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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Tenets of Technology as a Post-Truth Credo in Indian Rural Academia

[1]D. Prasanth Arokia Samy, [2]Dr. P. V. Rajlakshmi, [3]Dr. S. S. Uma Sundara Sood, [4]Dr. P. Kiruthika, [5]Dr. J. Britto Jenobia, [6]Dr. S. Paul Pragash, [7]Attrait Dovin Fedrick S

[1,6] PG & Research Department of English, St. Joseph's College (Autonomous), Affiliated to Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli – 620002, Tamil Nadu, India.

[2] Department of English, Kongu Engineering College, Erode – 638060, Tamil Nadu, India.

[3] Department of English, Annapoorna Engineering College, Salem – 636308, Tamil Nadu, India.

[4] Department of English, Periyar University Centre for Postgraduate and Research Studies, Dharmapuri – 635205, Tamil Nadu, India.

[5] PG & Research Department of English, Holy Cross College (Autonomous), Affiliated to Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli – 620002, Tamil Nadu, India

[7] PhD Research Scholar of English, Sri Krishna Arts and Science College (Autonomous), Kuniyamuthur, Coimbatore – 641008, Tamil Nadu, India.

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ABSTRACT

The integration of technology in rural Indian academia has transformed educational practices, offering both opportunities and challenges. This study looked into how digital tools and platforms affected the pedagogical approaches and epistemic frameworks used in rural educational institutions, examining the role of technology as a post-truth credo. The study used a mixed-methods strategy to collect data from different rural institutions across India by combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews. The results showed how technology could support objective learning and critical thinking while also working against them. The study provided guidance to schools and politicians on how to promote media awareness, critical thinking, and digital literacy in order to maximize the positive aspects of technology while minimizing its post-truth drawbacks. This study added to the larger conversation about the effects of technology-enhanced learning on academic integrity in the post-truth age.

***Corresponding Author:**

prasanthdavidraj@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

The convergence of technology and education in the modern era has brought about significant changes, especially in India's rural academic communities. The emergence of digital tools and platforms has transformed the ways in which knowledge is acquired and disseminated, while also democratizing access to information. But this rapid advancement of technology also brought to the phenomena known as "post-truth," in which subjective opinions and emotive appeals frequently took precedence over objective facts. In the setting of Indian rural academia, this research study aimed to investigate the principles of technology as a post-truth credo, looking at how digital advances impacted the educational practices and epistemic frameworks in these areas.

The concept that appeals to emotion and personal belief were more effective in influencing public opinion than objective facts was summed up by the term "post-truth," which was selected the Oxford

Dictionaries' Word of the Year in 2016. In rural India, where resources were scarce and educational infrastructures frequently inadequate, integrating technology into academia brought both opportunities and obstacles. Digital tools have the potential to bridge educational gaps by giving teachers and students unparalleled access to knowledge and resources. However, the same instruments might also encourage cognitive biases and aid in the dissemination of false information, undermining efforts to arrive at objective knowledge. The spread of social media, internet access, and cellphones in rural regions has drastically changed the nature of schooling. These tools gave teachers and students more power facilitating cutting-edge instructional strategies and dynamic educational opportunities. However, the dependence on digital sources also gave rise to questions regarding the veracity and legitimacy of the data. The ubiquity of edited films, biased content, and fake news could skew public opinion and spread untruths, undermining the objectivity of scholarly discourse.

The purpose of this study was to find out how much technology was used in Indian rural academics as a post-truth ideology. It explored how students' and teachers' epistemic perspectives were affected by digital tools and platforms that altered educational practices. The research utilized a mixed-approaches methodology, merging qualitative interviews with quantitative surveys to collect extensive data from numerous rural educational establishments throughout India. Through the process of data analysis, the research aimed to pinpoint patterns and trends that clarified how technology either supported or impeded objective learning and critical thinking. The study also looked at how these findings might affect practice and policy. It examined how educational practices could be developed to take use of technology's advantages while minimizing its post-truth risks. Advice were designed to help educators and legislators foster media awareness, critical thinking, and digital literacy in rural children. It was feasible to use technology as a positive force in rural academics by creating an atmosphere that valued truth and critical thinking.

To sum up, this study tackled a pressing problem at the intersection of truth, education, and technology in rural India. It looked at the principles of technology as a post-truth ideology in an effort to add to the conversation about how digital advancements affect epistemic values and educational integrity. For educators, legislators, and academics trying to negotiate the challenges of technology-enhanced education in the post-truth era, the findings provide insightful information.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The convergence of technology and education, especially in India's rural settings, has drawn attention from scholars and the general public. With the proliferation of digital tools and platforms, a careful analysis of their effects on educational practices and epistemological frameworks was necessary. This chapter addressed the body of research on the post-truth era, the impact of technology on education, and the unique dynamics of rural academia in India.

2.1 Technology in education

A large body of research has been done on the use of technology in education, with many academics emphasizing how it can improve student learning. Selwyn (2011), for example, talked about how digital technologies can completely change the way that education is delivered by fostering interactive, student-centered learning environments. In a similar vein, Anderson and Dron (2011) stressed the advantages of online learning environments for delivering flexible and easily accessible education, especially in underprivileged areas. The integration of technology has been perceived as a way to address educational gaps in rural India. Digital tools greatly increased access to high-quality education in rural areas, where traditional educational infrastructures were frequently insufficient, according to a 2017 World Bank research. Furthermore, Sarangapani and Vasavi's (2017) study emphasized the advantages of digital learning efforts in Indian rural schools, observing gains in academic performance and student involvement.

2.2 The post-truth phenomenon

In recent years, there has been a lot of discussion around the idea of post-truth, in which objective facts are given less weight than one's own opinions and sentimental appeals. The post-truth period may be traced back to the rise of social media and the waning faith in traditional news sources, according to McIntyre (2018). The dissemination of false information and fake news, made possible by digital platforms, presented a significant obstacle to the search for knowledge and the truth. The

effects of the post-truth age were most noticeable in rural India. Rural populations were exposed to more potentially biased or erroneous digital content as internet penetration expanded. According to the 2018 Reuters Institute Digital News Report, disinformation was a major problem in India, especially in rural areas where there is a lower level of digital literacy. Das and Sahoo's (2019) study provided additional evidence of rural people' vulnerability to false information, underscoring the importance of well-designed media literacy initiatives.

2.3 Technology and post-truth in Indian rural academia

Within Indian rural academia, the post-truth phenomena and technological convergence created a complex dynamic. Digital tools, on the one hand, provided chances to improve teaching methods and increase information availability. However, the same instruments can also make it easier for false information to proliferate, jeopardizing the integrity of education. In their 2018 study, Kumar and Moorthy examined the pros and drawbacks of using technology in rural Indian schooling. In addition to highlighting the benefits of digital learning platforms for raising student achievement, their research emphasized the dangers of false information and digital manipulation. Similar to this, Gupta (2019) investigated how social media shaped rural students' epistemic views and discovered that exposure to biased content could greatly affect their perceptions and understanding of reality.

2.4 Empirical evidence from Indian and global contexts

The impact of technology and post-truth on rural academia was further clarified by empirical evidence from research and newspaper articles. A 2019 article in The Hindu examined the growing impact of digital tools in rural education, highlighting examples where technology has helped disseminate false information while also improving learning outcomes. The difficulties experienced by rural educators in thwarting fake news and encouraging digital literacy among children were covered by The Times of India (2020). Similar patterns had been noted globally. The New York Times (2018) emphasized the difficulties facing schooling in the post-truth era and noted how technology both democratizes information and aids in the propagation of lies. The Guardian (2019) examined how social media affects teaching methods, highlighting the need of critical thinking and media literacy skills.

2.5 Policy and practice implications

The literature made numerous recommendations for practices and legislation that may be used to address the issues of post-truth and technology in rural academic settings. Everyone agreed that comprehensive programs in digital literacy were necessary to give instructors and students the ability to assess digital content critically. In 2019, the Indian Ministry of Human Resource Development promoted the inclusion of digital literacy in rural education curricula, stressing the significance of training students to distinguish reliable sources from false information. Effective digital learning initiatives also need cooperation between government agencies, technology companies, and educational institutions. A multi-stakeholder strategy, according to Singh (2020), might guarantee that the advantages of technology were utilized while reducing the risks connected with the post-truth period.

The literature review emphasized how technology has a dual effect on rural Indian academics, emphasizing both the positive effects it can have on education and the negative effects of the post-truth phenomenon. This chapter gave a thorough review of the intricate interactions between digital tools and educational practices in rural India by looking at previous research and empirical data. The results highlighted the necessity of specific policies and practices that supported critical thinking and digital literacy in order to preserve the integrity of education in the digital age.

3. METHODOLOGY

The approach used to look into the "Tenets of Technology as a Post-Truth Credo in Indian Rural Academia" was described in this chapter. A mixed-methods strategy was used to thoroughly investigate the integration of technology in rural higher education and its effects on educational beliefs and perceptions of truth. It combined quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. Surveys, interviews, focus groups, and content analysis were all used in the study. This design was chosen to give a comprehensive picture of the condition of technology in rural academia today, the

relationship between technological principles and educational ideals, and stakeholders' opinions of what is true and false. It also sought to suggest methods for lessening the impact of post-truth dynamics in the context of technological integration.

Two rural Tamil Nadu colleges, Arul Anandar College in Karumathur and Anandha College in Pamakudi, both hosted surveys. The purpose of these surveys was to gather quantifiable information about how students, teachers, and community members use and view technology. The first year of the research, from March 2023 to February 2024, saw the creation and validation of the survey tools. The tools were made to record a variety of data, such as the kinds and quantities of technology used, as well as the opinions of participants regarding the reliability of digital information. Qualitative data were acquired through focus groups and in-depth interviews in order to acquire deeper insights. These techniques made it easier to investigate the intersections between technology principles and educational ideas in rural academic contexts. The interviews and focus groups were carried out in February and March of 2024, the study's second year. A wide range of students, teachers, and community people participated, offering a wealth of qualitative data. These conversations aided in revealing complex viewpoints regarding the advantages and difficulties of integrating technology into the classroom.

3.1 Evaluate the present state of technology in rural higher education

To evaluate the present state of technology in rural higher education, the research employed quantitative surveys. These surveys were distributed to students, educators, and administrative staff at rural educational institutions such as Arul Anandar College, Karumathur. The surveys collected data on the extent of technology usage, types of technologies being utilized, and their prevalence. The survey included questions such as:

1. What types of digital tools and platforms are used in your institution?
2. How frequently are these technologies employed in your academic activities?
3. What are the primary purposes for which these technologies are used (e.g., teaching, learning, administration)?

This approach provided a statistical overview of technological adoption in rural academia, highlighting the degree to which technology had been integrated into educational practices.

3.2 Examination of the intersection of educational beliefs and technological tenets

To explore the intersection of educational beliefs and technological tenets, the research utilized qualitative methods, including in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. Interviews were conducted with educators, administrators, and policymakers to understand how current educational practices and beliefs aligned with or diverged from technological principles. Sample questions for interviews included:

1. How do you perceive the role of technology in enhancing educational practices?
2. In what ways do technological tools align with your teaching philosophy?
3. Are there any conflicts between traditional educational beliefs and technological integration?

Focus group discussions with students further illuminated how educational beliefs were influenced by technological tenets. These discussions provided rich, contextual insights into the lived experiences of individuals in rural academic settings.

3.3 Exploration of Perceptions of Truth and Misinformation

To investigate perceptions of truth and misinformation in the context of technology integration, the research employed qualitative methods. Focus group discussions and interviews with students, teachers, and community members were conducted to explore their understanding of truth and false information in the digital age. Questions for these discussions included:

1. How do you differentiate between credible and non-credible information online?
2. Have you encountered misinformation in your academic work? How did you handle it?
3. What role do you think technology plays in spreading or mitigating misinformation?

These qualitative insights helped uncover the nuanced ways in which rural communities perceived and navigated the post-truth landscape.

3.4 Identification of opportunities and challenges

To identify the opportunities and challenges associated with integrating technology in rural academic settings, the research combined insights from both the quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews. The surveys quantified the perceived benefits and drawbacks of technology use, while the interviews and focus groups provided detailed descriptions of specific opportunities and challenges. Sample survey questions included:

1. What are the primary benefits of using technology in your education?
2. What challenges have you faced with technological integration?

Qualitative data offered deeper explanations and examples, painting a comprehensive picture of the technological landscape in rural academia.

3.5 Proposal of mitigation strategies

Based on the findings from the surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions, the research proposed targeted strategies to mitigate the effects of post-truth dynamics. Content analysis of instructional materials and digital platforms was also conducted to understand how information was framed and presented in rural academic institutions. Content analysis involved:

1. Reviewing digital textbooks, online tutorials, and other educational materials for accuracy and bias.
2. Analyzing social media content and its impact on academic discourse.

This multifaceted approach ensured that the proposed strategies were evidence-based and context-specific, addressing the unique challenges faced by rural educational institutions. This study used a mixed-methods approach to provide a comprehensive knowledge of the function of technology in rural Indian academics and how post-truth dynamics intersect with it. Comprehensive insights into the current state of technology, educational beliefs, perceptions of truth, and the potential and problems of technological integration were obtained through the combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies. In the end, the study provided useful tactics for improving critical thinking, digital literacy, and the general quality of instruction in rural educational environments.

3.6 Plan of work and targets achieved

The research followed a structured plan of work, divided into two main phases. A thorough review of rural institutions' use of technology in Tamil Nadu was conducted in the first year from march 2023 to February 2024. Survey tools were created and verified, and partnerships were formed with educational institutions such as Arul Anandar College and Anandha College. This phase also involved initial data collection and pilot testing of the research instruments. Focus groups, interviews, and surveys were conducted in selected rural academic settings in the second year from February 2024 to July 2024. Both quantitative and qualitative data were examined to understand the interaction between educational beliefs and technological principles. Content analysis of digital platforms and instructional materials was initiated. Initial observations and findings were prepared and shared with stakeholders for feedback.

4. THE IMPACT OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES ON EDUCATIONAL INTEGRITY IN RURAL ACADEMIA

The global adoption of digital technologies has brought about a change in educational processes, including in rural India. Although these technologies had many advantages, they also presented serious difficulties, especially in light of the post-truth era. This chapter looked at five main topics: global attempts to counter disinformation in academia; social media's influence on educational discourse; digital echo chambers in research communities; the distortion of educational principles in online resources; and digital literacy initiatives in higher education.

4.1 Digital echo chambers in research communities

Online spaces known as "digital echo chambers" occurred when people were mostly exposed to information that supported their preexisting opinions, which reinforced those opinions and excluded other points of view. This tendency was especially troublesome in academic rural India. According to Kumar (2018), "the lack of exposure to diverse viewpoints can hinder critical thinking and scholarly debate." These communities' researchers frequently depended excessively on a small number of digital sources, which could obstruct academic advancement and produce an echo chamber effect.

4.2 Social media's impact on educational discourse

Social media sites have grown to be important forces in forming the conversation in education. They allowed for cooperation and the exchange of knowledge, but they also made it easier for false information to proliferate. The Reuters Institute Digital News Report (2018) states that "misinformation on social media is a widespread issue, particularly in rural areas with lower levels of digital literacy." This has direct effects on educational discourse since it increases the possibility that teachers and students would come across and unintentionally spread inaccurate or erroneous information. Das and Sahoo (2019) pointed out that "the rapid dissemination of fake news on social media platforms can distort educational content and undermine the credibility of academic institutions."

4.3 Distortion of educational principles in online resources

Another major worry was the distorting of educational concepts by means of internet resources. Digital textbooks, online courses, and educational websites may occasionally provide false or biased material. In rural locations, where access to reliable sources may be limited, this problem was made worse. Gupta (2019) stated that "the quality of online educational content varies significantly, and students in rural areas are often ill-equipped to discern credible sources from unreliable ones." This could result in the spread of false information and the deterioration of fundamental educational values.

4.4 Global efforts to combat misinformation in academia

Many international campaigns had been started to counteract academic disinformation. For instance, the Digital Education Action Plan was put into effect by the European Union with the goal of improving critical thinking and digital literacy among educators and students (European Commission, 2020). The Stanford History Education Group in the US created materials to assist students in critically assessing internet sources. "Promoting digital literacy and critical thinking is essential to countering the effects of the post-truth era," according to McIntyre (2018).

4.5 Digital literacy programs in higher education

Higher education's digital literacy initiatives were essential in preparing students for life in the digital information age. Initiatives like the National Digital Literacy Mission (NDLM) in India were designed to instruct people in rural areas in digital literacy. According to the Ministry of Human Resource Development (2019), "improving digital literacy is key to fostering an informed and critically thinking student body," underscoring the significance of including digital literacy into the higher education curriculum. Academic institutions in rural India had both opportunities and obstacles when integrating digital technologies. These technologies presented concerns connected to disinformation and the distortion of educational principles, even while they may improve access to education and promote creative teaching approaches. A multifaceted strategy was needed to address these issues, one that included fighting misinformation, encouraging critical thinking, and increasing digital literacy. It has been feasible to lessen the negative effects of the post-truth age and preserve the integrity of education in rural places by putting in place efficient digital literacy programs and supporting a diversity of viewpoints in research communities.

5. RESEARCH FINDINGS

The study "Tenets of Technology as a Post-Truth Credo in Indian Rural Academia" produced illuminating results that shed light on the status of technology in rural higher education, the ways in which technological tenets and educational beliefs interact, how people perceive the truth and false

information, and the advantages and disadvantages of technological integration. The results for each of the objectives are presented in this chapter, along with suggestions for how to lessen the influence of post-truth dynamics in this particular setting.

5.1 Evaluate the present state of technology in rural higher education

According to the survey, technology use in rural higher education institutions is increasing but is still uneven. A study carried out at Arul Anandar College in Karumathur revealed that over 70% of students and 60% of staff members said they used digital tools for their academic work. Computers, smartphones, and internet-based tools like instructional apps and online databases were common technologies. The quality and accessibility of these technologies, however, differed greatly.The potential of digital tools to improve education in rural areas was being partially realized, as noted by Selwyn (2011) and the World Bank (2017). However, issues like restricted internet access and inadequate teacher training continued to exist. These results highlighted the need for focused support and enhanced infrastructure in order to optimize the use of technology in rural education.

5.2 Examine the intersection of educational beliefs and technological tenets

The results of focus groups and interviews showed a nuanced interplay between technical principles and conventional educational ideals. Numerous instructors recognized the importance of technology in facilitating information access and promoting participatory learning. The deep, thoughtful learning that is valued in conventional educational approaches was at odds with the quick, frequently surface-level involvement that digital tools encouraged. Similar conflicts were highlighted by Kumar and Moorthy (2018), who pointed out that although technology could improve teaching methods, it could also undermine long-held pedagogical convictions. This contradiction emphasized the necessity for a well-rounded strategy that included technology without sacrificing the fundamentals of education.

5.3 Explore how people see the truth and false information

The study discovered important issues with how students, teachers, and community people perceive the truth and false information. Discussions from focus groups revealed that a lot of people had trouble telling the difference between reliable and unreliable sources of information. The existence of digital echo chambers, which restricted exposure to different viewpoints, made this problem worse. The Reuters Institute Digital News Report (2018) and Das and Sahoo (2019) both highlighted how rural communities' lower levels of digital literacy make them more susceptible to disinformation. These results indicated that in order to provide people with the abilities to critically assess digital content, comprehensive media literacy programs are desperately needed.

5.4 Identify the opportunities and challenges

There were benefits and drawbacks to integrating technology in rural academic environments. Opportunities included the opportunity for creative teaching techniques, better student involvement, and increased access to educational resources. But there were also major obstacles, like the digital gap, false information, and the breakdown of conventional educational ideas. Sarangapani and Vasavi (2017) and Gupta (2019) both emphasized the advantages and disadvantages of digital learning in rural settings. These contradictory facts need a sophisticated strategy that addressed the drawbacks of technology while maximizing its advantages.

5.5 Propose mitigation strategies

Based on the findings, several strategies were proposed to mitigate the effects of post-truth dynamics in the context of technology integration:

1. Enhance Digital Infrastructure: Invest in reliable internet access and up-to-date digital tools to ensure equitable access to technology.
2. Implement Comprehensive Digital Literacy Programs: Develop and integrate digital literacy curricula that teach critical evaluation skills, helping students and educators discern credible sources from misinformation (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2019).
3. Promote Balanced Integration of Technology: Encourage a pedagogical approach that harmonizes traditional educational values with technological advancements, ensuring that

technology serves as a tool rather than a replacement for deep learning (Kumar and Moorthy, 2018).

4. Foster Diverse and Inclusive Digital Spaces: Create opportunities for exposure to a variety of perspectives to counteract the effects of digital echo chambers (McIntyre, 2018).
5. Develop Policies and Guidelines: Establish clear policies and guidelines for the use of technology in education, addressing issues of misinformation and promoting ethical digital practices.

CONCLUSION

The research's conclusions emphasized both the post-truth era's serious issues and the revolutionary potential of technology in rural higher education. Through an assessment of current technological capabilities, an investigation of the relationship between educational ideologies and technological principles, an exploration of truth perceptions, an identification of opportunities and challenges, and the proposal of mitigating measures, this study offered a thorough framework for managing the intricate terrain of digital integration in rural academia. In the future, initiatives should concentrate on developing critical thinking skills, improving digital literacy, and making sure that technology enhances rather than detracts from the educational process.

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