A Study On Empowering Tribal Livelihoods Through Digital Marketing With Special Reference To Tribal Areas At Kodaikanal, Tamil Nadu, In Accordance With Sustainable Development GOALS (SDGS).

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ABSTRACT:
This study investigates the potential of digital marketing to empower tribal livelihoods, with a specific focus on tribal areas in Kodaikanal (Perumalmalai), Tamil Nadu, aligning with sustainable development goal. The research aims to explore how digital marketing strategies can be utilized to enhance the economic opportunities and socio-economic well-being of tribal communities in the region, contributing to SDG 1 (No poverty), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). Data collected from 60 respondents through surveys and interviews provides insights into the current status of digital marketing adoption, challenges faced by tribal entrepreneurs, fear in adopting digital tools and opportunities for leveraging digital platforms to promote tribal products and services. Through an analysis of the data and existing literature, the study seeks to identify effective strategies for promoting digital marketing initiatives tailored to the unique socio-cultural context of tribal areas in Kodaikanal. The findings of this research contribute to the growing body of knowledge on digital empowerment in marginalized communities and offer practical recommendations for policymakers, development practitioners, and tribal stakeholders to harness the potential of digital marketing for sustainable livelihood development in tribal regions and advancing SDG 1 and 8.
KEY WORDS Digital Skills, Traditional Knowledge, E-commerce, Employment Opportunities, empowerment

I. INTRODUCTION

Tribal communities in India have long grappled with socio-economic challenges stemming from historical marginalization and limited access to mainstream opportunities. Among these challenges, one prominent issue is the struggle to sustain viable livelihoods in the face of changing market dynamics and socio-cultural shifts.No Poverty," one of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), entails ensuring that all individuals have access to basic resources, services, and opportunities to lift themselves out of poverty. It emphasizes the importance of economic empowerment and social inclusion to eradicate poverty in all its forms.Similarly, "Decent Work and Economic Growth" SDG focuses on promoting sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all. This goal emphasizes the creation of decent jobs, the protection of labour rights, and the promotion of entrepreneurship and innovation. It aims to ensure that economic growth benefits all segments of society, including marginalized groups such as tribal communities. In recent years, however, the emergence of digital marketing as a transformative tool has offered a glimmer of hope for empowering tribal livelihoods and fostering economic resilience

This study focuses on the application of digital marketing strategies to uplift tribal livelihoods, with a specific emphasis on tribal areas situated in Kodaikanal Perumalmalai, Tamil Nadu. Kodaikanal, renowned for its scenic beauty and rich cultural heritage, is also home to several indigenous tribal communities. Despite their deep-rooted connection to the land, many of these communities face barriers to economic advancement, including limited market access, inadequate infrastructure, and insufficient resources for entrepreneurship.

Through the collection of data from 60 respondents through surveys and interviews, this study seeks to delve into the current landscape of digital marketing adoption among tribal communities in Kodaikanal. By analyzing the data and synthesizing insights from existing literature, the research aims to identify effective strategies for empowering tribal livelihoods through digital marketing interventions. Furthermore, the study aims to shed light on the unique socio-cultural context of tribal areas in Kodaikanal, providing valuable insights for policymakers, development practitioners, and tribal stakeholders seeking to promote sustainable livelihood development and socio-economic empowerment in marginalized communities.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY
- To analyse the opportunities of digital marketing of to empower the tribal people.
- To find challenges faced by tribal community towards implementation of digital platforms
- To add joint with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) such as SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), inadvancing socio-economic empowerment among tribal communities through digital marketing initiatives.

1.2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Dr. T. Shobarani (2019)[1] this study explore. Information communication strategy method are play vital role in this digitalized world and effective assistance to tribal those who are marketing this product in different platform, tribal people especially tribal victims by tremendous Problems like lack of knowledge, lack of support price lack of were housing lack of Infrastructure facility lack of education, lack of technical know-how, lack of financial assistance and lack of freedom for marketing of products. By suing of ICT tools tribal people increase their victory level to marketing of this products, mobile phones and Internet necessity tool for victory business operation and contest and also give tremendous range of opportunities to tribal people different kinds ICT tools which are having favorable Inaugurated and practices by tribal people marketing this product service.

Rajathilagam & Dr.K.Kavitha (2018)[2] this study describes on latest marketing strategies to tribal product and determine the maximum support price to this products. Therefore an attempt made explore this study find out he extent of live Livelihood security tribal people in kodaikanal through social media sourcing online platform where tribal people, Agriculture, NGO Individual join the online platform channels climate can process with direct tribal people these is no interfere middlemen, NGO LAMP and tribal people can reap maximum price of this product of marketing for the selection of simple random sampling method adopted to this study is to be used for which guaranteeing equal probably though sample procedure kodaikanal municipal 0.3 that is 102 schedule tribe has been living the of this study to explore the Marking strategies to possibilities implementation and progress social marketing among tribe to enhance this livelihood security.

Smitha Kumar, R. L. Gayathri Journal: Journal of Rural Development, Volume 39, Issue 3, 2020 Abstract: This paper explores the potential of digital technologies in empowering indigenous communities, focusing on how digital marketing strategies can enhance their livelihood opportunities. It discusses the role of digital literacy, access to technology, and socio-economic factors in promoting digital empowerment among indigenous populations. The study also examines the challenges faced by indigenous communities in adopting digital platforms and proposes policy recommendations to address these barriers. Furthermore, it emphasizes the importance of aligning digital empowerment initiatives with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to ensure inclusive and sustainable development for indigenous communities.

Caneolivier (2020)[3] This studies revealed Tribal marketing now a day facing its tremendous challenges as society and tribe evolving towards a single and unique manner of Information through online platform society and world tribe are now groups of people who are Independent and cannot be controlled by the brand, tribes such as Harlaydavid son owners are concern on this own with rules and rituals that are hard to control. For further analyses researches recommended this study the relationship between the loyalty and financial patronage of tribes among different product besides their measure different back ground and peculiar each member of the tribes share some inducement to client perception and social Interaction.

MohamadAjaz –UL –Islamis.msulaiman QULI. R Rai and a sofi (2016)[4] this study shows that direct jobs under routine forestry activities are created by the Forest Department, generally causal labor. The main forest-based activities from which people get jobs and income are land measures Tendu leaf procurement and the tribal bam boo role were used to set contracts on a regular pay basis for further forestry activities, the employment in such activity, due to its seasonal existence, is largely sporadic. In order to enrich the research

activities in the sample village under the block of the Ranchi District of Jharkhand, the author suggested cooperation to support gram pradhan leader local NGOs.

1.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining surveys and interviews to collect data from tribal communities in Perumalmalai, Kodaikanal. A sample of 60 respondents was selected using convenience sampling, representing a diverse range of age groups and occupations. The survey questionnaire included questions on having 4g mobile phones access to technology, internet usage, online payments, doing business other than local areas, online business and perceptions of digital tools.

1.4 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Digital transformation	Yes	No	Total number of respondents
Having 4G mobile phones	26	34	60
Using internet facility	22	38	60
Using online payment facilities (like Gpay)	12	48	60
Doing business other than their local areas	25	35	60
Purchasing outside areas	32	28	60
Doing online business	1	59	60
Fear adopt digital tools	39	21	60
Idea to implement digital tools in future	44	16	60
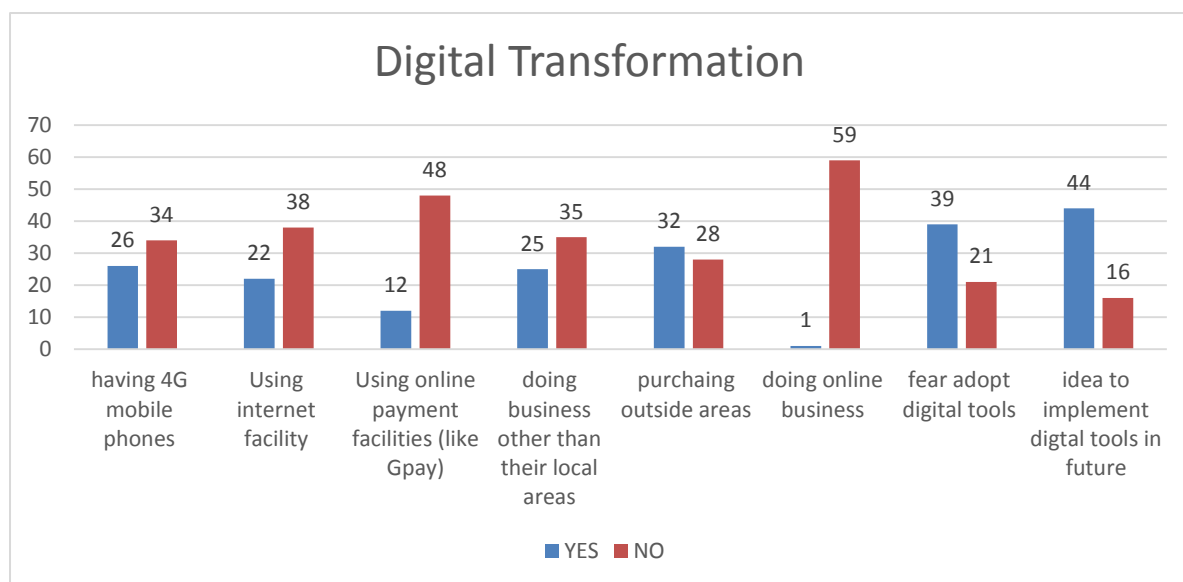
The survey data revealed the following insights regarding digital transformation among tribal livelihoods in Kodaikanal:

- Approximately 43.33% of respondents reported having 4G mobile phones, indicating relatively widespread access to mobile technology.
- Only 36.67% of respondents reported using the internet, suggesting limited internet penetration among the surveyed population.
- Online payment facilities, such as Gpay, were utilized by only 20% of respondents, indicating low adoption of digital payment methods.
- While 41.67% of respondents engaged in business activities outside their local areas, only 1.67% reported doing online business, highlighting a significant gap in online entrepreneurship.
- A majority of respondents (65%) expressed fear or reluctance to adopt digital tools, despite 73.33% indicating an idea to implement digital tools in the future.

Major Challenges of Tribal for using Online Plat forms
<u>**CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS**</u>

Major problems faced by tribal people kodaikanal hills is problem of getting finance, searching for raw material is stiff contest limited mobility family cohesiveness, sales this product lack of education communication and intimations haring sending Email. WhatsApp telegram face book, and improving marketable skills of tribal people with the help of internet.

Tribal communities face several unique challenges when utilizing digital marketing platforms:

Access to Technology: Many tribal communities may lack access to reliable internet connections, computers, or smartphones, limiting their ability to engage with digital marketing platforms effectively.

Digital Literacy: Limited digital literacy skills among tribal members can hinder their ability to navigate and utilize digital marketing platforms effectively. Lack of familiarity with onlinetools and technologies can make it challenging to create and manage digital marketing campaigns.

Cultural Sensitivity: Digital marketing efforts must be culturally sensitive and respectful of tribal traditions, languages, and values. Failure to understand and respect cultural nuances can lead to misunderstandings or offense within the community.

Language Barriers: Tribal communities often have their own languages or dialects, which may not be widely supported on digital platforms. Language barriers can make it difficult to create content that resonates with tribal audiences and limits the reach of digital marketing efforts.

Infrastructure Challenges: Remote locations and inadequate infrastructure in tribal areas can result in poor internet connectivity and unreliable electricity supply, making it challenging to engage with digital marketing platforms consistently.

Trust and Privacy Concerns: Tribal communities may have concerns about privacy and data security when engaging with digital marketing platforms. Building trust and addressing privacy concerns are essential for successful digital marketing campaigns within tribal communities.

Resource Constraints: Limited financial resources and personnel within tribal organizations can pose challenges for implementing and managing digital marketing campaigns effectively. Investing in training and capacity building is crucial to overcome these resource constraints.

Limited Local Content: Digital marketing efforts may struggle to resonate with tribal audiences if they do not feature relevant local content or address issues that are meaningful to the community. Creating content that reflects the unique identity and interests of the tribal community is essential for engagement.

Major opportunities for Tribal for using digital marketing Plat form.
Opportunities for digital marketing

Despite the challenges, tribal communities can harness various opportunities through digital marketing platforms:

Access to Global Markets: Digital marketing provides tribal businesses and artisans with the opportunity to showcase their products and services to a global audience. By leveraging online platforms such as e-commerce websites and social media, tribal entrepreneurs can reach customers beyond their local communities and expand their market reach.

Cultural Preservation and Promotion: Digital marketing platforms offer tribal communities a powerful tool for preserving and promoting their cultural heritage. Through storytelling, multimedia content, and digital campaigns, tribes can share their traditions, languages, and art with a broader audience, fostering cultural appreciation and understanding.

Community Engagement: Digital marketing enables tribes to engage directly with their community members and build stronger connections. Social media, email newsletters, and online forums provide platforms for tribes to share news, events, and resources, facilitating community dialogue and collaboration.

Educational Opportunities: Digital marketing can serve as an educational resource for tribal communities, providing access to online courses, tutorials, and informational content. By leveraging digital platforms, tribes can promote skills development, entrepreneurship, and knowledge sharing among community members.

Tourism Promotion: Tribal communities often have unique cultural attractions and natural landscapes that can attract tourists. Digital marketing campaigns can promote tribal tourism experiences, such as cultural tours, eco-adventures, and heritage sites, helping tribes generate revenue and support local economies.

Talent Recruitment: Digital marketing platforms can be utilized by tribal organizations to attract talent and professionals to work within their communities. By showcasing career opportunities, cultural immersion experiences, and community benefits, tribes can recruit individuals who are passionate about supporting tribal initiatives.

Data Analytics and Insights: Digital marketing tools offer tribes the ability to collect and analyze data about their audience, including demographic information, online behavior, and engagement metrics. By leveraging data analytics, tribes can gain valuable insights into audience preferences and optimize their marketing strategies for better results.

STRATEGIES CAN BE IMPLEMENTED

Improving Internet Connectivity: Advocate for improved internet infrastructure in Kodaikanal to ensure reliable and high-speed internet access for residents, businesses, and tourists. Collaborate with local government authorities and internet service providers to expand broadband coverage and address connectivity gaps.

Digital Literacy Programs: Launch digital literacy programs aimed at enhancing the digital skills of residents, especially marginalized communities and elderly individuals. Offer workshops, training sessions, and online resources to teach basic computer skills, internet navigation, and digital communication tools.

Localized Content Creation: Develop localized digital content that highlights the unique culture, attractions, and experiences of Kodaikanal. Produce engaging multimedia content, such as videos, blogs, and social media posts, which showcase the natural beauty, heritage sites, and local businesses of the region.

E-commerce and Local Businesses Support: Support local businesses in Kodaikanal by helping them establish an online presence and leverage e-commerce platforms. Provide training and resources to enable small businesses to sell their products and services online, expanding their customer base beyond the local market.

Environmental Awareness Campaigns: Utilize digital marketing tools to raise awareness about environmental conservation and sustainable practices in Kodaikanal. Promote eco-friendly tourism activities, waste management initiatives, and conservation efforts through digital campaigns and educational content.

Digital Healthcare Services: Introduce digital healthcare services, such as telemedicine and health information portals, to improve access to healthcare in Kodaikanal. Partner with healthcare providers and technology companies to implement digital solutions that enhance healthcare delivery and patient outcomes.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS ON DIGITAL MARKETING

Looking ahead, tribal communities in Kodaikanal can explore several future directions for leveraging digital marketing platforms to promote economic development, cultural preservation, and community empowerment:

Digital Skills Development: Invest in ongoing digital skills development programs to ensure that tribal community members are equipped with the necessary knowledge and expertise to leverage digital marketing platforms effectively. Offer advanced training in areas such as social media marketing, search engine optimization (SEO), and data analytics to empower tribal entrepreneurs and professionals.

Virtual Tourism Experiences: Embrace virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) technologies to create immersive virtual tourism experiences that showcase the natural beauty, cultural heritage, and attractions of Kodaikanal. Develop virtual tours, interactive exhibits, and 360-degree videos that allow visitors to explore the region from anywhere in the world, attracting a global audience to the tribal community.

Eco-friendly Digital Initiatives: Promote eco-friendly digital initiatives that align with the principles of sustainability and environmental conservation. Implement paperless communication strategies, renewable energy solutions for digital infrastructure, and carbon offset programs for digital marketing activities to minimize the environmental impact of digital initiatives in Kodaikanal.

Cultural Exchange and Global Outreach: Use digital marketing platforms to facilitate cultural exchange and global outreach initiatives that connect tribal communities in Kodaikanal with indigenous peoples and cultural organizations around the world. Organize virtual cultural festivals, online exhibitions, and collaborative projects that promote cross-cultural understanding, solidarity, and mutual respect.

Youth Engagement and Innovation: Engage youth in Kodaikanal in digital marketing and innovation initiatives to harness their creativity, energy, and digital fluency for community development. Establish youth-led digital marketing clubs, innovation hubs, and mentorship programs that empower young tribal leaders to drive positive change through digital technologies.By embracing these future directions and leveraging digital marketing platforms as tools for empowerment and transformation, tribal

communities in Kodaikanal can navigate the evolving digital landscape with resilience, creativity, and a commitment to cultural integrity and sustainability.

1.5 FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The findings from the survey data reflect a nuanced picture of digital transformation among tribal communities in Kodaikanal, Tamil Nadu with adjoining SDGs. While a portion of respondents possess 4G mobile phones and access internet facilities, indicating some level of technological penetration, there remains a notable gap in the adoption of digital platforms for business and financial transactions. The low usage of online payment facilities and engagement in online business activities underscore the challenges faced by tribal communities in fully embracing digital marketing as a means of livelihood empowerment.

Moreover, the prevalence of fear or reluctance in adopting digital tools highlights the need for targeted interventions to address barriers such as digital illiteracy and concerns about online security. Despite these challenges, the positive outlook expressed by a significant majority of respondents regarding the future implementation of digital tools presents an opportunity for promoting digital literacy and fostering a conducive environment for digital transformation in tribal areas.

In conclusion, the findings emphasize the importance of tailored interventions aimed at enhancing digital literacy, expanding access to digital infrastructure, and building trust in online platforms among tribal communities, in line with No Poverty and Decent Work and Economic Growth By addressing these challenges and capitalizing on the willingness of respondents to embrace digital tools in the future, policymakers, development practitioners, and community stakeholders can play a pivotal role in empowering tribal livelihoods through digital marketing initiatives in Kodaikanal and similar tribal regions.

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