, National News Network (DD News) October 20, 2012.
3. 'Akash' for all; *Lofty Ideas and Ground Level Reality*, *The Tribune*, on October 22, 2012. p-10.
4. Shukla, C. Ramesh, *Putting out the Information and Communication Technological Flames: It's Ethics*, *English Language Teaching @ World Wide Web* ed. Dr Ashok K. Saini, Authors Press, New Delhi, 2011 (p-46).