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Rising Tide of Technology and its Impact on the Human Relationships

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Abstract:

Indeed technology has greatly helped us in the era of globalization. It has made our life faster and mobile which was never before. The world has become an easily approachable place. The boundaries and peripheries went on extending beyond imagination. Consequently though we are separated geographically we are close and near by the technology. The technological development has expedited our journey at a pace and ranked us among the faster developing countries. However this change was not abrupt. It had slowly affected the life and the lifestyle of the people. Through this paper an attempt is made to register such changes in Indian culture and the human relationships. This paper will highlight the various examples and incidents to make the point understand. The examples are from the day today life. The views of the researcher are not skeptical but based on the realistic observations in the society.

Argument of the Paper:

Globalization has spelled the new dimensions of human advancement. Often this advancement was measured in terms of economic growth and Industrial Development. However the key point of this advancement is mans adherence to the technology. The Information and Communication Technology has boomed a path-breaking progress of India. It had also added to the Information Explosion. The sudden burst of information has led to the easy access to information. The knowledge and information became two divers' streams for accessing the data. On the changing nature of society Alvin Toffler in his book, *The Third Wave* describes three types of societies, based on the concept of 'waves'- each wave pushes /slides the older societies and cultures aside. He describes the "First Wave" as the society after agrarian revolution and replaced the first hunter gatherer cultures. The 'Second Wave' he labels society during the Industrial Revolutions (late 17th century through the mid 20th century). That period saw the increase of urban industrial populations which had undermined the traditional nuclear family, and initiated a factory-like education system, and the growth of the corporation. Toffler said:

The Second Wave Society is industrial and based on mass production, mass distribution, mass consumption, mass education, mass media, mass recreation, mass entertainment, and weapons of mass destruction. You combine those things with standardization, centralization, concentration and synchronization, and you wind up with a style of organization we call bureaucracy.

The 'Third Wave' was a term he coined to describe the post-industrial society, which began in the late 1950s. His description of this period dovetails with other futurist writers, who also wrote about the Information Age, Space Age, Electronic Era, Global Village, terms which highlighted a scientific technological revolution. (Chindhade p.18)

It is said, "Change is the only permanent thing". This change was expedited by the technology. No doubt technology has made our life more engaging and interesting. It affected the culture and the human relationships. The advent of technology has affected the very fundamental human behavior. This paper is divided into two parts i.e how the culture is affected and how the human relationships?

Let us see how our culture is affected by the smart use of technology. India has its rich tradition and customs. Every Indian believes and respects the culture. Most of the rituals and religious functions were earlier performed by the priests. Nowadays these rituals are performed with the help of technology. E,g chanting of Mantra i.e hymns, Prayers can be downloaded and sung. The purpose of chanting the religious hymns was to cater the peace and stability of mind. Moreover it's pronunciation helped in pronouncing the words with clarity and correctness. Hence it helped in clarity of speech. With the technology the physical and spiritual spirit of chanting is sidelined. The recitation skills were improved but with the technology it is diminishing. We are rather depending on the technology.

In India the concept of celebrations is collective or gathering. Our Festivals are the cultural feasts. They are celebrated with joy, peace and harmony. However slowly and steadily this trend is losing its hold. People, mainly in the urban areas, are changing their cultural world by restricting only to their family members and the close relatives. Invitations are being sent through Whatsapp groups and are requested to remain present for the time limit given on the Card. On the other hand rich people are creating it as a status symbol and inviting thousands and thousands people for the wedding ceremony. Earlier marriage was a collective responsibility of the whole village. Due to this people use to come together and share their feelings frankly and freely. Nowadays due to the event management and with the mushrooming outsourcing industries, all the work related to the wedding ceremony is being outsourced. As a result, the sense of belongingness in the family members is declining.

They say "more the merrier". Anything that comes in ample does not necessarily guarantees the utility and efficacy of it. Looking at the present scenario it seems that Technology has reduced the physical distance and had increased emotional distance. People have started using the masks of being loving and affectionate. The lines from Gabriel Okara's poem *Once Upon a Time* aptly describe the situation:

And I have learned too
to laugh with only my teeth
and shake hands without my heart.
I have also learned to say, 'Goodbye',
when I mean 'Good-riddance';
to say 'Glad to meet you',
without being glad; and to say 'It's been
nice talking to you', after being bored(Okara p)

Even the cultural values have started losing their hold. The collective joy is getting replaced by joining a group on a Whatsapp. This group is known as social networking without having any network of feelings and range of emotions. We are least interested in wishing and greeting the person face to face. Rather by sending a message with a bunch of digital flowers and cake we are expressing our feelings to the near ones. Isn't it an alarming bell for all of us? It indicates that people

are merely doing the formality of wishing and not the humanity. Thanks to the emogis because they are doing the job of expression. It is rather unrealistic that emotions which is the unique feature of human being is also been reflected through technology. This sounds more objective. We are avoiding the human bondage and harmony at the cost of internet and other social media. The lifestyle has been changed radically and rapidly. It is creating hazardous situation among the people. More specifically, the earlier bond of human relations is getting continuously estranged. What Toffler predicts miracles that biological sciences will bring about in the near future: ".....the clock is ticking for a biological Hiroshima....The ethical, moral and political questions raised by the new biology simply boggle the mind." He predicts happenings like baby shops where babies, made to order, can be available /bought wombs on rent(surrogacy in modern terms: a great debate is on in India about the serious issues involved in it) cloning, trial marriages, homo-sexual daddies, long and frequent travels for job requirements , disintegrated families, growing loneliness in life and so on". Aren't the same situations that we are observing nowadays? People are becoming self centered; social gathering is for some collective goal and not for collective joy. Their world is full of appointments without any achievements. This reminds the Shakespeare's famous quotation, "The world is full of sound and fury signifying nothing." The human life is technically connected but emotionally detached.

The Society has undergone a sea level change. At an individual level, the human life is becoming self centered, detachment, isolated, and segregated. The sense of loneliness is being observed. At family level people are losing communication moreover there is less communication and more connection through social media. The human bondage is missing. Wi-fi has become the need of the hour. The feelings of trust and faith are almost decaying. There is great threat for the human relationships. Consequently the number of cases of divorce is increasing suddenly.

The positive fallout of this is that at the social level the technology has played a role of unifier or leveler. It is reducing the caste and class barrier. Every individual possessing the skill and the talent to use technology is gifted with ample opportunities of advancement. Furthermore it is opening the avenues for the experts of different fields.. Thus technology has uplifted us socially economically. All in all I believe that in a country like India where caste plays a crucial role technology can be a great leveler or equalizer. Anybody acquainted with technology is equally literate knowledgeable and powerful. I would like to conclude with Toffler's quote , " The illiterates of tomorrow will not be those who cannot read and write but those who refuse to learn, unlearn and relearn" (p 19)

While commenting on the changing human relations Alvin Toffler has predicted is an interesting point. Toffler in his futuristic book *Future Shock*, published in 1970s , he coined a new term 'future shock' to refer to what happens too fast, which results in social confusion and normal decision making processes breaking down. In his interview to Australian Broadcasting Company in 1998 he states, "Society needs people who take care of his elderly and who know how to be compassionate and honest. Society needs people who work in hospitals. Society needs all kinds of skills that are not just cognitive; they're emotional, they are affectional. You can't run the society on data and computers alone" This suggests that the visionary views of Toffler indicates that though technology and science is need for the advancement and welfare of the society, however one cannot ignore the very humanity and affections in the society. The emotions and feelings are the base of the human society. The present scenario seems that people are engaged in unnecessary use of

technology but this does not imply that they will totally ignore the human relations. To some extent the nature of these relationships is changing but it is not a threat to the relationships.

Technology has changed the life of both the younger generation and the old generation. The younger generation is handling the technological devices smartly and intelligently. They are depending more on the memory of the mobile than their own memory. To cite another more interesting example would be of selfie mania. The younger generation is busy with mobile for number of activities like downloading the software applications of games, vedios, Whatssapp and social media. They are engaged in playing the games on Mobile and spending their time unproductive activities which consequently results in health issues.

The total absence of communication among the people, teenagers especially is resulting into the psychological and verbal expression problems. The declining sensibility, sentiments are a thing of concern. People are doing the rituals on phone by video shooting and uploading the videos. The futility of love in human relationships is observed when people treat it as a deal. It is simply as exchange of messages with no communication between the friends.

Conclusion:

All these scientific advancements leads to conclude that as the use of calculator has made us to forget the tables, then it would be of no surprise if we forget our own prayers and rituals. No wonder if we forget how to celebrate our own festivals. No wonder if we are confronting with another culture and adopting it as our own. No doubt technology is a boon to a larger extent but not at the cost of loss of human touch.

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