

# Rural Society in Transition: The Role of Communication and Transportation Technologies

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**Abstract**—Since time immemorial, Indian rural society has been a symbol of simplicity. The residents of the village have an intimate relationship with other residents. However, in the twentieth century, there was a rapid technological change. These technological changes have brought about rapid change in rural social structures. The advent of modern means of transportation and communication, particularly the widespread use of smartphones and access to the internet, has influenced rural life, economy, and social relationships. The lifestyle gap between rural and urban communities has narrowed, leading to trends of acculturation, conflicts, and changes in social structures. From agriculture to kinship patterns, the adoption of technology has connected rural society to the global network and propelled it toward a modern lifestyle. This study presents an analysis of the social, economic, and cultural aspects of this transformation. A sample of 20 female respondents, 10 Hindu and 10 muslim from village Yusufpur Gram Sabha Purkhas Kaushambi district in Uttar Pradesh was selected for the study. Primary data was gathered through observations, interviews, and narratives from the rural area. Findings reveal that rural social structures have changed with the advent of transportation and smartphones. The close-knit fabric of the village no longer acts as a safety valve. As people's sharing and caring attitudes have diminished.

**Index Terms**—Rural society, linear transformation, technology, communication, transportation, social structure, acculturation, smartphone, rural-urban convergence, social relationships.

## I. INTRODUCTION

According to the Census 2011, 68.84% of India's population lives in villages. In contemporary society, there is a rapid increase in industrialization, information, and knowledge. The villages are a strong

pillar of Indian culture, as they bind the people together. Every individual depends on agriculture for their basic need, which is food. Apart from providing food to people in the village, villages remain an integral, strong, and vibrant pillar of Indian society. Rural life in India has immense importance as it is an institution that provides stability to social relations. There is no electricity; therefore, as soon as the sun sets, everyone eats their food, stays in their homes, and goes to sleep early. The daily routine starts by waking up in the early morning before the sun rises. Water is filled by women from wells, and hand pumps are also seen at some places, but rural folks do not like hand pumps because of water stagnation around it. There is no drain, and there are unpaved roads. For transportation, people use bicycles, walking, and horse-drawn carriages.

Even amidst the expansion of a knowledge-based society and the widespread wave of globalization, it has always been considered essential to find close, direct, and intimate relations between man and nature in the village. According to Sims, a village is generally referred to as the settlement of ancient farmers. The society connected to nature, which we call the village, is the identity of India.

The researcher observed that people in Yusufpur are involved in agriculture, animal husbandry, and poultry farming. There are small shops for their daily use. They have connections with the market only once or twice a week. People wake up early in the morning and start their daily work. Men go out to work in the fields. Women also work in the fields. Apart from this, they sweep the houses and go to the kitchen to cook food. When they are free in the afternoon, they go to meet people in their neighborhood and ask about their health. After returning from the fields, the men sit outside at the

door and smoke a hookah. In this way, they also spend two hours in the morning and two hours in the evening every day with the people of the village and the neighbourhood. In this way, the *duardari*<sup>1</sup> continues. While smoking hookah, they talk about sports, political issues, and also joke and tease each other for entertainment. Women also do creative work in their free time, which is suitable for the season, like making sweaters, embroidery, making bedspreads, stitching clothes, making small and big baskets from Munj and Kasa for household use. Women also preserve grains in their homes. They maintain grains for the whole year. Women also preserve grains in their homes. On the occasion of weddings, all the women of the neighbourhood assemble to clean the wheat and rice for the wedding. During this, wedding songs are sung, and there is also a round of sarcasm and Jokes. On the occasion of a wedding, all the people of the village and locality fully cooperate by providing goods and services to the family in which the wedding is taking place. Every day after school, the children of the village are seen playing cricket and *gullidanda*<sup>2</sup> in the ground. While playing in the village, mohalla teams are also formed. Two, three, or more mohallas are present in every village. There is also a development-related competition among them. Young girls play outside their homes in where they play skipping, *ikkhat-dukhat*<sup>3</sup> (game), and playing with *chinaan* (tamarind seed)<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup>Duardaari refers to the practice in which people of the village gather in front of the house of a prominent person to discuss village matters and engage in recreation.

<sup>2</sup>Gulli - a small wooden stick (short, pointed at both ends)

Danda - a longer wooden stick used to strike the gulli  
Gulli-danda means a traditional stick game played in villages. Players use the danda to flick the gulli in to the air and then hit it as far as possible.

<sup>3</sup>*ikkhat-dukhat drawa* series of squares on the ground, throw a stone into one square, and then hop through the boxes without touching the lines

<sup>4</sup>*Chinaan* (tamarind seed) Boxes are drawn on the ground (usually in a row or pattern). Each player gets several **chinaan (tamarind seeds)**. The player **throws a chinaan** into a specific box.

Since their childhood, the girls have been trained to do household chores. Both Hindu and Muslim respondents said that girls are given toy utensils. The parent intends for them to learn household duties while playing games. Girls who are not allowed to leave their homes often arrange marriages of *Guriya* (dolls). They buy the wedding goods for *Guriya's* (dolls) wedding from the annual Urs or the local fair. The fair is a great attraction in the village. People from the lower class mostly set up shops at fairs. People of the village from the upper class roam around and do shopping. Respondents, both Hindu and Muslim, said that the physical mobility of women is restricted; villagers object to women's participation, but they assert, women visit fairs. Thus, it is evident that among respondents, both Hindu and Muslim physical mobility is seen, and they appear to be asserting their rights.

When there is a death in the Yusufpur village, on the occasion of mourning, all the people of the village cooperate. The people of the locality together arrange food and other necessities for the family members and guests of the bereaved family. Hence, this type of cooperation still exists.

In recent times respondent said that Technology, especially mobile phones and the internet, has connected the people of the village directly to the whole world. Now the village people immediately get to know the news, fashion, education, and employment opportunities globally. The new generation of the village is rapidly adopting facilities like social media, online shopping, and digital payments, which have brought about a lifestyle change. By adopting these new practices, the people of the Yusufpur village have become more aware and self-reliant than they were before.

Respondents, both Hindu and Muslim, told that in the field of education, online media have opened up new avenues for students to prepare for exams and competitive tests. Due to inventions, the use of modern technology and equipment has also increased in agriculture. People have started doing organic farming instead of traditional farming. Along with this, the social gathering at *Duadari* where the villagers used to gather and smoke hookah. The importance of group meetings has decreased, and people have started getting information through

mobile phones and YouTube. Respondents said that both Muslim and Hindu rural folk have started narrating religious activities like *Bhajan*<sup>5</sup>(sermons), *Naat*<sup>6</sup>, recitation of the Quran and stories through YouTube. It is clearly evident that technological advancement has impacted regardless of caste, class and religion.

Community development programs have increased the opportunities for development in the village. Due to the availability of roads and transport facilities, connectivity has been established between the village and the city. With the advent of electricity, machines have started being used in the village. Now people have become dependent on machines instead of working with their hands. Due to the opening of new employment opportunities, people have shown indifference towards poultry and animal husbandry and these are almost coming to an end. The youth of the village are showing more interest in working outside the village or going abroad. Youth of the village have migrated from almost every household are earning outside the village, due to which their economic condition has improved, and their lifestyle has also changed. Muslim respondents said that Muslim women do not go to work in the fields. But Hindu respondents said that Hindu women of the upper caste do not go to the field for harvesting and other work, but women of the lower caste go to the field. This clearly indicates that there is a prohibition among women of the upper class, both Muslim and Hindu, to go to the field, while lower caste women can work in the field without any restrictions.

Respondents said that the life of Yusufpur is impacted by city life. Even in villages, people have started getting their clothes stitched by tailors, and women go to beauty parlours, which are on the rise in villages. Guest houses are being booked for weddings. People have become dependent on the market for wedding ceremonies. Individualism and materialism have crept into the village. Nowadays, village people prefer neither to take help from other village residents nor to give help. Now, people

<sup>5</sup>Bhajan means a devotional song sung in praise of a deity, usually in Hindu tradition.

<sup>6</sup>A naat is a religious poem or song in Islam that expresses love, respect, and admiration for Prophet Muhammad.

maintain relationships as per their convenience and benefits. Earlier, people used to treat people of their village and locality with great affection. They used to help others in every small and big need. Now people help someone only when they expect to get some benefit from them in the future.

The use of technology has brought the village lifestyle closer to the urban lifestyle. Now, even in villages, people stay awake till late at night and sleep till late in the morning. Even the elderly people of the village have got mobile phones in their hands, and they are also using various social media platforms like YouTube, Instagram and Facebook to connect with the world.

Respondents said that the economic conditions of the villagers have improved. Villagers have brought bikes and cars according to their status. Villagers prefer to go to malls and shopping complexes instead of going to local fairs. Online delivery has made it easier to get food items, clothes, and entertainment items. Children and youth of the village prefer to connect with social media instead of playing sports. The trend of making reels, running social media channels, and creating pages has increased among the younger generation.

Now, kutchra houses are not seen in the villages; there is no drainage or sewer system, and the appearance of the houses has also changed. On one hand, this change shows development and progress, but on the other hand, it also raises the question whether the fundamental social and cultural identity of the village will remain intact for a long time amidst this rapid change. The interactions and social relations among people are going well with both modernity and tradition.

Studies by various scholars show that the rapid changes in communications and technology in the late 1980s and 1990s deeply influenced the structure of India's rural society. In his research, sociologist like Dube S.C. (1958) in his study *India's Changing Village*, observed that development programmes have brought about economic as well as cultural changes in the villages.

The study observed that development programmes have brought about economic as well as cultural changes in the village. In order to improve the living standards of villagers and make their lives happier, policymakers implemented schemes and innovations in the villages, but people accepted this development

because of factors like it looks new and good. The village will become like a town. When guests come, they will praise our village. This is happening in other villages, so we should do the same. These ideas influenced rural relations, and materialism and individualism arose in rural life.

Belli F.J. (1957) stated in his study, "Caste and the Economic Frontier: A Village in Highland Orissa," that people outside the state came to the village and purchased land from the residents, and this process occurred gradually over the last 50 years. Additionally, these people also became involved in the village economy. The cultivable land in the village was limited. Consequently, migrants could acquire land only from the old residents. Due to poverty, debt, social pressure, and the economic structure, farmers sold their land and became labourers. As a result, the transfer of land ownership led to a change in the social structure. Land serves not only as a means of livelihood but also as a source of social prestige. Due to the sale of land, the social and economic status of the farmers declined, and the social prestige of the buyer increased. This type of change was particularly evident in tribal societies.

Béteille A. (1965), in his study *Caste, Class and Power* (pp.121-122), explains that the village is not static but keeps changing through the interaction of law, tradition, technology, and power. Béteille describes changes in rural life, arguing that what previously existed as a caste-bound traditional agricultural system was influenced by technology, law, and commerce. The agricultural system became market-oriented. The Tanjore Tenant and Pannaiyal Protection Act (1952) empowered small farmers. The use of technology in agriculture opened up new avenues of production. Labour-based paddy cultivation was replaced by commercial cultivation of banana and betel leaf, but technology and commercialisation of agriculture did not benefit all farmers. Big farmers took advantage of the loopholes in the law and gained more profit. Small farmers remained dependent on large farmers and lacked access to opportunities and the economic and social capital to claim legal rights. Thus, inequality persisted in rural society. Technology transformed the caste-based rural structure into a class and market-based one.

Marriott M. in "Village India: Studies in the Little Community" (1955) wanted to understand the Indian

village in the complexities of Indian civilisation. Studied the village through a structural functional approach. The basis of his study has been civilisation, social organization and traditions. He says that there is an evolutionary concept, the structure of civilisation and traditions develops in two stages. The first stage is Evolution at the local level in a continuum of events. The second stage is Evolution through contact with civilisations and cultures or their amalgamation. He said that there is one type of evolution at the micro level and one at the macro level. During his study of Kishangarhi, he said that Kishangarhi is not an isolated big village, but it has its own identity. In a way, it can be called self-sufficient, which is confined within itself. On the other hand, there is also interaction with the outside world; he studied both forms of social change. The development of railways increased geographical mobility. The Thakurs of Madhopur and the Kaimars, a suppressed caste living at some distance from them, are gradually reshaping their family structures. Family ties among the Thakurs have weakened, and the importance of the clan and the village has diminished. The minor changes observed in the family structure among the Kammar, especially those with some education, are not a shift towards a Western-influenced family, but rather towards a more conservative "Hindu" family. Kaimar is trying to tighten the father's authority and impose restrictions on the wife. While Thakur's wife is coming out of solitary confinement, Kaimar's wife is being kept in solitary confinement. The Thakur model for the family appears to be influenced by the urban, Western family. At the same time, the Kamara class is based on a managerial caste and tenancy, so that their sympathies generally lie with the landlords rather than the tenants. As the authority of the Thakur Panchayats weakened, the caste system in the Kaimar community became stronger. With the weakening of the patron-client and landlord-tenant relationships, the Kaimar community has become increasingly self-reliant for resolving its disputes. The Kammar community has also become more sensitive about its collective reputation. A generation ago, it was common for a Thakur man to have sex with a Kammar woman. This still happens, but now this caste is trying to punish the criminals.

Food and drink restrictions have been tightened for the Kammar community and are strictly enforced; whereas earlier the Kammar community used to eat food and take water from other untouchables, they are now outcasts for such acts. As the Kaimar caste has become stronger, excommunication from the caste by the Kaimar Panchayat has also become common.

A.M. Shah's article "Village in the City, the city in the Village" depicts the process of universalization in which the city is absorbing the village by being delimited. On the other hand, urban people and urban cultures are entering the rural areas. He calls this a two-way process. This clearly reflects the rural-urban continuum.

In the second part, he highlights how villages are becoming more like cities. Urban amenities—markets, transportation, education, mobile networks, government institutions, new urban jobs, and consumerism—are rapidly entering rural areas. The rural economy is becoming cash-based, people work in the cities and live back in the villages, and rural lifestyles are becoming increasingly influenced by modern goods and services. This is changing the social structure of the village: joint families are loosening, caste-based control is weakening, and occupational diversity is increasing.

## II. OBJECTIVES

- To analyze the impact of technological advancements (transportation, smartphones, internet) on the social, economic, and cultural structure of rural society in India.
- To examine the extent to which modernization and globalization have influenced traditional rural values, social interactions, and lifestyle patterns.

### Research Questions

- How has the adoption of modern technology (e.g., smartphones, the internet, and digital services) transformed social relationships and community bonding in rural India?
- To what extent has modernization affected the preservation of traditional cultural practices and collective identity in Indian villages?

## III. METHODOLOGY

This study presents an analysis of the social, economic, and cultural aspects of this transformation. A sample of 20 female respondents, 10 Hindu and 10 Muslim village Yusufpur Gram Sabha, Purkhas Kaushambi district in Uttar Pradesh. For this, a multifaceted approach incorporating qualitative methods, such as interviews and observations, is employed. To gather in-depth information for this study, a sample of 20 respondents has been selected. The random sampling method was employed for selecting this sample. Data has been collected through both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include observations, in-depth interviews, and case studies. Secondary sources include books, journals, and reports.

Area of Study: Yusufpur is a small Village/hamlet in the Nevada Block in the Kaushambi District of Uttar Pradesh State, India. It comes under the Yusufpur Panchayath. It belongs to the Allahabad Division. It is located 26 km South of the District headquarters, Manjhanpur. Yusufpur is surrounded by Chail Block towards the North, Kaushambi Block towards the west. Place is on the border of the Kaushambi District and the Chitrakoot District. Chitrakoot District Mau is west towards this place.

### Data Analysis

The data has been broadly categorised into four themes (i) Transformation of Rural Life and the Impact of Technology, (ii) Changes in Social Relations and Community Life, (iii) The Role of Modern Transport in Connectivity and (iv) Mobility and Conflict Between Tradition and Modern Lifestyle Choices

### I: Transformation of Rural Life and the Impact of Technology

Technology has influenced all aspects of social life, like family, marriage and kinship. Even in villages, nuclear families are replacing joint families.

Due to the availability of the internet, people get information related to crop production, crop prices, etc., from the main market. The villagers make payments online. Due to transportation, people sell their produce directly in the market, which gives them more profit, and they also avoid exploitation by middlemen. Ferries are also being operated using

motorbikes and loudspeakers. People are taking advantage of government schemes and digital banking. The commercialisation of agriculture, the advent of the gig economy, and new sources of income have emerged in villages. Where connectivity was previously limited, villages have now become connected.

Respondents were of the view that, in comparison to earlier times, the lives of people have become easier both at home and work due to technological advancement, whether it is long-distance communication or the buying and selling of products.”.

## II Changes in Social Relations and Community Life

Data analysis reveals that social relationships have changed drastically. Three respondents (Hindu) said that earlier they had fictive kinship relation with the villagers. In northern Indian villages, fictive kinship is not established through religious rituals, but it is built automatically. As people of the village interact with each other, they are socialized to use kinship terminology based on age and relatedness. People of the village built and maintained relationships based on relatedness and utility. Sometimes the relation is on the basis of relatedness, and at times based on utility. (Erum & Lalima 2024)

The respondents said the structure of families is changing. The concept of joint families has been replaced by smaller families. However, the spirit of the joint family has not disappeared. People stand by their families when the opportunity arises. The values of cooperation and collectivism are changing, and people increasingly value cash work rather than physical labor. Values, family, religion, and culture are not in their old form, but rather appear transformed. Communications and digital services have impacted rural life today. Modernity has also arrived in villages, and people are embracing technology. The use of mobile phones and social media, in particular, has bridged class divides. People are copying the customs, traditions, and fashion of the upper class. In a way, fashion is becoming universalised thanks to social media and YouTube. This kind of change is evident even in small villages like Yusufpur. At weddings, everything from the bride and groom's clothing to the food and drink is adapted according to fashion. English culture has also entered the language. People

are using words like "Mamma," "Papa," "Daddy," etc., instead of "Amma," "Abba." "Chacha and Mamu are being called uncles. Terms like "chhota uncle" and "bade uncle" are being used. People are teaching young children the words "thank you," "sorry," and "bye-bye" from an early age, thus acculturating. Globalisation has made almost every product (of almost every brand) available today. The culture of materialism and ostentation has not left even rural people untouched. Rural residents are increasingly turning to digital communications and payments for convenience and modern appearance. Almost every household has a motorbike. The use of walking and cycling is declining, and e-rickshaws have reached every village. All the public amenities like air conditioners, refrigerators, washing machines, gas stoves and other mechanical equipment which are used in cities are also being used in villages. With the advent of electricity in the village, villagers have become increasingly dependent on machines. Inverters, solar panels, water purifiers, and cars are available only in elite families. Religious activities have also become symbols of prestige. Traditions, both large and small, interact, exchange, and adapt, influencing each other. McKimm Marriott shows the flow of two cultures through the Little and Great Traditions. He depicts the dynamics of rural society through his Little Great Tradition model.

The study shows that rural life in Yusufpur is undergoing significant transformation due to technological advancement, modernity, and globalization. Traditional joint families are being replaced by smaller nuclear families, though the spirit of mutual support persists. Values of cooperation and collectivism are changing, with increasing emphasis on cash work and materialism. Technology, especially mobile phones, social media, and digital services, has influenced lifestyle, fashion, communication, and even religious practices, bridging class divides and introducing urban and Western customs. Weddings, clothing, language, and household amenities reflect modern trends, while transportation has shifted from walking and cycling to motorbikes and e-rickshaws. The interaction of traditions and the adoption of new cultural practices illustrate the coexistence of old and new, aligning with McKim Marriott's Little and Great Traditions model of rural society.

### III The Role of Modern Transport in Connectivity and Mobility

Transportation plays a vital role in bringing about connectivity and mobility among the rural folks of Yusufpur. People migrate from village to city in search of a livelihood. Rural youth are increasingly relying on mobile connectivity and transportation for employment, relocation, and migration. People are seeking employment in other countries and connecting with their families through daily video calls. Instead of face-to-face direct relationships, WhatsApp and digital relationships have started being maintained. People have started maintaining relationships by joining WhatsApp groups and through video calls. Two Muslim respondents said that the village folk living in Saudi Arabia are easily connected through WhatsApp video calls. 20 years ago, they were unable to connect to their family members. They also said that now more people are moving to metropolitan cities like Mumbai, Hyderabad, Burnpur and Jamshedpur for employment. The construction of roads has connected villages to big cities, and now people can travel easily as per their needs.

Transportation has played a vital role in enhancing connectivity and mobility among the rural residents of Yusufpur. Improved roads have linked villages to major cities, enabling easier travel for employment, relocation, and other needs. Many villagers, especially the youth, migrate to metropolitan cities like Mumbai, Hyderabad, Burnpur, and Jamshedpur, while some seek employment abroad. Mobile connectivity, WhatsApp, and video calls have transformed social relationships, allowing families to maintain ties across long distances, including international connections that were not possible 20 years ago. Villagers living in Saudi Arabia, for example, can now easily stay in touch with their families. Overall, transportation and digital communication together have significantly reshaped rural social and economic life.

### IV Conflict Between Tradition And Modern Lifestyle Choices

The village had a jajmani system and a set pattern. To transmit messages, there were *naus* (cowmen) who would deliver messages to relatives in other villages and receive rewards in return. But communication facilities like telephone, smartphone, and technology

smartphones have transformed rural life to such an extent that a clear value conflict has arisen between the older and younger generations. Elders talk about following values like discipline, tradition, religious activities and spending time with family, but the advent of smartphones, social media and digital entertainment has completely changed the lifestyle. They use mobile phones late at night, follow trends and prioritize personal freedom, while parents give importance to cultural values and responsibilities. Due to this, conflict in thinking, behavior and relationships is increasing, which has become the main reason for change in society.

### IV. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The study reveals that rural life in Yusufpur is undergoing profound transformation due to technological advancement, modernity, globalization, and improved transportation. Traditional joint families are giving way to smaller nuclear families, though mutual support persists, and values of cooperation and collectivism are gradually changing. Technology, including mobile phones, social media, digital services, and online banking, has influenced communication, employment, lifestyle, fashion, and even religious practices, bridging class divides and introducing urban and Western customs. Improved roads and transport facilities, along with digital connectivity, have enabled migration for employment within India and abroad while maintaining family ties through WhatsApp and video calls. Cultural practices, traditions, and ceremonies such as weddings are being adapted according to modern trends, and household amenities, motorbikes, and e-rickshaws reflect rising materialism and convenience. At the same time, conflict has emerged between traditional values upheld by elders and the modern lifestyle choices of youth, highlighting a tension between discipline, religious practices, and family-oriented values versus personal freedom, digital entertainment, and trend-following. Overall, Yusufpur exemplifies the coexistence of old and new, illustrating McKim Marriott's Little and Great Traditions model, where technology and modernity reshape social, economic, and cultural life while partially preserving traditional bonds.

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