
Defence Seminar

Seminar Title	: ‘Abua Dishom, Abua Raaj’ (My Country, My Rule): Tribal Youth, Cultural Citizenship, and Collective Identity Assertion on Social Media
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Venue	: HS Seminar Room (MN436)
Date and Time	: 19 Sep 2025 (11.15am)
Abstract	: Despite digital inequalities in India, it is crucial to acknowledge that social media platforms have played a significant role in revitalizing tribal identity. The study aims to understand the wider significance of social media as a space for tribal communities to negotiate their social and cultural identity. The slogan <i>‘Abua Dishom, Abua Raaj’</i> that translates as ‘My Country, My Rule’ has surfaced over social media platforms as a new wave of socio-political and cultural protest by tribal youths of Jharkhand, India to establish their identity. Historically, the discourse on tribal identity was understood as a part of modern consciousness by the British administration, anthropologists, and historians. Studies suggest that if India’s tribals are to regain their true identity, it is necessary that their oral history, which was suppressed by the history written by outsiders, is reconstructed. With the rise of social media, a revolutionary levelling force has been reshaping the self-representation of tribal identity. The tribal communities that have faced marginalization and exclusion use social media platforms as a powerful tool for communication that renders them a space to counter stereotypes, raise awareness, and reshape their identity. The study was conducted among Santhal, Munda, and Oraon youths of Jharkhand studying in various higher educational institutions all over the country, and who actively shared posts on Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook, during the period 2019 to 2022. The study also carried out a case study of a tribal organization in Jharkhand named <i>Rumbul</i> to understand how a community-based initiative is operating as one of the leading organizations advocating for sustainability and revitalizing the rich tapestry of tribal culture. It stands apart from other organizations due to its comprehensive approach towards documentation, revival, and collective cultural assertion through digital media. The study adopted netnography as the research design for the study. Netnography is a ‘rigorous qualitative method that relies on data collected from social media.’ This method was used to explore textual, graphic, photographic, and audiovisual posts on YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram. The study further used thematic analysis to generate themes from the data to understand collective solidarity and identity assertion on social media platforms. The findings of the study show that social media provides a platform for marginalized youth to contest, question, and demand socio-cultural and political rights. It was observed that social gatherings and youth organizations were equally indispensable for cultural revival, language preservation, and political activism. They offer immersive experiences, foster direct engagement, and build community bonds that digital platforms alone cannot fully replicate. Through these in-person interactions, communities can sustain and advance their cultural and political goals in ways that are both meaningful and effective.