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Impact of Modern Communication Systems on the Socio-Economic Development of the Uraon Tribe: A Study from Jashpur District of Chhattisgarh

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Abstract

Communication is widely recognised as a critical instrument of socio-economic development, particularly in marginalised and indigenous communities. The present study examines the impact of modern communication systems on the socio-economic development of the Uraon tribe in Jashpur district of Chhattisgarh. The research is based on primary data collected from 200 Uraon households selected from Manora and Pathalgaon blocks. The study analyses access to modern communication tools such as mobile phones, television, radio, and internet, and evaluates their influence on education, employment opportunities, income generation, and awareness of government welfare schemes. Quantitative data were analysed using percentage methods, tables, and graphical representations. The findings reveal that increased exposure to modern communication systems has positively influenced educational awareness, employment information, and income levels among the Uraon community. However, limited digital literacy and infrastructural constraints continue to restrict the full utilisation of communication technologies. The study emphasises the need for culturally sensitive communication strategies to promote inclusive tribal development.

Keywords: Development Communication, Uraon Tribe, Primary Data, Socio-Economic Development, Jashpur District

Introduction

Communication plays a decisive role in the process of development by facilitating the flow of information, awareness, and participation among communities. In developing societies, particularly among tribal populations, communication serves not only as a medium of information exchange but also as a means of social integration and empowerment (Servaes, 2008). Tribal communities in India have traditionally relied on indigenous and interpersonal communication systems to preserve culture, transmit values, and maintain social cohesion.

With the expansion of modern communication technologies such as mobile phones, television, and digital media, tribal societies are increasingly exposed to new forms of information related to education, employment, health, and government welfare programmes (Melkote & Steeves, 2015). The Uraon tribe, one of the major tribal communities in central and eastern India, is gradually experiencing changes in communication practices. These changes have the potential to influence their socio-economic conditions significantly.

Jashpur district of Chhattisgarh is predominantly tribal, with a substantial population of the Uraon community (Census of India, 2011). Despite several development initiatives, the region continues to face challenges related to poverty, limited educational attainment, and restricted access to employment opportunities. In this context, analysing the role of modern communication systems becomes crucial to understanding development dynamics among the Uraon tribe.

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Review of Literature

Scholars have consistently highlighted the importance of communication in fostering development and social change. Rogers (2003) emphasised that access to information accelerates the adoption of innovations and improves decision-making at the community level. In tribal contexts, communication processes are deeply embedded in social structures and cultural norms (Singh, 2002).

Studies on development communication suggest that modern media can enhance awareness of education, health, and livelihood opportunities when integrated with local communication practices (Melkote & Steeves, 2015). Nayak and Mahapatra (2016) observed that media exposure among tribal communities contributes to improved socio-economic outcomes, particularly in relation to education and employment awareness.

Research focusing on tribal communities in India indicates that mobile phones and television have emerged as significant sources of information, although their impact is moderated by literacy levels and language barriers (Chaudhary, 2017). Thakur and Minz (2018) found that communication plays a supportive role in tribal development by improving access to government schemes and social welfare programmes.

However, existing studies largely rely on secondary data or generalised observations. There remains a need for micro-level, primary data-based research focusing on specific tribal communities and regions. The present study attempts to fill this gap by examining the Uraon tribe in Jashpur district using household-level primary data.

Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the extent of access to modern communication systems among the Uraon tribe.
2. To analyse the role of communication exposure in enhancing educational awareness.
3. To examine the impact of communication on employment opportunities and income levels.
4. To evaluate the overall contribution of modern communication systems to socio-economic development.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design, based on primary data collected through fieldwork.

Area of the Study

The research was conducted in selected villages of Manora and Pathalgaon blocks of Jashpur district, Chhattisgarh. These blocks were selected due to the significant presence of the Uraon tribal population.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

A total of 200 Uraon households were selected using the purposive sampling method. Households were chosen to ensure representation across age groups, occupations, and educational levels.

Tools of Data Collection

- Structured interview schedule
- Household survey
- Direct interaction with respondents

Tools of Data Analysis

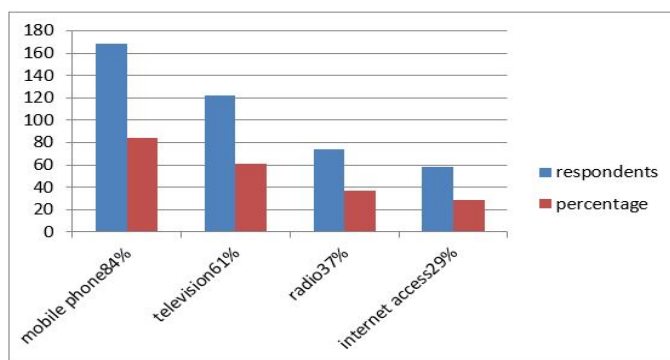
- Percentage analysis
- Tabular presentation
- Bar charts and pie charts

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

Table 1: Access to Modern Communication Devices among Uraon Households (n = 200).

s. no.	device	respondent	percentage
01	Mobile phone	168	84%
02	Television	122	61%
03	Radio	74	37%
04	Internet access	58	29%

The data indicate that mobile phones are the most accessible communication tool among Uraon households. Television also plays a significant role, whereas internet access remains limited. Similar trends have been observed in other tribal studies (Nayak & Mahapatra, 2016).

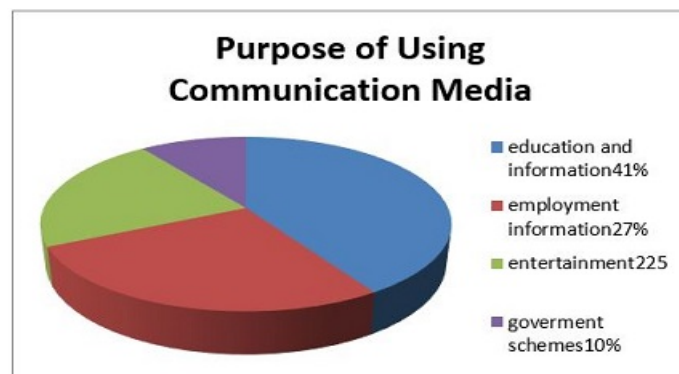


(Chart 1: this chart showing access to communication devices)

Table 2: Purpose of Using Communication Media

s. no.	purpose	respondent	percentage
01	Education and Information	82	41%
02	Employment Information	54	27%
03	Entertainment	44	22%
04	Government Schemes	20	10%

The findings suggest that communication media are increasingly used for development-oriented purposes, particularly education and employment information. This supports the argument that media exposure enhances developmental awareness (Melkote & Steeves, 2015)

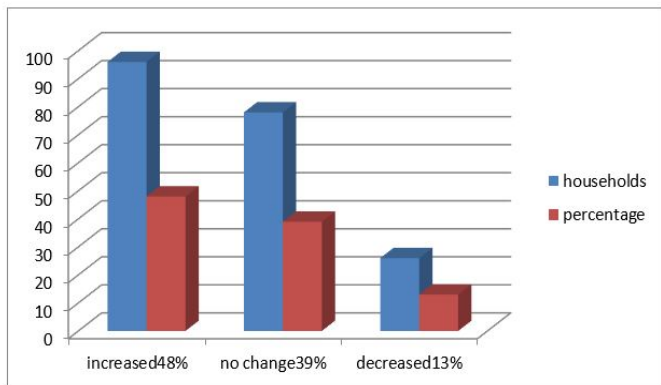


(Chart 2: Pie chart showing purpose-wise media usage)

Table 3: Impact of Communication Exposure on Income Levels

s. no.	Income change	households	percentage
01	Increased	96	48%
02	No change	78	39%
03	Decreased	26	13%

Nearly half of the respondents reported an increase in income after gaining access to communication-based information. This reflects the role of communication in improving livelihood opportunities, as noted by Rogers (2003).

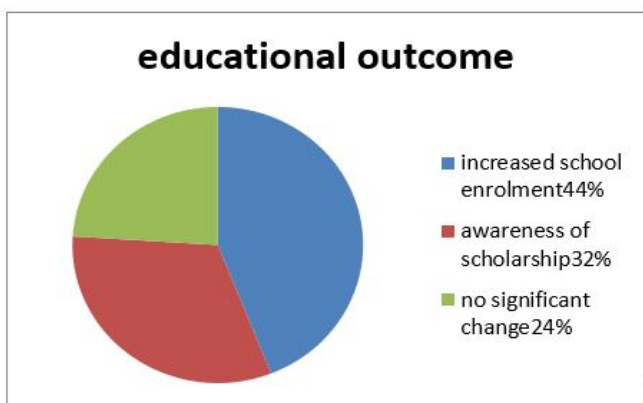


(Chart 3: Column chart showing income impact)

Table 4: Communication and Educational Awareness

s. no.	Educational outcome	respondents	percentage
01	Increased school enrolment	88	44%
02	Awareness of scholarship	64	32%
03	No significant change	48	24%

Modern communication tools have contributed positively to educational awareness among the Uraon tribe. Access to information regarding schooling and scholarships has improved participation in education (UNESCO, 2018).



6. Findings of the Study

- 1.Mobile phones are the most influential modern communication tool among the Uraon community.
- 2.Communication exposure has enhanced awareness regarding education, employment, and welfare schemes.
- 3.A positive relationship exists between access to communication systems and income generation.
- 4.Limited internet access and digital literacy remain major challenges.

7. Conclusion

The study concludes that modern communication systems play a significant role in the socio-economic development of the Uraon tribe in Jashpur district. While traditional communication practices continue to preserve cultural identity, modern media has expanded access to development-related information. Strengthening communication infrastructure and promoting digital literacy through culturally appropriate strategies can further enhance tribal development outcomes.

8. Scope for Further Research

Future research may adopt a comparative approach across different tribal communities or employ longitudinal methods to assess long-term impacts of communication on socio-economic development.

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