

Technology and Social Ills: A Double-Edged Sword in Contemporary Society

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ABSTRACT

The rapid advancement of technology has become one of the most defining features of the twenty-first century, profoundly transforming the way individuals communicate, learn, work, and interact. While technology has brought unprecedented opportunities for innovation, efficiency, and connectivity, it has also generated a range of social challenges that question the ethical, psychological, and cultural foundations of modern life. This paper critically examines technology as a double-edged sword, an instrument of both social progress and moral disruption. It explores how technological innovations have improved access to education, healthcare, and global communication, while simultaneously contributing to social isolation, cyberbullying, addiction, misinformation, and erosion of interpersonal relationships. Drawing on sociological and psychological perspectives, the study investigates the interplay between digital dependency and the deterioration of traditional social structures, emphasizing the importance of digital literacy, ethical awareness, and responsible media use. Through a multidisciplinary lens, the paper analyses how human behaviour mediates technology's impact, arguing that technology itself is not inherently harmful, but its misuse amplifies pre-existing social vulnerabilities. The discussion further highlights the implications of these trends for developing societies such as Fiji and other Pacific Island nations, where the digital divide and rapid modernization intersect with cultural change. Ultimately, the paper calls for a balanced approach that integrates innovation with social responsibility, urging policymakers, educators, and communities to promote ethical digital citizenship and sustainable technological engagement. In doing so, it reaffirms the need to harness technology's transformative power for social good while mitigating its potential to deepen inequality and moral disconnection.

Keywords: Technology; Social Ills; Digital Literacy; Ethical Responsibility; Social Change; Fiji; Pacific Islands; Digital Society; Cyberculture; Moral Development.

INTRODUCTION

The twenty-first century has been characterized by the rapid evolution of technology, fundamentally reshaping human interactions, economies, and social systems. From digital communication and artificial intelligence to social media and virtual education, technological innovation has become central to everyday life. While these developments have enabled greater access to information, improved global connectivity, and accelerated socio-economic growth, they have also produced new forms of dependency, inequality, and social disruption. Scholars increasingly recognize that technology functions as a double-edged sword, a force that can empower and enlighten, yet also alienate and fragment society (Castells, 2010; Turkle, 2017). This paradox forms the foundation of contemporary debates on whether technology serves as a catalyst for progress or as a contributor to modern

social ill.

Historically, technological progress has been celebrated as a hallmark of human achievement and modernization. In many respects, innovations in communication, transport, and medicine have raised living standards and improved access to essential services. However, the same technological tools that connect people across the globe have also altered patterns of human behaviour and community engagement. The rise of social media, for instance, has transformed communication into a virtual experience, often prioritizing instant gratification over meaningful relationships (Turkle, 2017). Likewise, the convenience of digital platforms has encouraged dependency, leading to reduced physical interaction, privacy concerns, and a growing detachment from real-world social responsibilities (Carr, 2011). The consequences are increasingly visible in the form of cyberbullying, online radicalization, digital addiction, and

the spread of misinformation—issues that challenge both individual wellbeing and collective morality (Kuss & Griffiths, 2017).

For developing nations such as Fiji and other Pacific Island countries, the societal impact of technology is particularly complex. On one hand, digital transformation has improved access to education, health information, and economic opportunities, especially in remote and maritime regions. On the other hand, rapid digitalization without adequate policy frameworks has created new risks, such as youth exposure to harmful online content, digital inequality, and erosion of traditional cultural values (Reddy & Sharma, 2021). The increasing dependence on digital communication technologies in these regions mirrors global trends but is further complicated by infrastructural limitations, economic disparities, and cultural sensitivities unique to small island contexts. Thus, understanding the dual impact of technology in Pacific societies requires a contextualized and interdisciplinary analysis that considers both technological benefits and social consequences.

This paper argues that technology itself is not inherently the cause of social ills; rather, it is the manner of its use, regulation, and integration into social life that determines its outcomes. Human behaviour, ethical frameworks, and societal structures play a decisive role in shaping whether technological advancement fosters inclusion and empowerment or alienation and inequality. Using a critical and sociological lens, this study explores the moral and social implications of technology in modern societies, with particular reference to Fiji and the Pacific region. It seeks to address key questions: How does technology influence human relationships and social cohesion? In what ways does technological misuse contribute to emerging social problems? And how can societies balance innovation with ethical responsibility to ensure that digital progress aligns with human values and collective wellbeing?

By examining these questions, the paper contributes to the broader discourse on digital ethics, social responsibility, and sustainable technological development. It calls for an educational and policy response that promotes digital literacy, ethical awareness, and cultural preservation within the context of modernization. Ultimately, the study advocates for a holistic understanding of technology, not merely as a tool of convenience, but as a social force whose influence must be guided by moral consciousness and communal values to ensure an equitable and humane digital future.

Brief Literature Review

1. Technology and Social Transformation

The evolution of technology has profoundly reshaped the fabric of modern society, influencing communication,

education, economy, and culture. Castells (2010) emphasizes that we now live in a “network society,” where digital connectivity underpins almost every social process. The internet, mobile devices, and artificial intelligence have collectively redefined how individuals access knowledge, form identities, and interact within their communities. These innovations have enabled faster information exchange, enhanced economic productivity, and greater participation in global dialogues. However, scholars caution that this transformation has also deepened socio-economic inequalities, created psychological dependencies, and challenged traditional social norms (Bauman, 2013; Turkle, 2017).

Digital technologies, while celebrated for promoting globalization and democratization, have simultaneously generated what some describe as “digital alienation.” Carr (2011) argues that overreliance on the internet alters cognitive patterns, reducing attention spans and critical thinking abilities. Similarly, Kuss and Griffiths (2017) highlight the addictive nature of social networking platforms, noting their potential to foster anxiety, depression, and social isolation. The paradox of hyperconnectivity, where people are digitally connected yet emotionally distant—has become a defining feature of contemporary life. These perspectives align with Turkle’s (2017) observation that digital communication often substitutes genuine human interaction with superficial exchanges, weakening empathy and interpersonal understanding.

2. Technology and Moral Responsibility

The question of whether technology itself causes social ills or merely amplifies existing human weaknesses has been debated extensively in sociological and ethical scholarship. Heidegger (1977) proposed that technology should not be viewed as a neutral tool but as a mode of revealing, one that shapes human perception and social reality. This philosophical stance suggests that technological impacts depend largely on human agency, moral frameworks, and governance. When societies fail to embed ethical considerations in their use of technology, the outcomes can be socially corrosive. For instance, online anonymity, while protecting freedom of expression, also enables cyberbullying, hate speech, and misinformation (Boyd, 2014). Thus, the problem is not technology per se but the absence of ethical literacy and social accountability in its use.

Emerging research advocates for integrating digital ethics and social responsibility into educational systems and community programs. As Bynum (2018) and Floridi (2014) assert, ethical engagement with technology requires cultivating a “digital moral compass” that helps

individuals navigate privacy, security, and equity concerns in virtual spaces. This aligns with contemporary calls for “humane technology,” which prioritizes user wellbeing and collective benefit over profit-driven design. Education plays a pivotal role in this transformation, as schools and universities are not only adopters of technology but also incubators of moral reasoning and civic responsibility in the digital age (Livingstone & Sefton-Green, 2016).

3. The Pacific and Fijian Context

In the Pacific Islands, technology adoption is growing rapidly, driven by global connectivity and regional development initiatives. Yet, this transformation occurs within unique socio-cultural, economic, and infrastructural constraints. Reddy and Sharma (2021) note that digital inclusion across Pacific Island nations remains uneven, with rural and maritime communities facing persistent challenges in access, affordability, and digital literacy. In Fiji, the government has made significant strides toward digital transformation through initiatives such as the *Digital Fiji Program* and e-Government services. However, these advances have also exposed vulnerabilities—such as youth overexposure to social media, cybercrime, and a gradual erosion of communal and cultural values rooted in *vanua* (community) and *lotu* (faith) (Kumar, 2022).

The influence of Western media and digital culture has led to a shift in values, aspirations, and social behaviours among Fijian youth. Social platforms like TikTok and Instagram, while providing creative expression and connectivity, have also introduced new pressures related to body image, consumerism, and validation (Naidu, 2023). These dynamics have raised concerns among educators and policymakers about the moral and psychological wellbeing of young people in a rapidly digitalizing society. As Singh and Reddy (2020) argue, the digital divide in Fiji is not only technological but also cultural and ethical, requiring locally grounded approaches to digital education that respect indigenous worldviews and social cohesion.

4. Towards a Balanced Perspective

While it is easy to attribute social problems to technological advancement, critical scholarship emphasizes the need for a balanced and contextualized understanding. Technology amplifies human intent, it can be a tool for empowerment or exploitation, depending on societal values, governance structures, and individual responsibility. In this sense, the rise of social ills in modern societies reflects not the failure of technology, but the failure to align technological use with moral and cultural principles (Floridi, 2014). For Pacific societies, where collectivism and respect for communal harmony are foundational, integrating technology with ethical

guidance rooted in local culture offers a pathway toward digital wellbeing and sustainable development.

3.1 Literature Gaps

Despite an expanding body of literature examining the relationship between technology and society, significant gaps remain in understanding how digital transformation contributes to or mitigates social ills, particularly in developing and small island contexts such as Fiji and the wider Pacific region. Most existing research is derived from Western perspectives that focus on industrialized nations, where technological infrastructure, education systems, and cultural dynamics differ markedly from those of Pacific Island societies (Castells, 2010; Boyd, 2014). Consequently, the unique socio-cultural, economic, and moral dimensions of technology use in Pacific communities remain underexplored.

First, there is limited empirical research on the cultural mediation of technology's social impacts within Pacific societies. Studies often generalize digital trends globally without adequately accounting for how traditional values, community structures, and indigenous epistemologies influence technological adoption and its social consequences. For instance, Fijian social life is deeply grounded in communal relationships and cultural identity (*vanua*), yet few studies examine how social media and digital communication reshape these collective bonds or redefine moral norms (Reddy & Sharma, 2021; Naidu, 2023).

Second, the moral and ethical dimensions of digital engagement in Pacific youth populations are poorly understood. While international literature links excessive technology use to issues such as cyberbullying, addiction, and psychological distress (Kuss & Griffiths, 2017; Turkle, 2017), little is known about how these phenomena manifest in Pacific youth, especially within contexts where digital literacy and ethical awareness are still developing. The absence of longitudinal and culturally grounded studies limits policymakers' ability to design effective interventions that promote responsible digital citizenship and mental wellbeing among young people.

Third, existing literature inadequately connects digital transformation with broader socio-economic inequalities in Pacific Island countries. Although several studies acknowledge the digital divide, few analyse how disparities in infrastructure, access, and digital skills contribute to new forms of social exclusion and vulnerability (Singh & Reddy, 2020). The interaction between poverty, geography, and digital opportunity remains under-researched, particularly in Fiji's maritime and rural communities, where connectivity challenges exacerbate marginalization.

Fourth, there is a theoretical gap in linking Western ethical frameworks of technology with Pacific moral philosophies. Most studies emphasize global ethics or utilitarian perspectives without exploring indigenous ethical systems rooted in community, reciprocity, and collective wellbeing. Integrating these perspectives could yield a more contextually appropriate framework for evaluating technology's social impact in Fiji and other Pacific societies.

Finally, policy-oriented research on mitigating the social ills of technology in the Pacific remains scarce. While governments and NGOs have initiated digital literacy and e-governance programs, few studies assess their effectiveness in fostering ethical, equitable, and sustainable digital engagement. There is also a lack of interdisciplinary inquiry that combines sociological, psychological, and educational perspectives to holistically address technology-related social challenges.

In summary, the literature reveals a need for contextualized, culturally sensitive, and empirically grounded research that investigates how technology intersects with morality, culture, and social wellbeing in small island developing states. Addressing these gaps is crucial for formulating informed policies and educational strategies that maximize technology's benefits while minimizing its social harms. This paper contributes to filling these voids by offering a Pacific-centred analysis of technology's dual impact on social life, with a particular focus on Fiji as a case study of digital modernization within a culturally rooted society.

The Fiji and Pacific Context

The Pacific region, comprising small island developing states (SIDS), occupies a distinctive place in global discussions on technology and social transformation. Unlike industrialized economies where digital integration has long been embedded in social systems, Pacific societies are navigating rapid technological change within fragile economies, limited infrastructure, and deeply communal cultures. Fiji, as one of the region's most economically advanced and digitally connected nations, serves as a focal point for understanding how technology shapes social dynamics, moral values, and community cohesion in island contexts (Reddy & Sharma, 2021).

1. Digital Transformation and Development Goals

Fiji's digital transformation aligns with its broader national development vision, *Transforming Fiji* (2017–2036), which identifies technology as a critical enabler for economic growth, education, and governance. The *Digital Fiji Program* and *e-Government initiatives* have expanded online access to public services, while mobile technology has increased financial inclusion across remote areas (Ministry of Communications, 2020). Similarly, regional initiatives led by

the Pacific Islands Forum and UNESCO have sought to close the digital divide by improving connectivity and digital literacy across island nations (UNESCO, 2021).

However, this digital progress has not been uniform. Rural and maritime communities, including those in Fiji's outer islands, still face significant barriers related to infrastructure, affordability, and digital competency (Singh & Reddy, 2020). The uneven access to digital tools reflects broader structural inequalities between urban and rural populations and highlights the risk of new forms of exclusion emerging in the digital age.

2. Cultural Dimensions of Technology Use

In the Pacific, culture serves as both a foundation and a filter for social change. Traditional values such as *vanua* (community identity), *lotu* (spiritual faith), and *veilomani* (mutual compassion) guide social relations and moral behaviour. While these values foster unity and social responsibility, the influx of global digital culture introduces individualistic values that often clash with communal ethics (Kumar, 2022). For example, social media's emphasis on self-promotion and personal branding can undermine the humility and respect central to Fijian and Pacific moral systems.

Moreover, Western-centric content disseminated through digital platforms shapes youth aspirations and identity formation. Pacific youth are increasingly exposed to global norms of beauty, consumerism, and lifestyle, sometimes at odds with traditional expectations (Naidu, 2023). This cultural dissonance manifests in family conflicts, peer pressure, and a growing sense of moral ambiguity. The result is a subtle but significant transformation of Pacific social life, one that demands careful navigation between preserving heritage and embracing innovation.

3. The Digital Divide and Social Inequality

While digital technologies have opened new opportunities for learning, employment, and communication, they have also deepened existing social and geographic inequalities. In Fiji, internet penetration is high in urban centres such as Suva and Nadi but remains limited in rural and maritime areas, where connectivity costs are prohibitive and infrastructure is weak (Reddy & Sharma, 2021). This divide restricts access to online education and government services and perpetuates social exclusion for vulnerable populations.

Furthermore, unequal access to technology intersects with gender and socio-economic disparities. Women, rural youth, and persons with disabilities are often underrepresented in digital participation (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, 2022). Bridging these divides requires

more than providing physical infrastructure, it demands policies that empower marginalized groups through culturally relevant education, inclusive training, and community engagement.

4. Technology, Education, and Moral Development

The education sector in Fiji and the Pacific plays a pivotal role in shaping how technology is understood and utilized. Post-pandemic, online learning became the primary mode of education delivery, exposing both the potential and pitfalls of digital tools. While technology enhanced access to knowledge, it also magnified issues of inequity, distraction, and detachment from cultural values (Naidu, 2023). Teachers and parents report growing concern over students' overreliance on gadgets and social media for communication, often at the expense of empathy, respect, and communal responsibility.

Thus, there is a growing consensus that digital education must be accompanied by moral and cultural education. Teaching digital literacy in isolation risks producing technically capable but ethically unanchored citizens. Integrating Pacific philosophies, such as *talanoa* (dialogue), *veilomani* (compassion), and *veiwekani* (relationship), into digital learning frameworks could foster a culturally grounded approach to technology use that promotes social wellbeing alongside innovation (Singh & Reddy, 2020).

5. Toward a Pacific Digital Ethos

The future of technology in Fiji and the Pacific depends on balancing modernization with moral and cultural sustainability. As digital technologies reshape communication, governance, and identity, Pacific nations are uniquely positioned to model a more humane and community-oriented approach to digital transformation. Drawing on indigenous knowledge systems, collective governance, and the principles of environmental and social stewardship, Pacific societies can lead the way in redefining technology not as an external force but as a shared cultural asset.

Creating a "Pacific Digital Ethos" would mean embedding empathy, inclusivity, and respect into technological design, policy, and education. Such an approach can help ensure that the digital revolution contributes not only to economic progress but also to the preservation of social harmony, moral integrity, and cultural continuity in the Pacific region.

Analysis and Discussion

1. Understanding Technology as a Social Construct

Technology does not exist in isolation; it reflects the societies that create and use it. From a constructivist perspective, technological tools acquire meaning and impact through human interaction, social norms, and cultural values

(Heidegger, 1977; Floridi, 2014). In Fiji and other Pacific societies, technology's introduction has both empowered communities and disrupted traditional ways of life. The Pacific ethos, centred on community, reciprocity, and respect—contrasts with the often an individualistic nature of digital culture promoted through social media and global networks. As such, the social ills associated with technology, including isolation, misinformation, and moral disengagement, are not inherent in the technology itself but emerge from a mismatch between technological design and local cultural contexts.

Digital tools designed for Western consumers are often introduced into Pacific societies without cultural adaptation. For example, global social media platforms promote self-expression and individualism, whereas Fijian social norms prioritize communal harmony (*veilomani*) and respect (*vakaturaga*). The uncritical adoption of these platforms has led to new tensions in social behaviour, particularly among youth, who navigate conflicting value systems between the global digital space and traditional cultural expectations (Naidu, 2023). This tension underscores the need for context-sensitive digital policies that promote cultural integrity alongside technological advancement.

2. The Paradox of Connectivity: Empowerment and Alienation

Technology has dramatically expanded access to education, communication, and employment across Fiji and the Pacific. Mobile banking, online learning, and digital entrepreneurship have created opportunities for social and economic inclusion (Reddy & Sharma, 2021). During the COVID-19 pandemic, digital tools enabled continuity in learning and business, showcasing their potential for resilience. However, this same connectivity has introduced social alienation, particularly among younger generations.

Research by Kuss and Griffiths (2017) and Turkle (2017) reveals that excessive engagement with digital media fosters loneliness, attention disorders, and diminished interpersonal empathy. In Fiji, educators report rising cases of cyberbullying, plagiarism, and screen dependency among students (Kumar, 2022). Social networks that once promised connection now often become spaces for comparison, validation, and anxiety. This paradox—the simultaneous expansion of connection and contraction of human intimacy, illustrates the psychological cost of technological dependency.

Moreover, while digital communication bridges geographic divides, it also erodes *talanoa*, the Pacific tradition of open, face-to-face dialogue used for building trust and community cohesion. As interpersonal

communication shifts online, the depth and authenticity of social interaction decline, challenging the foundations of collective life in many Fijian communities.

3. Digital Inequality and the Reproduction of Social Divides

The literature reveals that technology, if unevenly distributed, can exacerbate social and economic inequalities rather than reduce them (Singh & Reddy, 2020). In Fiji, disparities in internet access, digital literacy, and affordability between urban centres and maritime islands reinforce existing socio-economic hierarchies. While urban youths benefit from digital learning resources and job opportunities, rural populations face exclusion, creating a digital class divide. This phenomenon not only limits access to education and employment but also deepens the sense of marginalization among those left behind.

The issue extends beyond access to include digital capability and ethical literacy. Many Fijian youth possess technical skills to use devices but lack the critical understanding to evaluate information, navigate online ethics, or protect personal data (Naidu, 2023). This contributes to misinformation, online scams, and exploitative behaviours. Bridging the digital divide, therefore, requires more than infrastructure; it demands a comprehensive approach that integrates digital literacy, ethical education, and community participation in digital governance.

4. Cultural Displacement and Identity in the Digital Era

Global digital culture exerts powerful influence on local identities, particularly in small island states where exposure to Western media shapes aspirations, lifestyles, and moral perceptions. Social media platforms often glorify consumerism, beauty ideals, and lifestyles that may conflict with indigenous values of humility, solidarity, and respect for elders (Kumar, 2022). The result is a cultural displacement, where youth increasingly define their identity through digital personas rather than communal belonging.

This cultural tension also affects intergenerational relationships. Elders, who serve as moral anchors within traditional Fijian society, may perceive technology as a threat to discipline and respect, while younger people view it as a vehicle for expression and autonomy. This generational divide highlights the need for intergenerational digital dialogue, where communities negotiate technology's role in preserving rather than eroding cultural identity. Such engagement can help redefine *vanua* in the digital age—not as a static tradition, but as a living, evolving framework adaptable to technological change.

5. Ethical Digital Citizenship and Policy Implications

To mitigate the social ills associated with technology, Fiji and other Pacific Island nations must prioritize ethical digital citizenship, a framework that combines digital literacy with moral responsibility. Education plays a central role in this transformation. Schools and universities should not only teach students how to use technology but also why and when to use it responsibly (Livingstone & Sefton-Green, 2016). Embedding digital ethics into curricula would help cultivate empathy, respect, and integrity in online behaviour.

At the policy level, governments must ensure that digital transformation is inclusive, culturally grounded, and human-centred. Regulatory frameworks should address online safety, misinformation, and data privacy, while promoting equitable access to technology across rural and maritime communities. Partnerships between government, private sector, and civil society are essential for building a digital ecosystem that balances innovation with social wellbeing. Initiatives such as community-based digital literacy programs, youth mentorship, and culturally responsive digital education can strengthen community resilience and moral integrity in the face of rapid technological change.

Ultimately, the path forward lies not in rejecting technology, but in reclaiming human agency over it. Technology should serve as a tool for empowerment and community development, not a force of fragmentation. Pacific societies possess rich cultural values of solidarity, empathy, and respect, principles that can guide a more ethical and balanced digital future.

Recommendations

1. Integrate Digital Ethics and Citizenship into Education

Educational institutions at all levels should embed digital ethics, online responsibility, and moral reasoning into curricula. Teaching students not only how to use technology but also how to use it responsibly will help cultivate empathy, respect, and accountability in digital spaces (Livingstone & Sefton-Green, 2016).

2. Strengthen Community-Based Digital Literacy Programs

To bridge the digital divide, governments and NGOs should invest in localized digital literacy initiatives, particularly targeting rural and maritime communities. Programs should involve elders, youth, and community leaders to ensure that digital skills are taught alongside traditional values and cultural practices (Singh & Reddy, 2020).

3. Develop Culturally Grounded Digital Policies

Policy frameworks must reflect Pacific worldviews

and moral philosophies. Regulations addressing cyber safety, misinformation, and data privacy should be guided by cultural principles such as respect, reciprocity, and communal wellbeing. This approach can ensure that technology serves social harmony rather than undermining it.

4. **Promote Intergenerational Digital Dialogue**
Encouraging open conversations between elders and youth about technology can reduce cultural gaps and strengthen mutual understanding. *Talanoa* sessions on digital behaviour and social media use can foster collective responsibility and shared moral frameworks, preserving cultural identity in the digital age.
5. **Establish Ethical Technology Partnerships**
Governments should partner with technology companies, universities, and civil society to create ethical guidelines for digital innovation. Such collaborations can ensure that technological development aligns with social justice, equity, and cultural sustainability (Floridi, 2014).
6. **Enhance Research on Technology's Social Impact in the Pacific**
There is an urgent need for region-specific, interdisciplinary research exploring the moral, psychological, and cultural effects of technology in Pacific societies. Evidence-based studies will provide valuable insights for policymakers and educators seeking to mitigate digital harms while maximizing social benefits.
7. **Foster Digital Wellbeing Campaigns**
National campaigns can raise awareness about the risks of excessive technology use—such as addiction, misinformation, and cybercrime, while promoting healthy digital habits, mindfulness, and balance between online and offline life.

Ultimately, technology is neither inherently good nor bad, it is a reflection of human choices and societal priorities. For Fiji and the Pacific, the task is not to resist technological change but to reshape it in alignment with indigenous values and collective wellbeing. By cultivating digital literacy, ethical awareness, and cultural resilience, Pacific societies can harness technology's transformative potential while safeguarding their moral and social foundations. This equilibrium, where innovation meets integrity, will define the sustainability and humanity of the Pacific's digital future.

CONCLUSION

Technology has become both the architect and mirror of modern society, shaping how people communicate, learn, and perceive the world. This paper has demonstrated that while technology enables progress, connectivity, and economic growth, it simultaneously gives rise to new forms of social disconnection, moral erosion, and inequality. The argument that "technology is a double-edged sword" remains

profoundly true—its benefits and harms depend on how societies design, regulate, and engage with it.

In Fiji and other Pacific Island nations, the digital revolution has brought a mixture of empowerment and disruption. On one hand, digital platforms have improved education, entrepreneurship, and governance; on the other, they have introduced challenges such as cyberbullying, misinformation, digital addiction, and cultural displacement. The traditional Fijian values of *vanua* (community), *lotu* (faith), and *veilomani* (mutual respect) are increasingly strained under the pressures of individualism and consumerism promoted through global digital culture.

The analysis revealed that these challenges stem less from technology itself and more from how it is used, governed, and contextualized. The absence of ethical literacy, digital awareness, and culturally grounded policies allows social ills to proliferate. Moreover, persistent digital divides, between urban and rural communities, the rich and poor, and the technologically literate and illiterate, reinforce existing inequalities. Technology has not yet fulfilled its potential to unify and uplift Pacific societies because its integration has often neglected moral education, community participation, and indigenous values.

Therefore, the way forward lies in developing a balanced and human-centred approach to technology, one that merges innovation with cultural sensitivity, ethics, and inclusion. Pacific societies can draw upon their collective ethos and interdependence to guide the digital transformation toward social wellbeing rather than social decay.

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