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**SELF-RELIANT INDIA: TRIBAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS A TOOL OF  
EMPOWERMENT  
(A CASE STUDY OF UMARIA DISTRICT OF MADHYA PRADESH)**

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**ABSTRACT**

The tribal people living very close to nature are indigenous, and they lead a very simple lifestyle. The tribes are culturally rich, but economically poor, and also, they are very neglected by different dignitaries. Without the development of the tribal, economic development of a country is not possible. The economic development of a country depends on human resources. The tribal people as human resource plays an important role in the economic development. So, for the development of a specific area or country the entrepreneurship plays an important role. The tribals have great potential for entrepreneurship. The researcher wants to focus on the present scenario of entrepreneurship development in the study area and to highlight the livelihood pattern of the tribal people.

**KEYWORDS:** Umaria District, entrepreneurship, empowerment

**INTRODUCTION AND BRIEF LITERATURE**

In India tribals are more hard working than any other people and contribute significantly towards their family income, but their income generating sources are limited (Chatterjee,2014). In this respect, tribal entrepreneurship development is a recent concern. Different research studies have been made on entrepreneurship development in different region of our country and they have tried to highlight the different motivating and de-motivating factors and also focused on the socio-economic status of the tribals. The socio-economic condition is very important. The tribal people earn low level of income which does not fulfil the basic needs and the infrastructure like road, communication, sanitation, etc are very poor (Jayakumar and Palniyammal, 2016). It has been noticed that the tribals have the great potential because they perform their dual duties in the home as well as outside the home. Their potentiality and production capacity have remained sometimes unutilized or underutilized (Sharma, 2014). But the hidden entrepreneurial potential of tribal people of Shilong have gradually been

increasing with the sensitivity to their role and their economic status in the society (Sengupta, 2016). The literacy rate of tribal people is very low as compared to the non-tribal people. But education and training are the tools in empowering people through the entrepreneurship (Sindhi, 2012). Education and training enhance one's competence level to cope up better in physical and social environment.

In rural areas of the study area there exists a greater gender inequality and the role of women is ignored in our society. From the different research studies, it has been noticed that a nation can't develop without the development of marginalized group (tribal). So, the tribals should be empowered and they can be empowered through the entrepreneurship programs. Therefore, entrepreneurship plays an important role.

The entrepreneur is a person who initiates and organizes an enterprise or business by taking risk and produces new goods or services and entrepreneurship is a process of combining different inputs to produce new goods and services. But the entrepreneurship development is very poor for the tribals. The Govt. of India has been introducing different scheme for promoting entrepreneurship among tribals such as 'Stand Up India Scheme' (to promote entrepreneurship among SC/ST and women giving loan up to 1 crore), Vendor Development Programme (to encourage SC/ST enterprise to be part of public procurement), Capacity Building and Skill Development, Finance Facilitation Centre, etc. It has been observed that entrepreneurship leads to the empowerment of tribals by various ways such as economic empowerment, property right, political empowerment, social equality, personal right, family development, community development as well as nation' development (Sharma, 2014).

### **BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

In India, tribal population is identified as aboriginal inhabitant. They are socially and geographically isolated and they love to live very close to the nature. They are culturally rich but economically poor and socially backward. Here, more or less 550 tribal communities exist in different states and union territories except Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi and Pandichery (Census of India, 2011). Since independence, the greatest challenge that Govt. of India has been facing for the provision of social justice to the tribal people. They are considered as the weakest section of the India's population and are deprived of their basic needs. Though the number of tribal populations increases during the census period, their entrepreneurial growth is not satisfactory all over India.

### **OBJECTIVES**

- To analyse the socio-economic background and livelihood pattern of the tribals in the study area,
- To examine the impact of entrepreneurship on empowerment and livelihood,
- To highlight the problems faced for their entrepreneurship development,

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study is done on the basis of primary as well as secondary data. The primary data are collected through a well-structured interview schedule. The secondary data are collected from the articles, books, newspapers, websites, etc.

## **STUDY AREA**

The study is conducted in the district of Umaria, Madhya Pradesh. Umaria is one of the district of Shahdol division. It is Umaria is located at 23.42\*N 78.63\*E and has an average elevation of 538 metres (1,765 feet). The main part of the district is covered with jungle of different woods. In this district, three blocks are there in which six villages are selected randomly. Then from each block two Gram Panchayet are randomly selected. After that, from each Gram Panchayet one tribal village is selected. Finally, from each village, ten household tribal members are selected randomly. Therefore the total of 80 samples are collected and executed.

## **LIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

There are some limitations of the study. First, the respondents were limited in terms of size and composition. Secondly, the respondents were tried to hide the actual information which may lead to biased result. Thirdly, it was impossible to explain some questions while interviewing the tribal women. Fourthly, the respondents tried to give the answer with very caution which could be deviated from the actual figure. Finally, the data collection was limited to only four blocks due to time and money constraint which may fail to represent the actual scenario of the whole district.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The data are interpreted in terms of age, marital status, family size, training, family income, expenditure, savings, marketing, awareness of the Govt. schemes, their economic activities, etc.

The respondents are classified according to the age groups. Out of 80 respondents, the majority of the respondents that is 29 falls in age group of 30-40. 20 respondents belong to the age group of 40-50 and 18 respondents are below 30 and remaining 13 are above 50 years of age. Regarding the sex composition of the respondents all are female.

The marital status of the sample studied constitute that out of 80 respondents, majority of them are married which accounts 53. There are only 7 members who are unmarried but 15 and 5 are widow and divorce respectively.

Regarding the religious background of the respondents, it is seen that all the respondents belong to Hinduism.

The educational level of the respondents shows that out of 80 respondents, 44 respondents are illiterate, 14 respondents have not completed their primary education and 21 respondents have studied up to high school. Only one respondent has completed her graduation.

About the family size of the respondents, the family size is divided into three groups. It is seen that 32.5% households have less than four members in their families where as only 27.5% have more than five members and 40% of the households have average family size (that is 4-5 members).

Regarding the occupational structure of the respondents, about half of the household of the respondents (45% of the households) depend mainly on agricultural activities as they are marginal farmers, but women members spend their leisure time by making plates (sal leaves), baskets, alcohol (hanriya), etc. Only two engage with service and two have their petty shop in their locality. Only 9 respondents are engaged with animal husbandry like hen and duck rearing, rabbit and goat rearing, cattle rearing, etc. But remaining 31 respondents work as a labourer their locality and sometimes as migrant labourer. Therefore 47 respondents are engaged in different supplementary activities.

It is also interesting to know from the respondents about the reasons of choosing such type of work. Out of 47 respondents, about 19.14% of the respondents choose their jobs for extra income to the family, 21.28% for education of their children, 38.30% for the family compulsion 10.64% for the desire for independent and remaining 10.64% for others.

The interest is to know from the respondents about the source of capital. The few respondents who are the members of SHGs replied that their sources of capital were banks and NGOs, but most of the respondents replied that their sources of capital were self-finance.

Regarding the training of the entrepreneurial activities, it is noted that out of 47 respondents, only 15% of entrepreneurs (i.e.7 in numbers) have taken their training from either Govt. organization or different NGOs.

The interest is to know from the respondents about the Govt. schemes. Most of the respondents are not aware about various Govt. schemes.

It is interesting to know from the respondents about their empowerment. The respondents are very aware about their different types of empowerments. The respondents who are members of SHG, are more empowered than the non-member of SHG. They are more empowered in socially, economically, politically, decision making and leadership. From the study, it is seen that out of 80 respondents 65% of the respondents are members of Self-Help Groups and remaining 35% are non-members of Self-

### Help Groups.

The few tribals are empowered economically as they sometimes take decision in purchasing assets like bi-cycle, mobile phone, etc. On the other hand, they take decision on education of their children and also in family matters.

The respondents are asked whether they took part any social awareness programs. Only 13 respondents have taken part to the awareness programme such as child marriage, various anti- superstitious activities, cleanliness programme, etc. As the tribal men as well as tribal women are very introvert and also controlled by the head of the village (namely Sarpanch), they do not come out from the society without taking his permission.

It is interesting to know from the respondents who are involved in different entrepreneurial activities whether their income, expenditure and saving have increased after joining in the entrepreneurship. The respondents did not give clear answer about their income, expenditure and saving changes because of the fear. On the other hand, they did not keep the record of savings, income and expenditure. Sometimes, they were trying to conceal information. They thought that it could hamper their life if they gave the correct answer. But from the respondents, it is clear that they feel better after taking part in the entrepreneurial activities and their standard of living has been increasing.

### **Problems of the Tribal Entrepreneur**

Some major problems are to be considered in the following ways:

Lack of education is one of the important problems for the entrepreneurship development of the tribal area.

Low income of the households hinders the entrepreneurial growth which causes poverty and unemployment.

Lack of available substitute employment opportunity is the cause of low income which affects the entrepreneurship development of the study area.

Lack of awareness about the entrepreneurship is seen prominently. The reluctance of the Govt. and bank officials in giving assistance to the tribal women are the poor growth of entrepreneurs in the study area.

Absence of Self-Help Group is one of the important reasons for slow growth of entrepreneurship.

Male dominance is one of the important reasons for slow growth of the women entrepreneurship.

Simple life style and introvert nature of the tribal women causes the slow growth of women entrepreneur.

### **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

It has been concluded that entrepreneurial activities of the tribals have been seen, but the growth of

these activities are very slow in the study area. It is clear from the study that tribals have the great potential and if this potential has been recognized properly, their standard of living will improve and poverty will decrease. It has been noticed that the tribal entrepreneurship development is higher for the SHG members than non-SHG members. On the other hand, lack of awareness about the entrepreneurial activities is significant in the study area.

Educational level of the tribals has to be increased. Skill and knowledge in their entrepreneurial activities are important reason for the tribals to emerge highly in the entrepreneurship. Tribal entrepreneurs have to be encouraged to meet the challenges of local market as well as national market. Finally, the entrepreneurship development may not be fulfilled without family support.

From the conclusion, it may be suggested that awareness programs should have to be organised in the tribal areas. The Govt. and NGO should take initiatives regarding entrepreneurial skill and knowledge. For that reason, the Govt. officials should be more sincere about the tribal as they can get all facilities as quick as possible. Finally, the market of the product should be enlarged and DRDC (District Rural Development Centre) and local self-govt. should encourage the tribal entrepreneurs.

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