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### A Study to Explore Problems and Laws Related to Tribal Women

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#### ABSTRACT

This research examines Development Communication and the Empowerment of Tribal Women via Media Interventions, emphasizing the convergence of communication, social justice, and gender equality within India's indigenous tribes. Both traditional and new forms of media are very important for spreading information, raising awareness, and encouraging socio-economic growth among tribal women. Even if literacy rates and access to social programs have improved, the situation and problems that tribal women in India face are still quite complicated and varied. They still have problems like poverty, not being able to read or write, patriarchal standards, not being able to vote, and not being able to get health care and education. Laws like the Forest Rights Act (2006), the Prevention of Atrocities Act (1989), and constitutional protections for indigenous women try to preserve their rights and promote fairness, however there are still gaps in how these laws are put into action. When structured with cultural sensitivity, media interventions may help tribal women by speaking out about their problems and making them feel more powerful. But they aren't really visible since the media doesn't reflect them well, they don't have access to digital media, and they are often shown in a clichéd way. This research stresses the need of participative and inclusive communication techniques that integrate policy frameworks, education, and media empowerment to elevate tribal women, guaranteeing their active involvement in sustainable and equitable development.

**Keywords:** *Development Communication, Media Interventions, Tribal Women Empowerment, Participatory Communication, Gender Equality.*

#### I. INTRODUCTION

Development communication has become a potent strategy for fostering social change, especially among underprivileged groups, including tribal tribes. In India, tribal people are among the most vulnerable groups in society. They typically have to deal with problems like poverty, illiteracy, gender inequity, and being left out of society. In these communities, tribal women are in a unique position. They are the backbone of their societies and do a lot of work in the home, on the farm, and in the community. However, they are still one of the groups that has the least access to education, health care, and decision-making opportunities. Media interventions, as instruments of development communication, have become crucial in empowering tribal women by distributing information, enhancing awareness, and facilitating



**National Conference on Latest Innovations in Engineering,  
Science, Management and Humanities (NCLIESMH – 2024)**

**26<sup>th</sup> May, 2024, Raipur, Chhattisgarh, India.**

involvement in social and economic processes. In West Bengal and other states with a lot of tribal people, the media has been a force for change, linking tribal women to larger stories about social and economic progress. Development communication's goal is not just to educate people but also to get them involved in the process of development. It involves using several types of media, such print, radio, TV, movies, and digital platforms, in a planned way to alter people's attitudes and actions for the better. Tribal women are learning about new things relating to education, cleanliness, reproductive health, job skills, legal rights, and environmental awareness via targeted messaging, community radio shows, and ways of communicating that include everyone.

There are several stages in the growth of media interventions among indigenous women. At first, folk music, puppet plays, storytelling, and village gatherings were all employed to convey developmental messages. These strategies were culturally appropriate and reflected the actual realities of indigenous groups. The range grew with the rise of contemporary communication technology. Community radio and regional television shows started talking about things like women's self-help organizations, maternity health, child education, and cleanliness. For instance, radio shows in local tribal languages have helped women who can't read or write but want to learn about new prospects. The rise of mobile technology and social media has changed the way people communicate about progress even more. Smartphones and internet connections have made it possible for indigenous women, even those who live in rural places, to learn about government programs, healthcare services, and job prospects. Women have become better at talking to people and starting their own businesses thanks to digital literacy programs run by NGOs and the government. People use platforms like WhatsApp and YouTube to share success stories, promote local crafts, and set up women's self-help groups. These kinds of programs not only teach women, but they also motivate and link them across various groups, breaking down the walls of isolation and exclusion.

The media also plays a big part in shaping how people think about the position of indigenous women in society. Through movies, news stories, and efforts to raise awareness, the hardships and successes of indigenous women are being brought to light, which is making them more visible and recognized. Media representation helps to fight against stereotypes that show indigenous women as weak or subjugated. Instead, they are more and more often seen as active agents of change who help with cultural preservation and sustainable development. But there are still problems. The mainstream media typically ignores tribal concerns or talks about them from the point of view of someone who is not a member of the tribe, which may lead to incomplete or inaccurate stories. There is a need for participatory media techniques in which indigenous women are not just subjects but also producers of media material. Media can only empower women if they can speak for themselves about their own lives. Community film projects, participatory photography, and radio stations run by locals are some examples of programs that have had good outcomes in this area.



## National Conference on Latest Innovations in Engineering, Science, Management and Humanities (NCLIESMH – 2024)

26<sup>th</sup> May, 2024, Raipur, Chhattisgarh, India.

Also, the effects of media interventions rely on how easy they are to get to, how well they speak the language, and how culturally sensitive they are. Many indigenous women still have problems like poverty, gender discrimination, not having power, and not knowing how to use computers, which keep them from seeing media. For development communication to work, it has to be open to everyone, take culture into account, and be sensitive to gender. To keep the efforts to empower indigenous women going, they need to take part in training programs that teach them how to use the media, lead, and communicate. Media interventions in development communication aren't only about getting the word out; they're also about encouraging conversation, involvement, and ownership. Tribal women who actively participate in media, whether by listening, watching, or making material, become more confident, learn new things, and obtain the power to change choices that impact their life. Women who have authority may then be agents of social change in their homes and communities, working to improve health, education, and equality. The revolutionary power of media resides in its capacity to provide venues for minority perspectives to be heard, valued, and acted upon.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Singh, Anubhav & Ahluwalia, Ishvinder. (2023) The dominant groups portray the Indian tribes as apart from the rest of the population because of their social, economic, and cultural practices; they also live in more isolated mountain and forest regions. Some Indian ethnic groupings are still known by the term "tribe" due to the impact of British colonial rule. Many people in India still use this term to describe the exotic local Indians who live outside of the major cities and towns. Even in modern times, you may find indigenous communities living in hilly, wooded regions that are abundant in water, minerals, and other natural resources. Strange and unfamiliar to contemporary humans are the civilizations of these indigenous groups. Consequently, others from outside the community use different names to refer to them. After gaining its independence, the state of Rajasthan saw remarkable development in every area of life. In an effort to empower women and other marginalized communities, the government of Rajasthan has launched a variety of development programs. Active mobilization of tribes and engagement of many stakeholders are essential components of tribal development, which is a complex process. To accomplish the goal of tribal development in the next century, public-private partnerships are essential. A lot of tribal development programs have come and gone in Rajasthan throughout the years. But the indigenous peoples of the state are still severely underrepresented in both society and the economy. In this article, we will look at the progress that tribal women in Rajasthan state have made and how they have been empowered. Data analysis has been carried out using descriptive statistics, correlation, and Chi-Square.

Naveen, S et al., (2023) one way to help women in tribal communities become economically and socially independent is to encourage them to start their own businesses. This study seeks to shed light on certain occurrences or incidents pertaining to women's empowerment while highlighting entrepreneurship in a particular tribal environment. Women entrepreneurs, particularly those from



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26<sup>th</sup> May, 2024, Raipur, Chhattisgarh, India.

indigenous communities, face discrimination because of their language and way of life, which hinders their business growth and competitiveness and ultimately impacts their life choices. Despite numerous efforts by international organizations and governmental institutions to assist them, these women continue to face isolation. The goal of this research is to provide light on how indigenous women in Odisha's Mayurbhanj region could have easier access to business opportunities. Using a combination of an interview schedule and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), 111 women entrepreneurs from the Santhal tribal group were questioned. To quantify the improvement in social and economic possibilities, we utilized the Women's Empowerment Index (WEI), and to determine which dependent factors impact entrepreneurs, we employed a linear regression model. Prior to and during an intervention designed to foster entrepreneurial spirit, participants were polled using a battery of WEI indicators. Final thoughts and findings Results showed that women's empowerment has improved when they started working; the study's indicators showed that the Women's Empowerment Index went up from 0.61 to 1.26. Research also shows that women's decision-making within the family is positively and significantly impacted by entrepreneurship. As a result, the research recommends that the government and related organizations step up their intervention with more initiatives to help women get the education and financial resources they need to start their own businesses.

Bhandari, Sandesh et al., (2022) the importance of development communication in empowering women is highlighted in this research. Across all spheres of society, including politics, economics, and education, the gender disparity persists. As a result, empowering women is critical for closing this gap. Women continue to face oppression and marginalization despite making up more than half of the world's population. This is what happens when people are unable to leave their homes. Women are still behind males in terms of empowerment, opportunity, and equality, even though we live in a more contemporary world. Because of this, it is essential to communicate effectively in order to empower women and assist them in realizing their full potential. Through conversation, women may learn about their roles in society, value themselves more, and stand up to the patriarchy that is still prevalent today. The purpose of this essay is to bring these concerns to the notice of those in positions of power. Knowledge and skills, as discussed in this article, are essential to promoting women's eminence and may be disseminated via improved communication. In this article, we look at how information and communication technologies (ICTs) might assist women recognize where they are in society and how to take control of their own destinies.

Jamal, S.. (2020) the advent of mobile phones, the web, and e-commerce has brought about tremendous changes in our society. Modern civilization is fundamentally dependent on information and communication technologies (ICT). Information and communication technology (ICT) has been acknowledged by governments worldwide as a potent instrument for enhancing human resources, facilitating effective governance, and speeding up economic activity. Information and communication



## National Conference on Latest Innovations in Engineering, Science, Management and Humanities (NCLIESMH – 2024)

26<sup>th</sup> May, 2024, Raipur, Chhattisgarh, India.

technology (ICT) has shown itself to be an essential component for societal and economic progress, whether in the context of online commercial transactions or online social and professional networking. An essential need for enhancing communication, expanding options, and increasing the flow of information is an ICT infrastructure. Information and communication technology has shown to be a key differentiator between industrialized and developing nations. Consider India as an example. Thanks in large part to its information technology sector; India is now the fourth largest economy in the world. Women in Pakistan may benefit from ICT if it allowed them to work from the comfort of their own homes, where they could also take care of their household responsibilities, and where they could have access to resources that were previously unavailable to them.

Hossain, Sarah & Beresford, Melanie. (2012). the current state of ICT development in Bangladesh is examined in this article, focusing on mobile phone technologies in particular. We argue that the current data in the Bangladesh instance demonstrates something very different, contrary to the common portrayal of broad access to ICT as the great socio-economic leveller. Social and cultural standards are at the basis of Bangladesh's dismal performance on international assessments of gender equality, which persists despite the prominent profiles of a few female leaders. Therefore, even when intended mostly for women, programs that try to reduce poverty in rural regions by deploying ICT widely end up benefiting males more than women. Our research shows that the gender gap will widen rather than shrink as a result of Bangladesh's ICT revolution unless programs address the root causes of gender inequality.

Dhanasree Kuna et al., (2007) the research was place in the High Altitude and Tribal Zone of Andhra Pradesh, namely in the mandals inhabited by tribal people. Data was gathered from 180 farmers using an exploratory study methodology and analyzed using appropriate statistical procedures. Because of their many contributions to the economy, tribal women are crucial to the development of tribal communities. Food, income, and the administration of financial resources are all areas in which women's labor is vital to the well-being of tribal families. Results showed a medium level of information seeking behavior, achievement drive, and credit orientation. There is a lack of exposure to mainstream media. Forty percent of those who took the survey said they didn't actively participate in society, had no say over the resources and services that might be used for production, and fewer than twenty percent said they lived in remote communities with no access to basic services or extension workers.

### III. CHANGING STATUS AND ENDURING CHALLENGES OF TRIBAL WOMEN IN INDIA

The situation of tribal women in India is characterized by several socio-economic obstacles and inequalities that impact their well-being and prospects for advancement. In India, tribal populations, also known as Scheduled Tribes or Adivasis, make up a large part of the population. They are also





## National Conference on Latest Innovations in Engineering, Science, Management and Humanities (NCLIESMH – 2024)

26<sup>th</sup> May, 2024, Raipur, Chhattisgarh, India.

acknowledged to be some of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable groups in the nation. Here are some important things that show how indigenous women are treated in India:

**Education:** Limited access to decent education is a common problem for tribal women. Their access to better jobs and higher socioeconomic standing is hampered due to illiteracy and a lack of educational options.

**Health and Healthcare:** Malnutrition, increased rates of maternity and infant mortality, and restricted access to healthcare facilities are some of the key health inequities that tribal women face. Factors such as cultural norms, insufficient healthcare facilities, and geographical isolation compound these difficulties. Tribal women confront a multitude of health concerns, which are exacerbated by a lack of knowledge, discriminatory behaviors, and inadequate access to reproductive health treatments.

**Economic Empowerment:** There is a lack of economic opportunity and economic marginalization for tribal women. Limited social and financial protection is a common feature of traditional vocations such as farming, forest-based subsistence, and informal work. Limitations on their economic empowerment include land alienation, inadequate property rights, a lack of business skills, and limited access to markets.

**Social Discrimination and Violence:** Gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic position all interact to create several types of oppression that tribal women experience. Many types of abuse, such as sexual exploitation, trafficking, and domestic violence, might affect them. Their social marginalization, lack of voice in decision-making, and limited access to justice are all exacerbated by stigma and discrimination.

**Cultural Identity and Preservation:** There is no better way to ensure the continuity of cultural customs, traditional knowledge, and communal cohesiveness than via the work of tribal women. Their social cohesiveness and cultural identity are in jeopardy because to the fast rate of urbanization, development, and cultural assimilation. One of the biggest obstacles that indigenous women have is finding a way to improve their socioeconomic status while still preserving their culture.

The Indian government and other groups have worked to improve tribal women's position and overcome these obstacles. A number of policies have been put in place to support tribal women, including those that aim to increase their access to healthcare, education, skill development, and entrepreneurship. Equal opportunity, social justice, and women's participation in development must be achieved by concerted, long-term efforts and holistic strategies.



## National Conference on Latest Innovations in Engineering, Science, Management and Humanities (NCLIESMH – 2024)

26<sup>th</sup> May, 2024, Raipur, Chhattisgarh, India.

### IV. PROBLEMS FACED BY TRIBAL WOMEN

In order to enhance their reputation, most tribal people must overcome a range of challenges. Here, the researcher intends to zero in on the unique challenges experienced by indigenous women.

**Absence of Any Fix Livelihood:** Although indigenous women are more likely to work together than those in booked roles or the general population, research shows that their jobs are neither secure nor sustainable. Their income is inconsistent, and most of them don't have jobs, therefore they live in poverty. The indigenous population of the province's rural parts relies on a wide range of low-skilled occupations to provide for their most fundamental need. The majority of their activities revolve on farming. Besides that, every once in a while, they'll put their contemporary skills to use and do some slow, careful work. Just as tribal males are more often seen working in agriculture, tribal women also do not engage in any kind of regular labour. Few indigenous people are involved with organizations that get funding from the government. All parts of a family's life have an impact on their financial condition.

**Lack of Access to Education:** Outside of the house, most tribal women engage in a variety of activities and hold down jobs. They toil so that their loved ones may live comfortably. Women tend to the household and the gardens. Sure, bring their little ones to work with them. While in school, they often act out against authority figures or skip class. Even low-income families often choose not to send their children to school since it would mean less help around the home. The consequences of a male-dominated culture are readily apparent in most indigenous communities; as a result, women in these societies often have their earnings from labour taken away by their husbands, who then often blow the money on vices like alcohol. The women in the family take care of the housework.

Family chores include preparing food, cleaning up afterward, washing clothing and dishes, and sourcing fuel for the stove. Even at home, elementary-aged kids who only need to know the basics don't pick up much knowledge. The government has promised all children a free and compulsory education up to the age of fourteen, so it's up to the parents to make sure their kids get the education they need in the vain hope those things would get better. The children are provided with complimentary meals, literature, and art tools. However, the females don't always show up to class. They go to school on occasion, but more often than not they choose to remain home, help out around the house, and work alongside their moms. This causes them to have a hard time remembering what they've learnt in class. Adolescent girls are often not sent to school by their parents.

**Poor Condition of Health:** Most of the time, since they don't know what to eat, indigenous women are weak, pale, and prone to diseases. If pregnant women do not get particular care, it will have an impact on the health of the mother and her unborn child.



## National Conference on Latest Innovations in Engineering, Science, Management and Humanities (NCLIESMH – 2024)

26<sup>th</sup> May, 2024, Raipur, Chhattisgarh, India.

Factors such as educational attainment, business standing, health, and critical thinking skills are considered when estimating the position of women in public life. Opportunities must be the primary emphasis of women's education programs. The capacity of women to think critically will be enhanced in this manner. One indicator of a woman's intelligence is her persuasive and communicative skills inside the family. When women reach a certain level of critical thinking proficiency, they might rise to a more prominent position in the household.

### V. LAW RELATED TO TRIBAL WOMEN

In India, tribal women's rights and welfare are safeguarded by a number of statutes and constitutional provisions. Tribal women and other members of tribal communities have particular obstacles, and these laws aim to help them. Important Indian laws concerning indigenous women are as follows.

#### **The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006:**

Scheduled Tribes and other indigenous peoples who have lived in forests for generations have their rights to forest occupancy and recognition bestowed upon them by this law. The rights of indigenous peoples, particularly women, to their traditional homelands and the resources within are its stated goals. The right to live in cultivate, and use forest products are all recognized as individual and communal rights in the Act.

**The Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955:** Scheduled Tribes are among the oppressed groups that this legislation seeks to protect by outlawing and penalizing the practice of untouchability. It guarantees that tribal women are protected from discrimination and have equal rights, especially when it comes to their caste or tribal identity.

**The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989:** The victims of crimes and genocide perpetrated against women belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are the intended targets of this law. Assault, sexual harassment, and humiliation perpetrated against members of these groups are to be punished severely under this law. For the expedited trial of such crimes, the Act also creates specialized courts.

**The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006:** In some indigenous groups, the practice of child marriage is rather common. This law makes it illegal to solemnize weddings between minors and establishes penalties for anyone who breaks the law. Because of the negative effects on their health, education, and general well-being, early marriage is something that this movement aims to prevent for indigenous girls.

**The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961:** The Maternity Benefit Act does not single out indigenous women in particular, but it does apply to all women. Paid leave and medical allowances are some of the maternity benefits that are provided for women. Tribal women's rights and safety in the workplace are safeguarded under this law.





## National Conference on Latest Innovations in Engineering, Science, Management and Humanities (NCLIESMH – 2024)

26<sup>th</sup> May, 2024, Raipur, Chhattisgarh, India.

**The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005:** This Act guarantees a legal right to employment for rural households, including tribal women. It aims to provide livelihood security and promote inclusive growth by ensuring a minimum number of days of employment and fair wages. Tribal women can access work opportunities under this Act, enhancing their economic empowerment.

### VI. CONCLUSION

In order to empower tribal women, development communication has relied heavily on media interventions. By doing so, they help women get access to important information and voice their opinions, closing the gap between traditional seclusion and contemporary engagement. Tribal women are learning more about their legal protections, healthcare options, educational prospects, and economic opportunities via various forms of mass media. Participation in self-help groups, activism for social change, and local government are all ways in which these interventions help women become stronger as individuals and as a collective. Making media more accessible, interactive, and culturally relevant is an ongoing challenge, but it is essential for long-term empowerment. Recognizing indigenous women as active communicators and decision-makers should replace depicting them as recipients. By acquiring the necessary media literacy, indigenous women may play a pivotal role in grassroots development and make sure that their lives are really transformed via communication. So, in the ever-changing social context of India, development communication via media interventions is a powerful force that connects tribal women's empowerment, equality, and progress.

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**National Conference on Latest Innovations in Engineering,  
Science, Management and Humanities (NCLIESMH – 2024)**

**26<sup>th</sup> May, 2024, Raipur, Chhattisgarh, India.**

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