


Chapter 14

A Conceptual Framework for ICT Adoption in Tribal Areas

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ABSTRACT

According to prior research on a developmental project in the tribal area in India, tribal people are said to be laggards in terms of technology acceptance and adoption. It is because of some factors such as geographical location and illiteracy rate. This chapter examines the whole issue using a new perspective - the use of theories of information systems (IS) for acceptance and adoption of technology in tribal areas. The chapter evaluates through these IS theories the basic understanding of the reasons behind the laggard behavior of tribal people, keeping the Indian context in mind.

1. INTRODUCTION

Tribal people (also known as *Adivasi* in India) are one of the major entities in India. According to the census of 2011, it has been noted that tribal population in India is around 104 million which is around 8.6 percent of India's population (Office of Registrar General and Census Commissioner Ministry of Home affairs Government of India, 2011). In India, tribal people are known by name '*Adivasi*' which means

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people who live like ancient people, i.e., the lifestyle of advasis have not changed from centuries. According to the author (Basu, Kappor & Basu, 2003), the way we look at tribal people is due to the fact that either we are unaware or ignorant towards them. They may be backward in materialistic resources, but their thought is way ahead of even city people. They are out of some of the social evils from which even city people are suffering. They do not have a dowry system, caste system, even widow remarriage and divorce practices are socially accepted.

In the last two decade, there has been a revolution of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Information Technology (IT) in India. This revolution divided our nation into two broad categories, one taking advantage of it and others not able to harness the true potential of the new technologies. Generally, the first category people live in the cosmopolitan cities, major cities, or town; for them, there are various social and technical benefits of ICT. The ICT was introduced to help communication between two people and in just less than a decade, it transforms its usefulness into various other domains. A question arises in the mind of researchers, why do the other section of society not able to associate with ICT revolution? The reasons are explained by many researchers in their respective research works and most of them agree on the absence of literacy and geographical unreachability.

Looking at their argument, the authors of this chapter find that there are some unexplained and untouched areas and reasons which still need further exploration. In some of the published works, it is reported that the adoption of any technology especially in the tribal area depends on the application for which the technology is needed to be adopted. According to the recent trend, the assessment of the impact of globalization and IT on the tribal area have been brought to the forefront (Mathiyazhagan, Nandan, & Meshram, 2007; Kannan and Vasantha; 2023). It is found that all the papers are looking at the issue from the geographical point of view with data collected from specific locations (Kannan and Vasantha; 2023; Katini, Amalanathan and Kaikho; 2023; Dubey and Sinha; 2022). There is ample room for exploring this issue using different backgrounds. This paper uses existing theoretical concepts of ICT to analyse the acceptance and adoption of ICT in the tribal areas.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 ICT Projects for Tribal Area

In recent years, the government of India tried to uplift people from different sections of society. For that, they keep on bringing the ICT projects for the development of the tribal and surrounding area. According to the government of India, department

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