

Role of Community-Led Enterprise Models in Empowerment of Tribal Women in Jharkhand

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ABSTRACT

Tribal development, being a critical issue draws attention of many stakeholders. The Govt. of India is also initiating many Community-Led livelihood initiatives to enhance the well-being and Quality of Life of various tribal communities. State governments are also implementing various policies for tribal welfare in tribal dominant areas. Jharkhand is one such state known for its rich tribal heritage and where state government has introduced JSLPS initiative meant for livelihood promotion of tribals. Many NGOs including PRADAN, Tata Steel Foundation, Udyogini etc. are also working for tribal development through Community-Driven Models. These community-led small enterprises are helping in women empowerment as well. This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of such Community-Led Enterprise Models where enterprises are run by women entrepreneurs in selected villages of Jharkhand, where the majority of Tribal population resides. Data was collected through case study method from Community-Led Enterprises which are functional and engaged only women. Factors contributing in the success & failure of selected Community-Led Enterprises were documented and presented as case studies. Comparative matrix was developed to identify common challenges and concerns.

Keywords: *Community-Led Enterprise, Women Empowerment and Tribal women of Jharkhand*

Introduction

Tribal development has long been a critical challenge, particularly in remote regions where socio-economic barriers and cultural marginalization persist. Jharkhand is a focal point where both development and indigenous culture preservation converge. As industrialization and infrastructure is expanding; the waves of change are been noticed in the cultural and livelihood practices of tribes (Gupta, 2023 and Moyon, 2023). Tribal communities among women face restricted access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities, limiting their ability to achieve self-sufficiency. As custodians of rich

traditions, they struggle to adapt while maintaining their heritage. The Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Vikas Mission (PMJVM) aims to address these issues by promoting sustainable livelihoods, skill development, and market access for tribal enterprises (Government of India, Ministry of Tribal Affairs, 2023).

Among such initiatives, Jharkhand State Livelihood Promotion Society (JSLPS), and few NGOs including Udyogini and Tata Steel Foundation (TSF) etc. are trying to bring change in livelihood opportunities through introduction of Community-Led Enterprises by facilitating their transition from traditional forest-

based subsistence activities to sustainable and profitable livelihoods. Studies indicate that empowering rural micro-entrepreneurs through strategic interventions, plays a crucial role in bridging the gap between local production and mainstream markets leading to women empowerment (Parthiban et al., 2024).

Tribal development is hindered by socio-economic barriers such as geographical isolation, land alienation, limited education and lack of skills, leading to economic marginalization (Sharma, 1973). However, social entrepreneurship and skill training have empowered them economically (Sindhi, 2012) by playing a pivotal role in socio-economic transformation of tribal women through fostering job creation and innovation. Moreover, entrepreneurship empowers Tribal women by promoting social mobility and financial independence leading to inclusive and sustainable development (Seerangan, 2023).

This study aims to assess the effectiveness of Community-Led Enterprise model in empowering tribal women in Jharkhand. The study primarily focuses on enterprises exclusively run by women. It attempts to document their lived experiences, challenges and facilitating factors.

Community-Led Enterprise model empowers tribal women by integrating traditional knowledge with innovative business models, fostering economic independence, leadership, and sustainable development (Esteves et al., 2021; Prakash et al., 2024). It also aligns them with SDGs to enhance food security, social equity, and environmental sustainability. Social entrepreneurship further strengthens women's economic and social roles e.g., Cooperatives run by Lijjat Papad, Amul (Datta & Gailey, 2012; Kumar & Jasheena, 2015; Naveen, Parida & Panda, 2023). In Jharkhand, initiatives under Atmanirbhar Bharat, MSME schemes, and skill development programs are promoting tribal entrepreneurship (Vinamrta & Chakraborty, 2020; Vanitha & Sriram, 2024). Successful models such as Didi Cafe by JSLPS, Village-Level Retail and Aggregation Centres (VLRACs) by Udyogini, and Tasar silk reeling by PRADAN demonstrate the transformative impact of community-led enterprises (Chaudhary & Kumari, 2023). Similarly, NGOs like Ramkrishna Mission is enhancing self-sufficiency through ICT, agriculture, and handicraft training (Chaudhary & Tigga, 2023; Bhaskar & Kaushik, 2022). The Kudumbashree model in Kerala also showcases the effectiveness of structured community initiatives.

Community-Led Enterprise Model

The Community-Led Enterprise Model proposed by Munoz et.al (Munoz, Steiner, & Farmer, 2015) is employed in this study where enterprises are initiated, managed, and governed by community members themselves to integrate economic viability with social empowerment

and environmental sustainability (Khiawnoi et al., 2025). It focuses on four interconnected components: Community Engagement, Need Assessment, Development of Community-Led Enterprise and Enterprise-Led Service Delivery. This is supported by Government and NGOs. The Process of CLE development is further highlighted in Fig. 1 given below

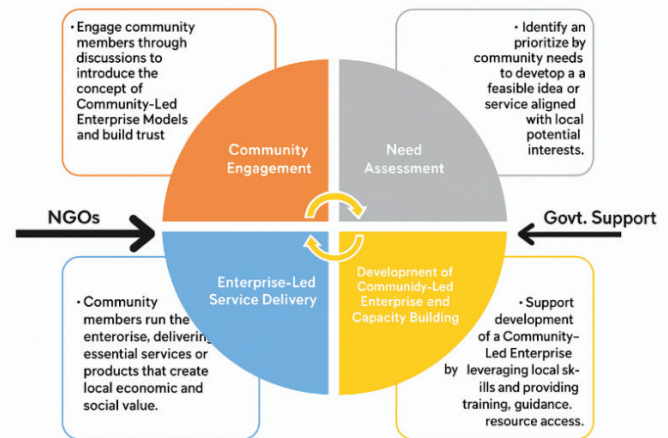


Figure 1: The process of Community-Led Enterprise Development (Munoz, Steiner, & Farmer, 2015).

This framework aims to enhance the well-being and quality of life of tribal communities in Jharkhand by addressing economic empowerment and sustainable livelihoods. The process of developing community-led enterprises starts with engaging communities to build trust and gain support, followed by identifying viable, locally aligned opportunities. Next step is to focus on capacity-building efforts & equip tribal women with skills and resources for effective management and it concludes with the community-led delivery of services and products that create both economic and social value.

Through this framework, the study evaluates the success and challenges of Community-Led women Enterprises in Jharkhand, specifically in tribal-dominated regions. It further highlights their achievements, coping mechanisms, and collective actions towards women empowerment.

Background of the Study

Tribal communities in India, particularly in Jharkhand, are facing significant socio-economic barriers and cultural marginalization, which severely limit their access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. These challenges hinder their ability to achieve self-sufficiency. Traditional tribal livelihoods, often centred around forest-based activities, are increasingly becoming unsustainable due to environmental changes, restricted access to resources and lack of market integration.

To overcome these issues, the Government of India, through initiatives like the Jharkhand State Livelihood Promotion Society (JSLPS), has prioritized Community-Led Enterprise models. The same is replicated by NGOs like Udyogini, PRADAN and TSF. These models focus on empowering tribal women by facilitating their transition from subsistence-based activities to sustainable livelihoods. By establishing community-led women enterprises, these models promote collective action, skill training, and financial inclusion.

This study evaluates the effectiveness of these Community-Led Enterprise models, with a focus on their impact on Tribal development.

Objectives

- To document case studies highlighting the role and effectiveness of Community-Led Enterprises in enhancing the QoL of women entrepreneurs in different Tribes in Jharkhand.
- To identify the challenges faced by Community-Led Enterprises in their sustenance, scalability & skill development.
- To highlight the impact of Community-Led Enterprises on financial and social gains for tribal women.
- To document the role of government and NGOs in facilitating entrepreneurship abilities among tribal women.

Methodology

This study employs a case study methodology to explore the effectiveness of Community-Led Enterprise Models managed by tribal women in selected villages of Jharkhand. The research focuses on communities where such enterprises are already functional and where tribal women demonstrate active involvement. Three tribal communities including Sauriya Pahariya, Bediya and Munda Tribes were selected. A purposive sampling method is adopted to identify relevant cases that offer rich insights into the CLE models. Overall, five Case studies of functional enterprises are documented. Secondary data from government policies, development reports, and scholarly research was reviewed to supplement primary data. Comparative analysis is further used to assess and contrast between different enterprise models using different parameters. Ethical integrity is maintained throughout the research process.

Case Studies from Community-Led Enterprise Models of Tribal Women

Case Study I: Gunny Sacks Enterprise Model, Pakur

The Gutu Galang Kalyan Trust (GGKT), a community-led enterprise established in December 2019 in the Pakur district of Jharkhand, the GGKT has emerged as a powerful community-driven initiative empowering 30 women from the Sauriya Pahariya Tribe. The GGKT has emerged from a context marked by economic vulnerability, social resistance, and limited educational access among the Sauriya Pahariya tribe. Prior to GGKT's formation, women were largely dependent on forest-based livelihoods, subsistence agriculture, and irregular wage labour, resulting in income insecurity and minimal control over household finances. Deep-rooted gender norms, restricted mobility, low levels of formal education, and limited exposure to institutional systems further constrained women's participation in income-generating activities. Against these structural challenges, GGKT has enabled 30 tribal women to transition toward a more stable, dignified, and collective livelihood model.

Through the enterprise, women have gradually moved from survival-based labour to organized production and entrepreneurship, allowing many members to contribute meaningfully to household expenditures related to food security, education, and healthcare. This economic participation has not only strengthened their financial independence but has also enhanced their social status and decision-making power within both households and the wider community.

Reflecting on the initial phase, one member shared: *"There was resistance at first, as women working in such roles was uncommon in our community. However, training provided by the Jharkhand State Livelihood Promotion Society (JSLPS), particularly on work-life balance and collective functioning, helped us negotiate family restrictions and continue our work."* While limited schooling had earlier inhibited confidence and leadership, capacity-building interventions enabled women to develop managerial skills, assert their voices, and emerge as economically active contributors.

According to their Trustee, JSLPS is playing a pivotal role in facilitating market access and institutional linkages, which culminated in GGKT successfully producing 73,000 gunny sacks every month for Jharkhand's Public Distribution System also directly benefiting PVTG households. She also acknowledges persistent challenges, including low technological exposure, inadequate digital marketing skills, and limited awareness of government schemes, which initially restricted enterprise scalability. These gaps are being progressively addressed through continued training and financial support.

Looking ahead, GGKT members aspire to strengthen the enterprise through advanced computer literacy, improved processing unit management, and diversification of operations. The collective envisions becoming a model for youth engagement and women-led community enterprises, fostering long-term economic resilience, social empowerment, and sustainable development within the Sauriya Pahariya community.

Case Study II: Lac Processing Enterprise Model, Gumla

A Community-Led Enterprise Established in 2018 under a Farmer Producer Organization (FPO) framework in the Gumla district of Jharkhand, the Lac Processing Unit emerged in a context characterized by structural livelihood insecurity, gender-based exclusion, and limited institutional access among tribal women. Despite engaging seven women as core entrepreneurs and reaching nearly 500 women as direct and indirect beneficiaries, the initiative initially faced significant challenges related to low-income diversification, dependence on agricultural wage labour, weak market integration, and minimal exposure to collective enterprise models. Although beneficiaries possessed education ranging from basic literacy to graduation, this did not translate into economic opportunity due to restricted mobility, limited decision-making power, inadequate technical skills, and lack of financial literacy. Operating within an FPO framework further posed early governance and compliance challenges for first-generation women entrepreneurs unfamiliar with formal institutional systems.

The transition from agricultural labour to entrepreneurship was further constrained by strong resistance from families and the wider community, where women's participation in enterprise activities was questioned and discouraged. As one member recalled, *"We were not even allowed to go as Family members questioned—What will you do? Why should you go? How much money will you earn?"* These social barriers significantly delayed women's engagement, affecting regular participation, confidence levels, and early productivity.

Technical and operational limitations also posed major obstacles. Initial lack of processing knowledge, quality control skills, and market awareness restricted the unit's ability to produce competitive products. Support under the SFURTI scheme (MSME) and facilitation by Udyogini, along with training from Jharkhand State Co-operative Lac Marketing & Procurement Federation Ltd (JASCOLAMPF), gradually addressed these gaps by providing technical capacity building, funding support, financial literacy, and market linkages. However, limited digital literacy and low technological exposure continued

to impede effective marketing and access to government schemes and formal credit during the early stages.

Environmental sustainability presented another challenge, given water usage and energy dependence in lac processing. In response, the unit adopted a solar-powered lac cleaning system with a 500-liter water tank, marking a transition towards carbon-neutral production practices. While this reduced operational costs and environmental impact, scaling such sustainable technologies remains constrained by capital requirements and technical expertise.

The women entrepreneurs identify advanced machinery, computer-based training, and digital marketing skills as critical needs for enterprise consolidation and growth. Their experience illustrates that women-led community enterprises in tribal regions are shaped not only by success outcomes but by persistent socio-cultural, technological, and institutional challenges, underscoring the importance of sustained handholding, ecosystem support, and gender-sensitive policy interventions for long-term sustainability.

Case Study III: Tamarind Processing Enterprise Model, Gumla

Tamarind Processing Unit is established in 2018 under a Farmer Producer Organization (FPO) structure in the Gumla district of Jharkhand, the Tamarind Processing Unit emerged in a setting marked by economic precarity, livelihood insecurity, and limited enterprise exposure among tribal women. Prior to the initiative, women were largely engaged in agricultural wage labour and seasonal migrant work, characterized by irregular income, poor working conditions, and minimal control over household finances. Despite involving seven women as core entrepreneurs and nearly 500 tribal women as direct and indirect beneficiaries, the unit initially faced multiple constraints, including low levels of business experience, limited access to infrastructure, restricted market reach, and persistent gender norms that constrained women's mobility and leadership roles. These challenges significantly affected early enterprise operations and sustainability.

The enterprise was subsequently supported through financial assistance under the SFURTI scheme (MSME) and technical and institutional facilitation by Udyogini, which helped address gaps in processing skills, organizational management, and market linkages. Over time, women began to strengthen their roles within the enterprise, gradually transitioning from informal labour to collective entrepreneurship. As one member reflected, *"We have gained full acceptance and evolved into confident decision-makers and respected figures in our households"*

and communities." Several members later progressed to become master trainers, mentoring aspiring entrepreneurs across regions.

However, despite these advancements, significant challenges persist, particularly in the area of digital literacy and technology adoption, which continues to limit market expansion, branding, and access to wider value chains. Inadequate infrastructure, especially the absence of cold storage facilities, further constrains product shelf life, scale of operations, and income optimization.

The ongoing experience of the Tamarind Processing Unit illustrates that community-led enterprises in tribal regions are shaped by continuous negotiation with structural, technological, and socio-cultural barriers. While the initiative reflects growing resilience and leadership among tribal women, its trajectory underscores the need for sustained capacity building, digital inclusion, and infrastructure support to ensure long-term economic viability, collective empowerment, and inclusive rural development.

Case Study IV: Millet Processing Enterprise Model, Ranchi

Udaan Mahila Maduaa Prashanshakaran Samooh is Formed in January 2024 in the Ranchi district of Jharkhand, the Samooh emerged from a context of chronic livelihood insecurity, dependence on low-return agricultural labour, seasonal migration, and forest-based subsistence activities among tribal women. Despite being led by twelve women, the initiative initially faced multiple constraints, including limited exposure to enterprise management, inadequate access to processing infrastructure, restricted market awareness, and prevailing gender norms that constrained women's mobility and participation in economic decision-making. Irregular incomes from livestock rearing and forest collection, coupled with low asset ownership, made the transition to a processing-based enterprise both risky and uncertain during the early stages.

With support from CSR-funded infrastructure and facilitation by local Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) for market linkages, the group gradually established a solar-electrified finger millet processing unit. As one member explained, *"Earlier, we relied on livestock rearing and forest collection despite financial hardships, but now we operate a unit that harvests, cleans, and processes finger millet into flour and value-added products such as millet laddus for the Mid-Day Meal programme."* These interventions helped stabilize production and enabled initial value addition, marking a shift away from purely subsistence livelihoods.

According to President, capacity-building support from Birsa Agriculture University played a crucial role in addressing skill gaps, particularly in the preparation of nutritious millet-based products. Initially, marketing was limited to village haats, local fairs, and programme stalls, reflecting continued constraints in branding, packaging, and wider market penetration. Nevertheless, the enterprise contributed to gradual improvements in household welfare, including better access to healthcare and education, while reducing economic dependence on male family members.

Despite these advances, technical and operational challenges persist. Frequent machine breakdowns disrupt production cycles, with members able to manage only minor repairs and remaining dependent on external technicians for major issues. The group identifies the absence of a packing machine and limited advanced technical training as key barriers to scaling operations and strengthening the millet value chain.

The experience of Udaan Mahila Maduaa Prashanshakaran Samooh illustrates how women-led enterprises in tribal contexts evolve through continuous negotiation with socio-economic, technological, and institutional challenges. While the initiative reflects growing confidence and leadership among tribal women, sustained support in technology, infrastructure, and market integration remains critical for long-term sustainability and inclusive rural development.

Case Study V: Lac Processing Enterprise Model, Ranchi

Formed in January 2024 in the Ranchi district of Jharkhand, the Pragati Mahila Lah Prasanaskaran Samooh emerged in a context of economic insecurity, dependence on daily wage labour, and limited access to value-addition opportunities among tribal women. Prior to the formation of the unit, the ten women members relied primarily on irregular wage work and low-return forest-linked activities, offering little income stability or social recognition. The transition toward a community-led lac processing enterprise was initially constrained by limited technical knowledge of lac processing, inadequate infrastructure, low financial literacy, and minimal exposure to formal markets. Deep-rooted gender norms and restricted decision-making power within households further limited women's participation and confidence during the early stages of the enterprise.

With CSR-supported infrastructure and structured training interventions, particularly from the Indian Institute of Natural Resins and Gums (IINRG), the group gradually established a solar-electrified lac processing unit. Reflecting on this phase, President Shushila Devi noted, *"Training from IINRG, supported by CSR initiatives,*

enabled us to set up our own processing unit—something we had never imagined earlier.” These interventions helped address technical gaps and enabled the women to begin processing, refining, and packaging lac, marking a gradual shift from wage dependency toward collective entrepreneurship.

Despite these advancements, the women continue to negotiate social resistance and institutional limitations. Several members reported initial opposition from family members, which affected participation and continuity. As one member shared, “Although we initially faced resistance from our families, our perseverance eventually earned respect and strengthened our role in household decision-making.” This shift reflects gradual changes in gender relations rather than an immediate transformation.

Further challenges persist in the form of limited digital literacy and low awareness of online marketing platforms, restricting access to wider markets and better price realization. The group identifies digital marketing training, branding support, and exposure to e-commerce channels as critical requirements for enterprise growth.

The experience of Pragati Mahila Lah Prasanaskaran Samooh demonstrates that women-led community enterprises in tribal regions are shaped by structural livelihood constraints, socio-cultural barriers, and technological gaps. While the initiative reflects emerging confidence and collective agency, sustained capacity building and market integration support remain essential for achieving long-term economic resilience and inclusive development.

Table: 1 Comparative Matrix of Community-Led Enterprise Models

Indicators	Case - 1	Case - 2	Case - 3	Case - 4	Case - 5
Mode of Functioning	Trust	FPO	FPO	SHG	SHG
No. of SHG Members	30	07	07	12	10
Type of Processing	Gunny sacks	Lac	Tamarind	Millet	Lac
Location	Littipada, Pakur	Kamdara, Gumla	Kamdara, Gumla	Badri, Ranchi	Obar, Ranchi
Distance from Village (Km)	To Unit: 15 To Market: 30	To Unit: In Village To Market: 40	To Unit: In Village To Market: 50	To Unit: In village To Market: 20	To Unit: In village To Market: 15
Earnings	High	Low	Medium	High	Medium
Finance related Challenges	Challenging Loan Procedures	Lack of financial literacy	Limited access to credit & NGO dependency	High transportation costs	Limited banking knowledge
Challenges in Skill Building	Lack of technical training, reliance on traditional methods	Lack in Advance Training/Lack of computer literacy	Limited exposure to modern business practices	Digital illiteracy affecting market expansion	Insufficient mentorship and Technical Knowledge
Challenges in Sustainability	Seasonal fluctuations	Market dependency on middlemen	Lack of infrastructure for storage and processing	Limited government and NGO support in scaling	Difficulty in matching standards to companies
Challenges in Scalability	Digital dependency and lack of awareness	Limited awareness of government schemes	Lack of Fund and Knowledge of digital platforms	Lack of new machineries	Limited Knowledge of Branding
Financial Gains	Improved Financial Status	Stable income	Shifted from daily wage to entrepreneurship	Increased control over financial decisions	Able to support education & healthcare
Social gains	Gain household decision-making	Gain respect and leadership, Develop Self-identity and Emerge as motivator	Overcame community resistance, respected as role models by community	Improved self-confidence and encouraging other women to join enterprises	Transformed family dynamics and became leaders

Areas where Skill Development is required	Financial literacy, enterprise management	Product diversification and branding	Business growth, marketing & financial literacy	Millet processing, value addition, and business networking	Digital marketing & business expansion
Impact of Trainings received	Improved negotiation skills	Improved production quality & became master trainers	Gained skills in networking and pricing strategies	Expanded business and became master trainer	Strengthened leadership & Decision-making skills
Overall Impact	High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate

Discussions

The case studies of various Community-Led Enterprises (CLE) from various tribes of Jharkhand highlight significant transformations in terms of personal and professional skills in these women. Across all five case studies, the progress of Community-Led Enterprises in Jharkhand, have clearly been demonstrated in transitioning tribal women from unstable livelihoods to structured entrepreneurship (Mair, J., & Noboa, E. 2003). These initiatives have significantly boosted the household incomes of these women, enabling them to invest more in education, healthcare, and family well-being (Datta & Gailey, 2012). Enterprises like the Tamarind and Lac Processing Units are impacting around 500 beneficiaries (Neelam et al., 2021). The SFURTI scheme under MSME and NGOs such as Udyogini and Farmer Producer Company have provided critical financial aid, infrastructure, and market access, fostering economic resilience among these enterprises (Raj & Sree, 2023). The advantages of CLE include enhanced financial independence, social recognition, and community leadership, as these women have evolved from facing familial resistance to becoming decision-makers and role models (Kummitha, R.K.R., 2017), inspiring broader women participation in entrepreneurship models (Ramesh et al., 2024). Their ability to produce value-added products, such as millet laddus and refined lac, has further amplified earnings and market competitiveness (Seelos et al., 2011).

Despite their success, these enterprises are consistently facing significant challenges across financial, skill-building, sustainability, and scalability domains. Financially; limited awareness of government schemes and restricted access to credit is hindering their growth, with many relying on loans to address immediate needs (Bhaskar & Kaushik, 2022). It is also reported by Kullu based CLE models that skill-building is constrained by inadequate digital literacy and technological expertise, limiting women's ability to leverage online platforms for marketing and sales (Kullu, 2023). Sustainability is threatened by operational issues, such as machine breakdowns and the lack of automated solutions, which

cause production delays. Scalability also remains a challenge due to patriarchal norms, socio-economic barriers, and insufficient market linkages, requiring long-term capacity-building and resource support (Bhaskar & Kaushik, 2022). NGOs face their own hurdles, including limited funding and bureaucratic obstacles, which impact their ability to provide consistent support (Raju, 2024). Therefore, they face financial crunch in meeting their community led enterprises to these production & other needs, which sometimes demotivates them to move out (Portales, 2019).

Despite challenges, the financial and social gains from these enterprises are profound. CLE are helping women gain stable incomes thereby reducing dependence on male family members. This also enables women to prioritize family welfare and achieve economic security (Chakravarty & Jha, 2011). Socially, their transition to entrepreneurship has shifted family dynamics, granting them active roles in household decision-making and earning community respect as advisors and leaders (Neelam et al., 2021). Their success has created a ripple effect, inspiring younger tribal women to pursue entrepreneurship as their career and fostering collective resilience through community networks and Self-Help Groups (SHGs) (Ramesh et al., 2024). These gains highlight the transformative power of women-led enterprises in breaking socio-economic barriers and promoting inclusive development. These SHGs are also supporting each other against various social evils like domestic violence, child marriage etc.

It is reported that skill development and training played a crucial role in the success of CLE. Consistent training programs from JSLPS, Udyogini, Birsa Agriculture University, and IINRG have contributed a lot to these women in managing and growing their businesses, with some becoming master trainers (Kullu, 2023). The impact of these programs is evident in their ability to produce high-value products and access markets, yet gaps in digital literacy and advanced technological skills do persist (Bhaskar & Kaushik, 2022). These women have enthusiasm, potential and talent (Kabeer, 2005). Only providing desired skills and support they may

overcome their exiting challenges. Therefore, continued investment in training, particularly in digital marketing and technical repairs is essential to enhance operational efficiency and market reach, ensuring these women-led community enterprises remain competitive and sustainable (Raj & Sree, 2023).

Overall, the Community-Led Enterprises (CLEs) have contributed substantially to enhancing women's empowerment and Quality of Life (QoL) among tribal women in Jharkhand. Evidence suggests that younger women aged 20–40 years participating in these enterprises experience relatively higher QoL outcomes, particularly in economic security and social participation (Joseph & Joseph, 2021). Significant variations in QoL are also observed based on age, educational attainment, and occupational engagement, with entrepreneurship offering a critical pathway for improvement (Ahammed Munavvir & Yesuraja, 2022). Increased literacy, NGO membership, structured training, and personal business income have strengthened women's empowerment within households and communities, enabling greater agency and self-efficacy (Naveen et al., 2023). Over the past decade, economic liberalization and expanding livelihood opportunities have further enabled tribal women to exercise decision-making power and negotiate more equitable gender relations within families (Jena et al., 2018). Emerging evidence from patrilineal tribal contexts indicates that enterprise participation can significantly shift traditional gender hierarchies, challenging earlier assumptions regarding male household dominance (Ellena & Nongkynrih, 2017; Mal & Saikia, 2024). Although the growth of tribal women's entrepreneurship remains gradual, engagement in business activities generates a strong sense of fulfillment, autonomy, and identity, underscoring entrepreneurship as a viable and transformative policy pathway for women's empowerment and improved quality of life (Sirgy, 1991; Gill & Ganesh, 2007).

Conclusion

Community-Led Enterprises in Jharkhand reflects the transformative potential of Community-Led entrepreneurship in women empowerment. These initiatives have not only uplifted the economic status of different tribal groups of women, but also sparked significant social change in their lives. Women who were once confined to traditional roles have now emerged as confident entrepreneurs, community leaders, and decision-makers. Access to training in production techniques, financial literacy, and basic digital skills has enabled them to manage enterprises more effectively. They are not only contributing to their family, but also contributing meaningfully to their communities. While

foundational progress has been made so far but existing challenges related to digital proficiency, technical expertise, and limited market exposure highlight the need for sustained and strategic intervention been supported by government and other stakeholders.

This further indicates that sustainability and scalability of Community-Led Enterprises, requires a robust policy framework. This includes focuses on different areas e.g. digital literacy, training in e-commerce, building market linkages, branding etc. Easier access to finance with simplified loans and better awareness of schemes should also be provided. The stakeholder should promote adaptation of eco-friendly practices like solar-powered units, and mentorship networks for peer learning as essential components. Lastly, it requires coordinated efforts among government, NGOs, and corporates towards inclusive and holistic development of Community-Led women enterprises.

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