

Problems and Prospects of Scheduled Tribe (ST) Women Entrepreneurship in Cachar District

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ABSTRACT

When every educational institution realised the importance of entrepreneurship education as a component that brings overall development has become important and necessary not only amongst academia but in many rural areas in North Eastern Region (NER) of India. It plays a pivotal role in empowering women, generating employment, eradicating poverty and exploitation of natural resources for the economic development. Entrepreneurship among the Scheduled Tribes (STs) populations is to be essential for the development and well-being of their families and societies. As most of North Eastern Region (NER) having the habitation of the tribal people since long, the present study examines the problems and prospects in becoming an entrepreneur among tribal women in Cachar district, Assam and also investigate the motivating factors for entrepreneurship among STs women of Cachar district of Assam.

Keywords: entrepreneurship, scheduled tribes (sts), north eastern region (ner), problems and prospects of entrepreneurship

I. INTRODUCTION

The economy of the tribal societies is predominantly agro-based. In addition to that, in tribal society, women equally participate in the decision-making and income-generating activities which is an important aspect of the overall development of their community. But due to the seasonal nature of business and lack of many support measures, they are unable to commercialize these activities. Though there is potential, these women feel reluctant to choose an entrepreneurial career. Therefore, this part of the study emphasizes the problems and their motivating factors which may encourage the emergence of entrepreneurship among ST Women in the Cachar district of Assam, which is the second objective of the study. For achieving this objective, the information is collected through the primary source and interpreted.

II. PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP AMONG SCHEDULED TRIBE (ST) WOMEN

Women are undervalued and exploited which results in a backward, and poor society (Reddy, 2003). Many tribal women possess traditional expertise and the freedom to make their own decisions. Despite that, they face some personal, social, and institutional barriers when they are to opt for an entrepreneurial career. Limbu and Bordoloi (2015) emphasized the importance of knowing the reasons to start a business among women. Studies found that sometimes women start a business after a variety of traumatic events such as divorce, pregnancy prejudice, or simply the desire for financial independence Rao (2016). They believed that entrepreneurs aren't created; they are born. As a result, they think they lack many business skills and fear of failure exists among them. Lack of knowledge, lack of collateral securities, and fear of failure were found to be the common problems of tribal women for not coming into entrepreneurship. At work, at home, or in social life, women are exposed to social institutions that have an impact on their development. Brush (1998) and as a result, for the same business opportunity, women face more bureaucratic hurdles.

III. VARIABLES SELECTION FROM LITERATURE REVIEW

The variables selected from the literature have been combined to develop a questionnaire for evaluating the problems of entrepreneurship among tribal women. The questionnaire consisted of 42 items representing the problem on entrepreneurship.

Table 1: Summary of the reviewed literature

Thrust area	Author (s)	Methodology adopted
Characteristics of Women Entrepreneurs	Bowen and Hisrich (1986)	Survey Based
	Buttner (2001)	Theoretical Review Based
	Minitti (2003)	Theoretical Review Based
	Bendixen & Migliorini (2006)	Survey Based
	Greene and <i>et al.</i> , (2008)	Theoretical Review Based
	Tambunan (2009)	Theoretical Review Based
	Das (2012)	Theoretical Review Based
	Hughes <i>et al.</i> , (2012)	Theoretical Review Based
Problems & Prospects of Entrepreneurship	Kollan and Pareekh (2005)	Survey Based
	Deshpande and Sethi (2009)	Theoretical Review Based
	Koturwar (2012)	Theoretical Review Based
	Goyal and Prakash (2011)	Case Study Method
	Lathwal (2011)	Case Study Method
	Singh and Raghuvanshi (2012)	Theoretical Review Based
Socio-economic background	Cox and Blake (1991)	Theoretical Review Based
	Eagli and Carli (2003)	Theoretical Review Based
	Handy <i>et al.</i> , (2003)	Survey Based
	Narayan and Geethakutty (2003)	Survey Based
	Kepler and Shane (2007)	Survey Based
	Sharma and Verma (2008)	Survey Based
	Murlow and <i>et al.</i> , (2008)	Theoretical Review Based

Source: Compiled by the author

Table 2: Identified list of variables

Sl. No.	Variable	Sl. No.	Variable
1	Age	21	Lack of confidence
2	Individual character/personality	22	Lack of training
3	Family background	23	Growth constraints
4	Educational environment	24	High production cost
5	Environmental factors (Obstacles, entrepreneurial culture)	25	Family ties
6	Marital status	26	Creativity/ Innovation
7	Experience	27	Needs
8	Purpose of starting a business	28	Satisfaction
9	Organizational character (Sector, leadership style, structure)	29	Unemployment
10	Employment/Job	30	High Income
11	Size of business	31	Independent
12	Management Skill	32	Intentions
13	Financial problems	33	Entrepreneurship education
14	Public policy	34	Personal attitude towards entrepreneurship
15	Social/cultural/religious problems	35	Work experience
16	Socio-cultural context (Heritage, designs, structure, rituals, modes of making decisions, meaning in relationship)	36	Parents Occupation
17	Political ideology	37	Being an ST woman is a problem (Self-constructed)
18	Competition	38	Lack of soft skills (Self-constructed)
19	Gender	39	Trust in relationships among family members (Self-constructed)
20	Optimistic attitude	40	Peoples' perception (Self-constructed)

Source: Compiled from a review of literature

Table 3: Identified Problems and prospects

Problems	Prospects
Sociological and psychological order	Individual personality and attitude
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social design and structure 	Cultural and social factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ritual and tradition 	Individual current perspective
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modes of making a decision 	Work value
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meaning in relationship 	Nature and size of business
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occupational role of a woman 	Childhood family environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative occupation 	Educational environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Old and outdated look 	Self-employment status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social recognition 	Environmental factors
Socio-economic problem	Freedom and take own decision
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mass Education and employment 	Satisfaction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial constraints and personal 	Entrepreneurial orientation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marital status and wide family matters 	Motivating factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desire to serve other
Political ideology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs in community
Lack of access to information and technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-actualization
Low level of achievement and advancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desire to achieve change
Lack of confidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural and social factors
Low-level management skills and business idea	Empowerment
Start-up problems and fear of failure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social
Legal challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic
Hand holding and Mentoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technological
Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall empowerment
Limited mobility	
Language	
Growth constraints-uncertainty	
Satisfaction	

Source: Compiled from the Literature

IV. METHODOLOGY

The present study is based on primary data which were collected from seventeen villages in the Cachar district considering the concentration of STs Population. The data was collected through a pre-tested questionnaire from a 354 sample size consisting of 256 students and 98 housewives from seventeen (17) villages of the Cachar district of Assam based on the concentration of the tribal population. The questionnaire was validated and Cronbach Alpha Coefficient was used to test reliability. The collected data were analyzed by using appropriate statistical tools including ANOVA.

Procedure: The questionnaire was validated and Cronbach Alpha Coefficient was used to test reliability which was established at 0.855

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.855	42

Table 4: Frequency Distribution of the sample (n=354)

	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
Less than 20 years	29	8.19
20-29 years	166	46.89
30-39 years	124	35.03
40-49 years	32	9.04
Above 50 years	3	0.85
Total	354	100.00
Marital Status		
Unmarried	256	72.32
Married	88	24.86
Divorce	8	2.26
Widow	2	0.56
Total	354	100.00
Educational Qualification		
10+2	206	58.19
Graduate	142	40.11
Post Graduate	6	1.69
Total	354	100.00
Work Experience		
Yes	53	14.97
No	301	85.03
Total	354	100.00
Place of Residence		
Rural	345	97.46
Urban	9	2.54
Total	354	100.00

V. PERCEIVED PROBLEMS OF THE ST WOMEN REGARDING ENTREPRENEURSHIP

One of the biggest obstacles to tribal women becoming an entrepreneur is that they are tribal. Due to that many inferior feelings have emerged underestimation of self among tribal women resulting in shyness in participation.

Table 5: Perceived problems

Sl. no	Problems	Yes	No	N=354
1	Shyness	216 (61.0)	138 (39.0)	354
2	Dependency	297 (83.9)	57 (16.1)	354
3	Lack of confidence	181 (51.3)	173 (48.7)	354
4	Fear of failure	252 (71.2)	102 (28.8)	354
5	Underestimation of self	272 (76.7)	82 (23.3)	354
6	Overburdened household work	309 (87.4)	45 (12.6)	354
7	Role conflict	193 (54.7)	161 (45.3)	354
8	Lack of knowledge	161 (45.3)	193 (54.7)	354
9	Lack of business idea	253 (71.6)	101 (28.4)	354
10	Uncertainty	191 (53.95)	163 (46.04)	354

Source: Collected and compiled by the researcher, (Figure in bracket indicates percentage)

The table indicates that the majority of the tribal women (61%) reported shyness to come into entrepreneurship. Out of a total of 297 (83.9%), women felt that depending on family members also creates problems for them. It is important to note that the majority of women 181 (51.3%) observed to have a lack of confidence and were not very sure about coming into the business in their lifetime and underestimation of self was the major weakness in them. The majority of them 309 (87.4%) reported that they are overburdened with the household activities. They get less time to think about the potential of making their traditional, cultivation, and farming-related activities from self-sufficient to market-led businesses. It has been observed that there is relatively less role conflict for tribal women, out of a total of 193 (54.7%) reported to have the role conflict. In terms of knowledge, 193 (54%) of women think that they do not lack knowledge as they are always in the business of cultivation, farming, weaving, etc., which is a good sign. But 253 (71.6 %) women confirmed that they lack business knowledge as a result, of uncertainty about making their regular activities business activities. Therefore, there is a need to motivate the tribal women and their family members to understand and co-operate with each other for the betterment of their lives.

VI. MOTIVATING FACTORS FOR THE EMERGENCE OF ENTREPRENEURS AMONG ST WOMEN

Table 6: Motivating factors

Sl no	Motivating factors	Yes	No	N=354
1	To earn money	317 (89.4)	38 (10.6)	354
2	Self-dependent	300 (84.9)	54 (15.1)	354
3	Creative urge	181 (51.3)	173 (48.7)	354
4	Motivation by family	46 (81.4)	66 (18.6)	354
5	Self-motivated	237 (66.8)	117 (33.2)	354
6	To utilize own skill and talent	227 (64.3)	127 (35.7)	354
7	To get recognition as an entrepreneur	277 (78.1)	77 (21.9)	354
8	To get Satisfaction	242 (68.2)	112 (31.8)	354
9	Have the capability to start a business	261 (73.6)	93 (26.4)	354
10	No other option	270 (76.3)	84 (23.7)	354
11	Better status in society	291 (82.3)	63 (17.7)	354
12	Role model	159 (44.9)	195 (55.1)	354
13	Social work	304 (85.9)	50 (14.1)	354
14	Independent	292 (82.5)	62 (17.5)	354
15	Self-confidence (4Qs)	215 (61)	138 (39)	354
16	Influence by the institutional course (3Qs)	144 (40.7)	210 (59.3)	354
17	Influence by EDP and its schemes	249 (70.3)	105 (29.7)	354
18	Influence of the Government's role	336 (95.1)	18 (4.9)	354
19	Influence by infrastructure	125 (35.3)	229 (64.7)	354
20	Influence by the family background (2Qs)	179 (50.4)	175 (49.4)	354
21	Influence by local resources	221 (62.3)	133 (37.7)	354
22	Business knowledge can be acquired	230 (65.1)	124 (34.9)	354
23	Self-employed	231 (65.4)	123 (34.6)	354
24	Risk can be managed	137 (38.7)	217 (61.3)	354
25	Business as passion	281 (79.5)	73 (20.5)	354

Source: Collected and compiled by the researcher, (Figure in bracket indicates percentage)

The table indicates that the majority of the respondents, i.e. 336 (95.1%) tribal women expressed that the most important motivating factor for entrepreneurship is the role of the government in promoting entrepreneurship among the tribal women; to earn money 317 (89.4%), 300 (84.9%) women stated that they wanted to be self-dependent by starting their own business; 181 (51.3%) women reported that they like to try new things for new experiences; 288 (81.4%) women stated that the family members, friends, and society people will support them; 237 (66.8%) were observed to have considered entrepreneurship as a desirable career option for them, and 227 (64.3%) women stated that they want to start a business to utilize their skills and talents. It is interesting to note that, 277 (78.1%) of tribal women opined of getting recognition by doing business; 242 (68.2%) of women were of the opinion that they wanted to come into entrepreneurship to get satisfaction. 261 (73.6%) women believe that they have the capabilities to start and run the businesses though 270 (76.3%) women believe that they have the capabilities to start and run the businesses though 270

(76.3%) women agreed that women choose an entrepreneurial career when there is no alternative available for earnings. It was noteworthy that 291 (82.3%) women have considered that entrepreneurship improves women's status in society. But in terms of role model, only 159 (44.9%) women have reported having knowledge about the local women entrepreneurs but was not sure about their success and their stories. Importantly, 304 (85.9%) respondents felt that doing business is more about serving society; 292 (82.5%) women thought of entrepreneurship to become independent, 306 (86.4%) respondents felt that self-confidence is needed for women to start a business. Only 86 (24.3%) of them felt that the courses help to prepare women to choose entrepreneurial careers whereas 268 (75.7%) did not feel the same, 277 (64.3%) had the opinion that training programs increase business knowledge but 236 (66.5%) felt that their institutional course does not provide this scope. 249 (70.3%) felt that dedicated schemes attract along with the role played by the government and her infrastructure. It is important to note that 260 (73.4%) did not get the opportunity to learn a business skill from their family but 263 (74.3%) opinion that family background influences women; 221 (62.3%) were influenced by the local resources and 230 (65.1%) with the perceptions that business skills can be acquired. A close inspection of plans for self-employment 231 (65.4%) have the plan to be self-employed in the future, but it had also observed that 217 (61.3%) are not ready to take a risk and do not know how to manage it but 281 (79.5%) women found ready to make every effort to start and run their own business.

VII. SUITABLE MEASURES FACILITATING THE EMERGENCE OF ENTREPRENEURS AMONG ST WOMEN

In tribal community, the traditional touch in terms of knowledge is a spill over from one generation to another whether it is of handloom, handicraft or any other artisan works than the formal education (Hazarika and Goswami, 2018).

- It was found that the average entrepreneurial inclination score does not significantly different across different age group and marital status, they are more likely to start their own micro enterprises. This finding indicates the need for innovative social programs and policies to promote entrepreneurship among tribal women.
- Sharing of responsibilities at the family level by women in tribal society is relatively higher. Due to this reason, they feel that they have the scope to participate in entrepreneurship training programs in order to bring more women entrepreneurs and change to their society.
- The low-technology based industry does not require higher formal education to manage. For the tribal women, the courses completed by them found insignificant in choosing micro-entrepreneurship as an occupation (Lokhande, 2015). Education would make them more abled in using of social capital aspects. Therefore, the institutional efforts to enhance women education in the tribal areas should be encouraged and extended.
- Brindley and Ritchie (1999) found that the choice of business for women has been based on their previous work experience because it helps in minimizing the risk. The study also disclosed that choosing a familiar business activity increases the possibility of success in her business.
- It was also observed that tribal women from rural areas see more opportunities for entrepreneurship compared to the urban areas. This may be due to the reason that non-availability of the job opportunities in rural part were found to be the prospect for entrepreneurship among tribal women.

VIII. CONTRIBUTION FOR THE FUTURE RESEARCH

The primary investigation on the problems and prospects of entrepreneurship among the Scheduled Tribe (ST) women on Cachar district in Assam brought to light a few notable findings. The various problems have been considered and closely examined; it is found that degree of problems vary from one to another. Again, the level of analysis on the prospects showed that the majority of tribal women have an opinion that the Government institute play a major role in influencing women toward entrepreneurship.

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