

## TECHNOLOGY AND ITS IMPACT ON SOCIAL CHANGES: SOME POSITIVE AND HARSH REALITIES

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### **Abstract**

The 21<sup>st</sup> century is known for technical discoveries and innovations including communication social networks among the communities across the globe. Technology is one of the eight factors considered by the World Economic Forum to evaluate the global competitiveness in terms of technological innovations between countries, social networks and changes between different communities, tribes and races. As a matter of fact, technology has revolutionized the way, in which people think, live and work. It has penetrated in all spheres of human activities be it – social, economic, political and above all cultural. It also gives us a historical perspectives that allow us to see the present trends and prepare the people for the future. Thus, any progressive society needs the technological intervention for its economic prosperity and also social transformation. However, the modern technology has also brought some negative impacts on the society. It is, therefore, the right and high time to know and gauge both the positive and harsh realities of the technology on the social changes of the modern society. This paper is an attempt that focuses and highlights on such vital social aspects.

**Key words:** *Technology, Impact, Social changes, Modernization, Realities.*

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**Introduction:**

Technology is the brainchild of human being. A systematic application of scientific invention for the benefit of humanity is the aim of Technology. It always multiplies itself and reinforces within. It brought the world closer. Technology converted the yesterday's illusion into today's reality. But in doing so, the changes have to face serious challenges also. History proved this many a time. The changes some time evident, and sometimes unnoticed, it may be in the field of birth and death rate, health and medicine, economic, political and cultural. Technology is a double edged weapon with positive and negative outcome having a close bearing on society and its activities. Besides, the stupendous advances in various branches of science, technology have opened up new avenues of knowledge, enjoyment and human endeavour. At the same time, new problems have also cropped up. The present paper attempts to analyze the positive side as well as its negative, harsh and naked realities of technology on social changes.

**Factors and Facets of Change****Physical Environment:**

Technological innovations have brought major changes in physical environment of the world today. When climate changes, it results in soil erosion and which in turn gradually leads to formation of swamps and finally plains. A change in culture of a society comes gradually unnoticed. Human misuse also brings changes in physical environment which in turn change the social and cultural life of the people. For example, deforestation brings land erosion and reduces rainfall. Much of the wasteland and desert land of today is the result of human ignorance. Most of the civilizations were disappeared because of destruction of environment. Many human groups, throughout history, have changed their physical environment through migration to another acceptable area. The primitive societies were directly dependent upon physical environment of their accustomed geographical location. Consequent upon the change of environment, they migrate to another area which results in cultural change. The developing civilization makes it possible for the group, to transport culture to another place. When old environment destroys, it results in creation of new culture with the help of new civilization.

**Population changes as a result of Technological Explosion:**

The increasing trend of population is a social change which furthers cultural change. When the population swells, the hospitality pattern fades away; secondary groups multiply; and

institutional structures grow and many other changes follow. A stable population can resist change but not a swelling population. As a result, they have to migrate to improve its productivity, when the group migrates; it comes into contact with a new environment, and thus new problems. When majority of the population changes, it definitely brings change in culture also. All these cyclical changes are the result of technological forces.

#### **Coalition and Isolation of societies:**

Societies living at the crossroads of the world are always subject to change, since they face absorption. These societies were proved to undergo a change when they came into contact with the other society. In ancient times the overland transport that passed through Asia, Africa and Europe, the societies on the shores, were swept by new culture; thus the transformation of new societies effected. In Ancient World, war and trade brought a change and in modern world, Tourism brought intercultural change in the existing societies. Conversely, isolated areas have become centers of stability and conservatism. They resisted any change vehemently. Thus isolation and coalition of societies are possible through technology.

#### **Social structure as a consequence of Technology:**

It is apparent that the structure of the society affects its rate of change. For example, in Ancient China, the authority was vested with aged people, who were naturally conservatives. They opposed any change; hence the society was stable. Highly centralized bureaucracy, could suppress any change temporarily. In a highly integrated culture, every element is rightly placed and interwoven with mutual interdependency. The duties, roles, privileges are precisely defined. Hence change of culture in such societies is difficult and costly. Conversely, in a less integrated cultural society, where the cultural elements are not properly interwoven, any change is easy. The culture of such society is loosely arranged and hence opens to individual interests.

#### **Technology versus Transition in People's Attitudes and Values:**

Technological changes around the world have made a rapid progress in the changing attitude of the people especially in developed societies and nations. Children in such a developed society are customary in socializing in developed economies. Naturally children appreciate the change. Societies who pegged themselves to the traditional values are found to be slow and unwilling for any change; it is because of long standing static culture of a given society. They strongly believe that their culture and customs are correct. Whereas rapidly changing societies

are aware of social change and their attitude towards change will be highly responsive. When they are critical and doubtful of certain traditions, any change through innovation will be invited and accepted. But all the groups in a society, do not respond equally, but with variations. In every society the forces of liberalism and conservatism will work with equal force and strength. Literated and educated people accept change over quickly and readily respond than illiterated and uneducated group of people. Gradually, the cultural factors influence social relationship. They also influence the direction as well as the character of technological change. So, it is our belief clubbed with our social institutions, determine the use of technological innovations. In such a situation our conventions, customs, beliefs and traditions, since deep rooted, may resist the new technological innovations: but yet the groups longing for change in the society shall definitely carry on them with determination. Thus, technology brings transition among the people.

#### **Technological compulsions Vis – a –Vis social change:**

Man attempted to satisfy his wants; fulfill his needs; satisfy his desires; and tried to make his life more comfortable; the result is creation of civilization. Civilization in its turn created technology. Hence, it is said that technology is the byproduct of civilization. When scientific knowledge is applied to solve the social needs, it resulted in social change. Thus, technology attempted far reaching effects, in the existing society, changing even the old traditions and conventions. If we turn the pages on the evolution of technology, there are so many instances, where a single invention brought a thorough change in the living conditions of man in the society. The modern society is fully loaded with modern technology, such as, Cellular Phones, Computers, Robots etc., and how these equipment brought change in the living conditions of the society is clearly visible. In spite of all the progress, every innovation has its dark side also. It is left in the hands of the leaders to make out the best, out of it.

#### **Positive drives of Technology**

##### **Technology leads to Industrialization:**

Technology has brought a substantial impact on the growth of industries or to the process of industrialisation. It brought a thorough change in industrial growth. An agrarian society substantially changes into an industrial society, where in manufacturing industries played major role in economy. It associated with factory system where with a fixed capital investment, apply

science to industrial techniques. The family has its economic importance. The result is large scale production of goods that changed the structure of the market and economy. It brought down the prices, improved quality of production. It provided large scale employment to men and women in the factories. Thus, industrialization affected the nature, character and growth of economy and brought thorough change in social structure.

#### **Technology grows up Urbanization:**

Another byproduct of technology being urbanization. The growth of industries has contributed the growth of cities. It is a worldwide phenomenon. The agrarian based families in rural areas sturdily shifted to the cities in search of employment, and industrialization met this frifix of the unemployed. Industries indirectly developed urbanization. Towns, Cities have developed in urban areas. Thus, technology provided a new class of society with new problems. This is clearly visible everywhere in our country. Comparion of villages and towns, towns and cities before Independence and after, shall give a visible picture of Urbanization, and its merits and demerits. Due to the fast development of industrialization, the towns and cities were developed and thus, the technology has paved the way for fast growth of urbanization.

#### **Technology a path way to modernization:**

Modernization indicates the adoption of the modern ways of life. It indicates a change in peoples' food habits, dress habits, tastes, speaking styles, ideas, preferences, values, recreational activities, to mention a few. In the process of getting themselves modern, people gave more importance to science and technology. Old customs, conventions, social norms, were replaced by new ideologies and social relationship. Thus the technology modernized the society with new things and new ideas. The usage of modern technology has become the fashion of the day. Today every home is loaded with fridge, TV, Oven, Lights, Fans, Cell phones, Computers, Tablets, ipads etc. The more they equipment, the more modern they, considered.

#### **Technology expedites the development of Transport and Communication System:**

Technology has boosted the development of transport and communication systems. They led to the national and international trade on a large scale. The road, rail, water and air transport made it easy to move men and material in a quicker way. Post and Telegraph, Radio and TV, News papers and Magazines, Telephone, and Communication net works have developed a great deal. Space research and launching of satellites for communication facilities added the

developments further. They helped the people belonging to different corners of the nation or the world to have regular contacts. Communication facilities created quick interaction between the Central Government and the States. The modern inventions have increased the sense of nationalism, and strengthened it further. Unfortunately, the dark side has gain much importance than the bright side of the Technology.

### **Harsh realities of Technology**

#### **Transformation in the economy and the evolution of the new social classes:**

The development of technology has paved the way for the development of industrialization, which in turn created factory system. Now, the agricultural economy slowly changed into industrial economy, a capitalist economy. Society was divided mainly into two groups, namely, capitalists and working class. Both the haves and have-nots are in loggerheads with vested interests. Meanwhile, middle class emerged in between. Thus the society is divided into three classes, namely rich, poor and middle class.

#### **Technology replaces the people and hence leads to unemployment and underemployment:**

The rapid technological advancement has created rapid unemployment problem also. When a single machine did the work of ten people, the remaining nine are found unemployed or jobless under labour saving device. This results in technological unemployment.

#### **Technology - war:**

The negative impact of technology can be seen in the method of present day warfare. Technologically advanced countries have sophisticated war-heads and can strike a target, thousands of kilometers away, with much ease. New war weapons created terror in the minds of people. It is easy to destroy the human race, out of fits, and the civilization that man has built up, right from the cave, through centuries. The lurking fears of human race, is always seen, with the development of technology, another harsh reality.

#### **Rapid strides and changes in social institutions:**

The mode of life has undergone a thorough change with the inception of innovations in technology. Even, the social institutions, like, religion, family, marriage have also been altered since modern industry is the byproduct of technology, and it radically changed the family

structure also. The functions of the family are taken away by outside agencies, namely, children health, education and their marriages. No morality of looking after the aged people. Marriage has lost its sanctity and has just been treated as a social contract. Separation, desertion and divorce have emerged as common things, having no social stigma. Though, modern technology has elevated the position of women in the society, it could not avoid strain between men and women. The scientific inventions have broken the religions taboos. Since religion is the cornerstone of society, especially in Asian Countries, the modern scientific inventions have brought immense damage to the fabric of society. Now, the Government also took a diversion in its responsibilities, with the development of modern technology. It turned its attention towards social responsibility, namely, protecting aged people, weaker section, education and health care of the people and so on.

**Cultural Lag:**

Cultural Lag between new technology and social organization is imminent. All the ancient civilizations have faced this problem, namely, gap between the old and new orders. Whenever there was an invention in technology, the advantages are visible and self evident. With the development in technology there comes, however, the invention creates social disturbance. A strain or stress is set up between the new techniques and various organizational aspects of the social system. Changes in the social system will be study and slow. People cannot adopt new culture and stick to the old social order.

**Technology and Family:**

The obvious impact of information technology is a change in work-home relationship. Yesterday, office means a place, where one sits from morning to evening, and conduct the business. Information Technology has changed the meaning of office, with its computers. Printers, fax machines, internet banking etc. One can conduct the business by sitting with his family members at home, and get done the business. Family life is also undergone a change due to Information Technology. Cell phones, Answering machines, kept the families together. All the activities are tied together through modern electronic gadgets. In spite of all these facilities, the love and affection among the members of the families is greatly missing since seldom they sit together at any given time. Home is converted simply a lodge, where members take rest and get

away. It serves no more a place of rejoice and comfort. Hence, the relationship among the members is more traditional than purposeful.

### **Technology and Community:**

To discuss any relationship between Technology and Family and Technology and Community is more complex in nature. People from different parts of the world who gather to live constitute as a family. Technology has changed the people, using the Engineering Language, entrepreneurship, design and community 'valued added' issues, namely, housing transformation, education and recreation. Agencies have grown up in every walk of life. If man and woman happened to be employees, they can keep the child in nursery school, pre-schools then hostel. These agencies take care of the child. But it dries up love between child and parents. They may look their child in webcam, heard his voice, but cannot touch him and kiss. Thus, information technology created a superfluous situation.

### **Conclusion:**

The Technological Innovations, interventions are penetrated into the all walks of people of all continents, countries, communities and individual human beings and more so on the entire social fabric of the humanity. Therefore, the technology and human life today cannot be isolated, aparted or departed but go always together. However, technology is a double-edged weapon. It can be used for the well-being of the humanity and for vanishing all the social values, norms, traditions including erosion of culture and heritage. Notwithstanding the harsh realities of technology, technology has pervaded and penetrated into all human activities from dawn to dusk today than yester decades. Hence, one must accept, welcome and adjust the social life as per the winds of technological changes and challenges.

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