



Assessing the Impact of Indigenous Women Entrepreneurship to their Socio-Economic Progress: An Investigation in the State of Chhattisgarh

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Abstract

The Scheduled Tribes represent a small portion of the country's total population and are disadvantaged in various means. They work even harder than tribal males and contribute to family income with limited revenue alternatives. In Chhattisgarh, 70% of the total population lives in rural areas, of which most of the population belongs to tribal communities, majorly dependent on agriculture and non-timber forest products for their livelihood. There are no other sources of income for tribal women resulting in lower participation of women in the workforce. With the lowest literacy rate, the total work participation of tribal women is 46.39%, lower than the tribesmen. A study conducted in 2010 reveals that Chhattisgarh has extremely high poverty rates in a rural and urban areas with 66.8 % and 28.6% respectively. The study chose Chhattisgarh as the state has a large tribal population. Women in the state are poor and disadvantaged, and their issues should be addressed to resolve them. For society to develop economically, entrepreneurs play prominent roles, while in tribal communities, women are proving to be the major players, and their active involvement is essential to accelerate the socio-economic development of tribal communities. Therefore, this paper explores the Role of Tribal Women Entrepreneurship in their Socioeconomic Development in Chhattisgarh. This paper is based on the conceptual paper and secondary data has been used particularly government official websites and reports, articles, and journals. The findings have the strategies for the socio-economic empowerment of tribal women.

Keywords: tribal women entrepreneurship, Chhattisgarh tribes, tribal population, developmental programs, economic empowerment

INTRODUCTION

The economy flourishes at a speedy pace only when it remarks significant acquisition of factors of production and technological progression. The prime aspects of the economy's development are governed by the justifiable utilization of financial, human, and physical assets. When it comes to constituents of the country's socio-economic development, entrepreneurship possesses a salient ability to achieve this purpose as it has the capacity to enhance the economy's efficiency, productivity, and profitability through innovation and competing approaches. Entrepreneurship opens the way for employment generation and thus benefits society by improving the living standards of individuals. The

initiation of a new policy for liberalization, privatization, and globalization by the Indian government in 1992 has given space for women entrepreneur to showcase their potential to contribute to the country's economic growth and social breakthrough. It has brought revolutionary transformation in entrepreneurship because women as an entrepreneur have begun to be involved in economic activity to empower themselves and occupy their place and reputation in society. It was found that entrepreneurial adaption among women in developing countries is progressive in comparison to developed countries (Bosma & Harding, 2006). Talking about tribal women who reside in primitive and underdeveloped regions also has a significant contribution to the country's socio-economic growth which cannot be neglected. They bear



huge adversity in organizing their business activities as they come from an impoverished background and have no credible sources of funds. Consequently, they gain lesser returns in contrast to automated businesses. The Indian government has made efforts to implement several policies and programs to ensure tribal development through entrepreneurship (Joshi & Upadhyay, 2022). This has assisted tribals in increasing their entrepreneurial activity and reforming their living standards (Afrin et al., 2008). To reach the target of entrepreneurial upturn and progress, tribal women need to spot their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (Khanum et al., 2022). According to the census report surveyed in 2011, women constitute 49.8% population out of the total population of Chhattisgarh, and this concentration of women involves scheduled tribes that share 31% population amongst the total women population in Chhattisgarh. The tribal population in this state is equally distributed among males and females. Since tribal individuals possess great potential to boost the economy and empower society, it is crucial to figure out the barriers encountered by women entrepreneurs in tribal regions. This paper seeks to examine the progression of tribal women entrepreneurs by means of various developmental programs looking into their business aspects.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This segment of research overlays prior and current relevant research reviews driven in the context of tribal women entrepreneurship and their role in societal advancement and economic empowerment of the country.

Mohanty & Samal (2022) carried out a case study on women entrepreneurs to set up a leaf plate production entity in the Kandhamal district of Odisha. The researchers focused on barriers, access, and operating prototype of small businesses for women. The female entrepreneur Banani founded her Sai Swapna Udyog entity with the intent of providing support to the tribal citizens and boosting their livelihood by utilizing the primitive raw materials and unmatched skills that the tribal possesses. Likewise, the government also initiated a varied plan of action for the MSME segment to enhance its product, service, and operations. This action of the government has given opportunities for women as well to exhibit their potential and also benefitted the MSME segment of Odisha to the large extent.

Sreenivas P. (2022) deduced from his research that socio-economic hardship does shatter tribal inhabitants and their overall socio-economic reputation. Moreover, a researcher found that determinants such as income, education level, employment creation programs, and tribal competence building have remarkable effects on the socioeconomic status and living standards of tribal individuals by concentrating on social independence and socio-economic empowerment. He marked out that the indigenous development initiatives for tribals primarily aim to promote social security, welfare, cultural attributes of scheduled tribes, social cohesion, and economic progression. In conclusion, he propounded that financial assistance for tribals is to be increased at a significant level in the prioritized area and local indigenous

enterprises are to be encouraged among the female community.

Gupta et al. (2020) explored a survey on rural women and their involvement in administering the activity of dairy farming by gathering the responses from rural women in the Surguja district of Chhattisgarh who are engaged in dairy farming. As rural women account for 50% population of the entire rural citizens, they contribute equally in all realms of community progression and are thus regarded as the backbone of the country. The authors made an inference that women involved in dairy farming have average participation in the decision-making process.

Sinha et al. (2020) reviewed the tribal women of Jharkhand by studying the factors that would motivate them to join entrepreneurship. Although tribal women empowerment indicates equal involvement and social equality by means of economic advantage and ownership entitlement, their empowerment is seen at a depleting level in recent times. The government's actions to aid entrepreneurship competence in tribal women are necessary so as to enhance their skills through various developmental programs and make them proficient enough to utilize the available resources for entrepreneurship.

Hazarika & Goswami (2018) delved into factors that strike the mind of tribal women to acquire handloom micro-enterprise by gathering data from tribal inhabitants who are at a firm level engaged in handloom activities from specified districts of Assam. The authors analyzed that the constituents such as ease of access to loans, risk-taking approach, business inheritance, and familiarity with associated handloom entrepreneurs have a pragmatic impact on women to make a choice to become handloom entrepreneurs.

Nair A. P. (2018) sought to review the tribal women of Kerala and the approach to bring them into diverse entrepreneurial activities. The author described the necessity of boosting tribal entrepreneurship and suggested applying a holistic approach to encourage tribal women to the entrepreneurial task.

Behera B. (2017) conferred that women's contribution to economic empowerment in India is evidently noticeable. Considering it, the author has carried out research on tribals who are mainly involved in entrepreneurial activities related to the agriculture of the Mayurbhanj district in Odisha. It was inferred that inability to risk-taking, lack of business orientation, knowledge inefficiency, absence of leadership, and failure in a decision-making capacity was observed in tribal entrepreneurs. There is an urgency to focus on tribal women and their development in entrepreneurship so as to enhance their livelihood and prepare them to tackle market obstacles.

Rathee & Yadav (2017) drove a conceptual study in context to the current situation and future anticipation of women entrepreneurs in rural regions and their support in the economic evolution of India. The government's intent to make women entrepreneurs more prosperous and conclusive

strategies that can aid in empowering rural women are discussed in this paper. Finance accessibility by linking banks and financial organizations should be improved. The government schemes must be improvised to empower women as their development conclusively leads to entire societal progression.

Manikandan D. (2016) researched entrepreneurship amelioration in some layers of society that are not marked in the development space which include women, rural and poor people, scheduled tribes, scheduled castes, and OBCs. The government has introduced entrepreneurial funds and encouraged self-employment as a persuasion factor for entrepreneurial projects to ensure equal convenience for the remaining precluded group of people. The author has promoted women's entrepreneurship as it assures their social recognition, and economic independence and cuts out their livelihood problems.

Singhraul et al. (2016) intended to comprehend the behavioral attitude of growing tribal women entrepreneurs in Madhya Pradesh as they remark on the drastic achievements of themselves and their families. The forcible causes behind the notable growth of tribal women entrepreneurs and which lead women to join entrepreneurship are a hike in the household budget, increased family requirements, children's education, and marriages. Their findings showed that tribal women of age above 30 years are more into entrepreneurship as they enter the maturity stage where they manage to tackle the coercion of a patriarchal society in the rural area. The inferences made from their study is that women entrepreneurs definitely bring constructive strike in women empowerment and society as a whole.

RESEARCH GAP

After reviewing the previous research works, it was seen that sufficient work had been done on women's entrepreneurship and their empowerment, but when we glimpsed into tribal women's perspective, minor research has been accomplished in Chhattisgarh state. So, an endeavor has been made to study tribal women's entrepreneurship and their role in socio-economic development.

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

1. To study the difficulties encountered by tribal women entrepreneurs in Chhattisgarh.
2. To assess the progress of tribal women entrepreneurs with the support of various developmental programs in Chhattisgarh.
3. To examine the role of tribal women entrepreneurs in economic revitalization and social empowerment.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is grounded on secondary data and is entirely theoretical in nature. Secondary data comprises assorted journals, administrative records, books, and articles that resemble our current study and assist in obtaining the decisive outcome.

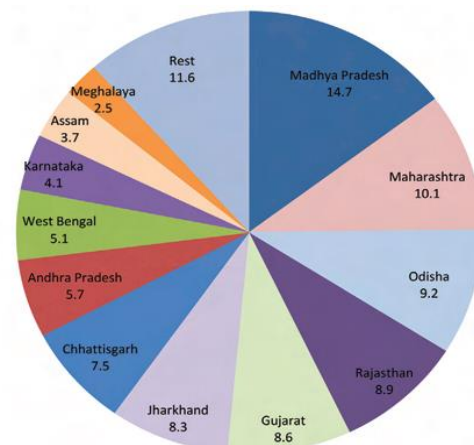
Women Entrepreneurship in India

The women of India stand out in every field regardless of all the social obstructions (Koneru, 2017). They have been drivers for growth and progression by contributing to entrepreneurship (Agarwal & Lenka, 2018). The younger age groups of women are more inclined to entrepreneurship than older women (Dhameja et al., 2000). Earlier, women entrepreneurs were more focused on primitive and informal business activities. But currently, they are stretching themselves to emerging and challenging sectors (Tiwari, 2017). Government policies and programs have broadened the zone of women's empowerment by enhancing entrepreneurial skills and equipping vocational training. The increment in women's entrepreneurship and their remarkable performance in business has made evolution in the business era and fetched social and economic evolution (Rao, 2016). The expansion of Self-Help Groups exhibits the women's interest in entering the business and showing their social existence (Dhekale, 2016). The prime elements that play a pivotal role in women's entrepreneurship are a risk-taking approach, family support, government support, and educational competencies. Innovation act as an incitement to give new dimensions to women's entrepreneurship (Archana et al., 2022). Contemporarily, there is a change in societal perspective towards women's entrepreneurship and the bright side of it is that women are getting family support and motivation which assist them in chasing their passion and attaining succession (Rastogi et al., 2022).

The tribal population of India

In India, tribes constitute 8.6% of the whole population with an assessment of 104 million tribal inhabitants and there are 705 primitive groups that are acknowledged as Scheduled Tribes (Kumar et al., 2020). According to the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) report, factually there are substantially more tribal groups that are not explicitly known and are yet to be positioned as Scheduled Tribes. Their inclusion in population statistics would definitely increase the percentage of tribal inhabitants. In central India, tribes are generally invoked as Adivasis which signifies indigenous citizens. The northeastern states of India and central states have a wide range of tribal inhabitants.

Figure 1. Percentage distribution of Scheduled Tribe population in India



Source:

<https://www.tribal.nic.in/ST/StatisticalProfileofSTs2013.pdf>

The above figure outlines the Scheduled Tribe population in different states of India derived from the census survey 2011. The state of Madhya Pradesh and north-east has a higher concentration of tribal inhabitants owing to 14.7% and 17.8% (Assam, Meghalaya, and the rest of north-eastern states) population respectively.

Tribals in Chhattisgarh

As per a census survey of 2011, Chhattisgarh represents 30.62% of the tribal citizens out of the total population in

Chhattisgarh. The tribal population in this state is equally distributed among males and females. The Gond community is proclaimed as the primeval and highest number of citizens among the entire tribal community. The Bastar district has the highest concentration of tribal citizens. The majority of tribes reside in rural regions of Chhattisgarh. They are best known for their conventional activities that require minimum skills and capital requirements which involve handloom, dairy farming, agriculture, handicraft, forestry, fisheries, and hunting so as to sustain their livelihood (Sanyal & Singh, 2022).

Table 1. List of Scheduled Tribes in Chhattisgarh

s.no.	Caste/Community	s.no.	Caste/Community	s.no.	Caste/Community
1.	Agariya	15.	Gadaba, Gadba	29.	Majhwar
2.	Andh	16.	Gond, Arakh, Arrakh, Agaria, Asur, Abujh Maria, Badi Maria, Bada Maria, Bhatola, Bhimma, Bhuta, koilabhuta, Koliabhuti, Bhar, Bisonhorn Maria, Chota Maria, Dandami Maria, Dhuru, Dhurwa, Dhoba, Dhulia, Dorla, Gaiki, Gatta, Gatti, Gaita, Gond Gowari, Hill Maria, Kandra, Kalanga, Khatola, Koitar, Koya, Khirwar, Khirwara, Kucha Maria, Kuchaki Maria, Madia, Maria, Mana, Mannewar, Moghya, Mogia, Monghya, Mudia, Muria, Nagarchi, Nagwanshi, Ojha, Raj, Sonjhari Jhareka, Thatia, Thotya, Wade Maria, Vade Maria, Daroi	30.	Pardhi, Bahelia, Bahellia, Chita Pardhi, Langoli Pardhi, Phans Pardhi, Shikari, Takankar, Takia
3.	Baiga	17.	Halba, Halbi	31.	Mawasi
4.	Bhaina	18.	Kamar	32.	Munda
5.	Bharia Bhumia, Bhuinhar Bhumia, Bhumiya, Bharia, Paliha, Pando	19.	Karku	33.	Nagesia, Nagasia
6.	Bhattra	20.	Kawar, Kanwar, Kaur, Cherwa, Rathia, Tanwar, Chhatri	34.	Oraon, Dhanka, Dhangad
7.	Bhil, Bhilala, Barela, patelia	21.	Khairwar, Kondar	35.	Pao
8.	Bhil Mina	22.	Kharia	36.	Pardhan, Pathari, Saroti
9.	Bhunjia	23.	Kondh, Khond, Kandh	37.	Parja
10.	Biar, Biyar	24.	Kol	38.	Sahariya, Saharia, Seharia, Sehria, Sosia, Sor
11.	Binjhwar	25.	Kolam	39.	Saonta, Saunta
12.	Birhul, Birhor	26.	Korku, Bopchi, Mouasi, Nihal, Nahul, Bondhi, Bondeya	40.	Saur



13.	Damor, Damaria	27.	Korwa, Hill Korwa, Kodaku	41.	Sawar, Sawara
14.	Dhanwar	28.	Majhi	42.	Sonr

Source: <https://www.apnalohara.com/chhattisgarh-caste-list/>

Table 2. Percentage Distribution of Tribal Workers in Chhattisgarh

Workers	Male	Female
Total workers	53.61	46.39
Main workers	64.87	35.13
Marginal workers	36.53	63.47

Source:

<http://www.tribal.nic.in/ST/StatisticalProfileofSTs2013.pdf>

The above table outlines the contribution of male and female tribes in different occupational activities where it depicts that female worker with 46.39% are less in comparison to male workers.

Development programs for tribal women entrepreneurs in Chhattisgarh

- The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) initiated a program to promote sustainable progression among tribal women with the support of the Australian NGO cooperation Program (ANCP).
- NITI Ayog conducted a tribal entrepreneurship summit in 2017 in the Bastar district with the intent to promote and encourage tribal entrepreneurship. it addresses hurdles that tribals counter and provided a stage for young tribal people to entrepreneurship opportunities.
- Chhattisgarh Khadi and Village Industries Board were formed to ameliorate employment among artisans and working women by aiding technological assistance in rural regions.
- Institutional Support for the Development & Marketing of Tribal Products scheme intends to provide support in entrepreneurial activities such as product upgradation, production capacity, traditional preservation, agricultural activities, and so on.
- State Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation (STFDC) was founded to encourage tribals to self-employment through skill training and make them take part in economic development.
- Centre for Entrepreneurship Development (CED) was founded in 1988 by the state government to assist with entrepreneurial tasks.
- Chhattisgarh Industrial & Technical Consultancy Centre is an administrative entity that gives training to women entrepreneurs for their empowerment.
- Schemes of MSMEs ministry provide a broad developmental strategy for women entrepreneurs to upgrade their societal and economic position.

Conclusion

The study emphasized the socio-economic status of female entrepreneurs. However, their active involvement is crucial to accelerate the socio-economic development of tribal communities. Women face more difficulties than men during the initial phase of any business and encounter several challenges in startups and successfully running businesses. Despite all the challenges, younger age groups of women are more engaged in entrepreneurship than older women. Some factors are crucial in women's entrepreneurship, particularly family support, government support, and educational competencies. Furthermore, the total work participation of tribal women is 46.39%, lower than the men, and Chhattisgarh state has extremely high poverty rates, with 66.8 % in rural areas and 28.6%. To conclude, it is suggested that an important need to engage in entrepreneurship among women in tribal areas is to raise their living standards and prepare them to tackle market hindrances.

Suggestions for the upgradation of tribal women's entrepreneurship

In spite of various administrative measures taken by the government, the entrepreneurship of tribal women is still lacking at some point due to improper implementation of the schemes and developmental programs. Hence, there is a need for a comprehensive evaluation of the situation they are in, and to take steps regarding those hurdles (such as least market approach, fund insufficiency, and technological unfamiliarity) to minimize the gap between tribal women and entrepreneurship so as to empower them and bring economic revitalization.

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