

**MODERNISATION AND TECHNOLOGICAL IMPACT ON TRIBAL ARTS AND CRAFTS IN INDIA****Dr.Saidulu Bhukya**

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**Abstract**

*Technology can be defined as the purposeful application of information in the design, production, and utilization of goods and services, and in the organization of human activities. It is the use of scientific knowledge for practical purposes or applications, whether in industry or in our everyday lives. Modern technology is the improved product of the application of science. The human beings started to use technology with the conversion of natural resources into simple tools. Discovery of wheels in early civilisation was the premier invention of technology of mankind. With the passage of time, technology has become very vital to human beings for survival and development of knowledge. Indigenous people across the world have been affected by the introduction of technologies from foreign cultures for hundreds of years. Some have not dramatically changed their ways of life, while others have completely changed self-identities, entire societies and worldviews. Modern technologies, especially telecommunication and computer technologies, allow indigenous groups to participate in the larger societies and economics around them.*

**Introduction**

The tribal people of Dooars were originally a floating settler migrating from place to place for land and employment. At early period they (Lepcha, Garo, Mech, Rabha) were migrated from north and north-eastern states and settled in the forest and hill areas of Dooars and Terai region and Santal, Oraon, Malpahari, Mahali, Munda, from eastern, central states and Chhotonagpur region and settled in Dooars and many other places of West Bengal. The tribal communities in Dooars are mainly engaged in tea garden as labour and small amount of them are engaged in agriculture and small industrial activities. Gradually, they started to accustom themselves with the new ecological condition. But they remain isolated from other caste community. This isolation makes them underdeveloped and backward. After independence, the situation has been changed due to modernisation which includes industrialisation and urbanisation and 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 with modern world many development programmes have been taken. The welfare schemes inspired them to accept new and modern technology and changed their attitude of thinking.

**Social Impact of Modern Technology**

All tribe members are related by blood, have their own political organization which has a chief who exercises authority over all the members, even recommending marriage of young boys with girls whom they have found suitable for marriage. Each tribe is guided by their own religion which is based on totemism, magic and fetishism i.e. believing in god being embedded in a special tree or a peculiar strange animal. Modern technology and

modern means of communication technology changed the social customs, religious behaviours, demographic structure of the societies of the tribal people. A tribal society is a primitive society living in early period of human history. There has not been any change of tribes in their belief, life style and religion which prevent them from mixing with any outsider or educated community whom they greatly dislike. They have their own social functions and festivals where they sing and dance in characteristic body movements in the same dress by girls, the males playing on musical gadget like drums, metallic gongs, flutes etc. A tribe is an endogamous group, as distinct from a clan who is exogamous.

### **Impact on Religion and Customs**

The performances of dances, songs are influenced by the modern rhythmic instruments replacing many of their age old handmade instruments. The traditional tribal musical instruments are simple and produce rhythmic sounds. Following are few examples of tribal traditional musical instruments (Deogaonkar, 2003): Tirio bamboo flute, a bamboo flute with seven holes. It is viewed as symbols of love and seduction. Dhodro banam bowed instrument, a bowed instrument carved out of a single log wood of a tree. It consists with a belly covered with an animal skin on which rests the bridge (sadam, lit, horse), an open chest (korom), a short neck (hotok) and a head Madol or tumdakis a double-sided barrel drum, a two faced drum with body brunt clay. Both heads the left one broader than the right are covered by bullock hide and are beaten by the left and right hand. Junko, an onomatopoeic description of sounds of the ankle bells which are caste in metal in the shape of buds and tied to the feet of dancers from where they produce rhythmic sounds. Singa, an S-shaped wind instrument played in pairs in weddings. Tribes were animism in religion which is very much separate from all the other traditional religions of the world. Most of the tribes in Dooars believe that they are Hindus. The tribes of Mal subdivision now are gradually being converted to Christianity by the influence of welfare activities of the missionaries. From the field study it is clear that 66% are believers of Hinduism, 31% are Christianity, and 3% are animists. With change of religion, the associated characteristics of religious behaviours of tribal people have also been changed. Made of brass of copper, it is usually constructed in the three pierces with mouthpiece at the blowing end and a conic opening at the other. Bansuri, a classical instrument from which melodious sound produces.

Ghungroos, musical bells producing musical sound. Bells of different sizes are used while dancing fitted with waist or on feet ankles etc. Ghangli, looks like a veena. Nagara, a drum of most widespread and lead instrument in folk ceremonies and weddings of the tribal people. The Santals and Oraons have their rich traditional folk cultures. Most of the times, the women perform the dancing and ceremonial rituals and the males play the rhythmic sets. Now the question arises, are the tribal people changing their traditional age old customs and musical instruments after advent of many modern instruments? In a study, Purkayastha (2012) opined about the Oraon tribes in Barak valley of Assam that, traditional belief and practice as a whole have been losing its appeal particularly among young tribal people, rather, they prefer to participate in national as well as regional festivals like Durga Puja, Kali Puja, Laxmi Puja, Holi etc. Now many of the tribal musical instruments are accompanied by the modern instruments.

Wooden Ghangli of the tribes are replaced by violin; piano is used instead of bamboo made tirio flute. The earlier open mouth tribal songs are abolished in many cases, instead of

it, there could be found modern sound system. The Santals men and women are very fond of music and dance. Archer (1946) rightly called them. They have elaborate song cycles for festival occasions and for the various stages of agricultural cycles. Traditional Santal women dances are modernised by modern musical instruments, sound devices etc. in Dooars areas. With the impact of westernisation coupled with industrialization and urbanisation, the Santals have yielded a significant change in their life style (Mohsin, demisation in religious believes and modern technology (Prasad, 1971). They are now in a state of flux and in a process of putting on a new social identity and image over their crumbling norms. However, the Santals still retain the essential core of their unique socio-cultural background notwithstanding the diverse influence on them. Same incident has occurred for all other tribal groups living in Dooars.

### **Impact on Arts and Crafts of tribal**

Indian tribal arts and crafts are almost entirely functional and had great utilitarian or social significance. There are artistic views. The way of building of the houses, thatching the roof, decorating the floor, carving the doors and painting the walls signify a lot about the artistic skills and creativity of Santals. The Mahali tribes have a rich source of cane and bamboo materials in their arts and crafts. The items are meant for household uses. Baskets of different kinds have significant place in the tribal houses. Mahali people in Dooars use to prepare bamboo crafts. There are wood crafts popular among the tribes. The religious product includes images of familiar gods. Some craftsmen carve a single piece of wood to form an object. Clay pottery is an ancient craft in India. In some places of Dooars it is found that clay pottery has shaped the home utensils.

### **Modern technology has influenced the arts and crafts of the tribal people**

Tribal art began gaining recognition in the late 19th century. Modern communication technology, media has nurtured their way of thinking in the broader world. As a result, the age old traditional ideas of the tribal people are well known throughout the world. Research wings are attached with their thinking and several developmental strategies are taken to promote tribal arts and crafts in every country. In modern days, as for example, various forms of decorative items are made of canes and bamboos instead of simple baskets by the Mahali tribes. In the Dooars area, the tribal arts are not so much enlightened by the modern technology. Because they have lost their own identity due to change of their own traditional occupational practices, rather they are now mostly tea garden labourers. Besides, a significant amount of them are working in as cultivators or agricultural labourers.

### **Economic Impact of Modern Technology**

Technology has affected the economy through direct job creation, creation of new services and industries, workforce transformation and business innovation. Compared to the industrialised economies, the technology adopted in tribal economy is much simpler and crude. Tools are either made of user himself or are acquired for a fee from craftsmen or from manufacturing groups.

### **Impact on Occupations**

The tribals have indigenous occupations. Most of the forms of occupations were subsistence in nature. The tribes of Dooars were used to practice several occupations before the introduction of modern technology or globalization. The main occupations of the primitive people were shifting cultivation, animal husbandry, basketry, fishing, hunting and

gathering, and weaving. Later on in-migration from Chhotonagpur region of the tribal people took place in this region. A large section of the people of this region became tea garden labourers in different forms i.e. plucking tea leaves, harvesting, planting tea sapling, processing, driving cars and others. Besides tea garden activities, the Mahali people depend on basketry, collection of forest produce, agriculture, carrying of palanquins; the Lohars are traditionally iron workers and blacksmiths; the Mundas were used to hunting in the forests.

Modern technology and modernisation has influenced the occupation of tribal people. They have given up many of their traditional occupations being influenced by the modern technology. Shifting cultivation of this region has been abolished today; fishing, weaving and hunting are now not occupations at all for tribal people. The specialised activities of basketry occupation of the Mahali people and blacksmith activities of the Lohars are now in the verge of abolition. The occupations of the tribals were based on customs and traditions. There were specific customs stressing participatory functions and specific roles to be played by each member of the family and community. They took care to preserve the ecological balances with the nature to sustain their livelihood. But exposures to modern economic practices teach them to exploit the nature and consume its products. As a result, the traditional tribal leaders often face a dilemma while accommodating modern influences.

Modern communication technology- the mobile phones, internet services, newspapers, and Medias have influenced many young people to alter their traditional occupations. To earn more or to work with leisure many tribal people now-a-days engaged in diversified activities. From the field observation, it is noticed that a few household industry has been established in the tribal areas like biscuit factory, furniture houses etc. So, a few people are engaged there. Many tribal young male workers now work in other provinces who are mostly engaged in construction works. A few people are now working in nearby Siliguri or Jalpaiguri town as carpenters or masons. There has been a change of income generating activities in the rural non-farm sectors both of tribes and non-tribes. These include the following: Training of youth in masonry, carpentry, smithy, repairs of cycles and motor cycles, tractors, pump-sets, and electrification etc. Bamboo crafts and utility articles. Production of housing materials. Embroidery and tailoring. Establishment of grocery shops and food stalls. The above mentioned activities are found among the tribes in areas adjacent to market, but in tea garden areas, the impact is very insignificant.

### **Impact on Agricultural Economy**

The aboriginal tribes of Dooars, namely, the Mech, Garo, Rabha, and Lepchas were the jungle dwellers who used to habituate with shifting cultivation. They settled in a place for few years, cultivated in the land in their own way, after few years they shifted into another place and settled there and their life was cycling in such a way. Some tribes of Bhutanese lived there but before coming of rainy season, they left the place to save themselves. Surgeon who appears to be the only people so constituted as to be capable of permanently enduring the migrated to this region. They were basically engaged as labourers of the tea garden. However, the aboriginal tribal groups and a section of later tribal groups are now engaged in agricultural traditional agricultural implements still persist.

### **Conclusion**

They are axe, hatchet, sickle, yoke, plough, crowbar, wooden hammer, flat basket etc. They get these implements either from the nearby local market and some of the implements

are also made by them. The success of technology transfer is dependent on various factors, particularly the infrastructure for providing motivation, training, finance, processing and marketing. As our target groups, who are semi-literate and economically backward, it is difficult for them to search for appropriate technologies on their own for enhancing their income. There is a need for facilitating organizations which can identify various technologies and modify them to suit the local needs before transferring them to the beneficiaries. The farmers at present are encouraged to use scientific methods of agricultural operations and trying to produce more crops from the same piece of land. Earlier, paddy and wheat were main crops of agriculture. But now paddy, jute, oilseeds, pulses and vegetables are cultivated. Modern technology and modernization has influenced the agricultural systems of the tribal people in some extent. Modern agriculture depends heavily on engineering, technology and the biological, physical sciences. In the field study, following information were asked to the tribal farmers about implementation of simple modern technology for agricultural field.

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