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Tribal Women Writers in Digital India Opportunities & Challenges

*¹Dr. Anita Rathi*¹Senior Fellow, ICSSR, New Delhi, Jai Narayan Vyas University, Jodhpur, Rajasthan, India.

Abstract

This paper is an estimation of the post Covid situation of Tribal Women Writers in digital India. This focuses on the impact of digitalisation on their social and cultural life. Tribal women authors in India are very less known and acknowledged due to their social environment from times ago. With the educational upliftment of remote areas, tribal women are now expressing themselves in their writings and producing good literary stuff. This paper is an initiation to estimate the role of digitalisation after the post Covid effects in Tribal women author's lives in India, just to understand the opportunities and challenges brought in to their writing impulses and in their everyday social life.

Keywords: Digitalisation, tribal women, authors, digital India, Covid, post Covid India, impact of digitalisation, opportunities & challenges

Introduction

“Hum the, hum hain aur hum rahenge (we were there, we are here and we will be there),” said Vandna Tete, general secretary of Akhra, while emphasizing on the existence of tribals over ages. Tribal women writers are a group of authors who come from Indigenous or tribal communities and write about their experiences, culture, and issues that affect their communities. They often provide a unique perspective on the world, shedding light on stories and perspectives that have been marginalized or underrepresented. Their writing can be an important tool for raising awareness and promoting understanding of Indigenous cultures and issues. Acclaimed writer and professor of North East Hill University, Shillong, Streamlet Dkhar, was addressing a room full of 35 women authors at the inaugural session of a first-ever all-India tribal women writers' meet at a Ranchi hotel. Tribal societies are going through a transition phase and the identity of tribals is being rediscovered through literary writing. “Tribals are currently reeling under the influence of urbanization. Still we are trying to preserve our culture through our writings, even when many of us do not speak the language,” said Dkhar.

Many tribal women writers use their platform to advocate for the rights and autonomy of their communities, drawing attention to the ongoing struggles they face, such as displacement, discrimination, and loss of cultural heritage. Their works are important contributions to the literary world and also serve as a powerful means of resistance and resilience for their communities. Tribal women in India face a number of challenges, particularly when it comes to access to education and opportunities for self-expression. Despite this, a growing number of tribal women authors are emerging in India, using writing as a means of telling their stories and

raising awareness of the issues that affect their communities. One of the major challenges that tribal women authors in India face is lack of education. Many tribal women come from communities where education is not a priority, and as a result, they may not have had the opportunity to develop the writing skills necessary to become authors. Additionally, many tribal women writers come from remote and rural areas with limited access to resources and opportunities for training and development. Another challenge that tribal women authors face is the lack of representation and visibility in the literary world. Many tribal women writers have to struggle to find publishers and audiences for their works. The literary scene in India is dominated by the mainstream and dominant culture and tribal women writers often find it hard to break into it. Despite these challenges, many tribal women authors in India are finding ways to make their voices heard. They are using writing to document their experiences and to raise awareness of the issues that affect their communities, such as displacement, discrimination, and loss of cultural heritage. These works also serve as a powerful means of resistance and resilience for their communities. Tribal women authors are also using digital platforms and social media to reach a wider audience, bypassing traditional gatekeepers and connecting directly with readers. This has allowed them to build communities of readers and supporters, who are interested in their stories and perspectives. In recent years, there have been initiatives to promote and support tribal women authors in India. Many NGOs and organizations are working to provide education, training and mentorship opportunities to tribal women writers. This is helping to create a supportive ecosystem for tribal women authors in India and to increase their visibility in the literary world. In short there is a strong

need to know and understand the social, economic and political situation of tribal women authors in India especially in digital India. The situation of tribal women authors in India is complex and challenging, but it is also an exciting time as more and more tribal women are finding ways to make their voices heard. Their works are important contributions to the literary world and also serve as a powerful means of resistance and resilience for their communities.

Post COVID Changes in India

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on India, leading to changes in various sectors such as healthcare, economy, education, and daily life. Some of the changes in India post-COVID-19 include:

- **Healthcare:** The pandemic has highlighted the need for better healthcare infrastructure and resources in India. The government has announced plans to increase the number of hospitals and health centers, and improve the availability of medical equipment and personnel.
- **Economy:** The pandemic has resulted in a significant decline in economic activity, leading to job losses and a decline in income for many individuals and businesses. The government has announced various measures to support the economy, such as financial assistance for businesses and individuals, and stimulus packages to revive economic activity.
- **Education:** The pandemic has led to the closure of schools and universities, resulting in a shift to online and distance learning. Many educational institutions have adopted digital technologies to continue teaching and learning, and there has been a significant increase in the use of online learning platforms.
- **Daily life:** The pandemic has led to changes in daily life, such as the widespread use of masks and social distancing, and the closure of non-essential businesses. Many people have also been working from home as a result of the pandemic, leading to changes in the way people work and communicate. Overall, the pandemic has accelerated the adoption of technology and digital solutions in India, and has highlighted the need for better healthcare infrastructure, economic support, and education reform.

Impact of Covid-19 Situations on Tribal Women Writers in India

“Irrespective of differences in lifestyle, all tribals possess an unconditional love for nature,” said tribal scholar writer K. Vasamalli, who came all the way from Tamil Nadu. The status of Indian tribal women writers in the new India, post-COVID-19, is a complex issue. On one hand, the pandemic has highlighted the need for greater representation and visibility of tribal women in Indian literature and media. On the other hand, the pandemic has also had a negative impact on the lives and livelihoods of tribal communities, including women. One of the positive effects of the pandemic has been the increased attention and awareness of the issues faced by tribal communities, including those faced by tribal women. This has led to a greater interest in the literature and stories of tribal women, and an effort to amplify their voices and perspectives in Indian literature. However, the pandemic has also had a negative impact on the lives and livelihoods of tribal communities, including women. The pandemic has led to job losses and a decline in income for many tribal communities, which has affected their ability to access education and healthcare, and has also affected their mental and emotional well-being. Additionally, the pandemic has led

to a rise in domestic violence and other forms of violence against women, which has affected tribal women disproportionately. This has further compounded the challenges faced by tribal women in terms of their socio-economic status, education and health. Overall, the status of Indian tribal women writers in the new India, post-COVID-19, is a complex issue that is affected by both positive and negative factors. While there has been an increased interest in the literature and stories of tribal women, the pandemic has also highlighted the need for greater support and resources for tribal communities, including women.

Some of the Qualities of Tribal Women Authors Writings in India from the Eyeglass of Multidisciplinary View Point

- i). **Authenticity:** Tribal women's writing often reflects their lived experiences and cultural identities.
- ii). **Diversity:** The literature written by tribal women in India is diverse and covers a wide range of themes and styles.
- iii). **Empowerment:** Many tribal women's writings focus on empowerment and the assertion of their rights and agency.
- iv). **Resilience:** Their writings often reflect the resilience and strength of tribal women in the face of societal and cultural challenges.
- v). **Oral Tradition:** Many tribal women authors draw on the oral tradition of their communities, incorporating storytelling and oral history into their writing.
- vi). **Intergenerational:** Many of their writings also tend to reflect the experiences and perspectives of different generations of tribal women.
- vii). **Addresses the Marginalization:** Many tribal women authors use their writing to address the marginalization and invisibility of tribal communities in mainstream society.
- viii). **Language:** Their writings in many cases are in the native languages of the tribes, preserving their linguistic heritage.
- ix). **Creates Awareness:** Their writing creates awareness about the issues that the tribal communities are facing, and also highlights their customs, tradition and lifestyle.
- x). **Expresses the Emotions:** Their writings express the emotions, feelings and thoughts of the tribal women in a very honest way.

Issues in Reducing the Hardship of Tribal Women Writers

- i). **Providing Financial Support:** Financial assistance can help tribal women authors overcome the financial barriers to publishing and promoting their work.
- ii). **Building a Support Network:** Creating a network of tribal women authors, editors, and literary agents can provide mentorship, guidance, and opportunities for collaboration.
- iii). **Encouraging Education:** Providing access to education and writing workshops can help tribal women authors develop their skills and improve their writing.
- iv). **Promoting Diversity and Inclusion:** Increasing representation and visibility of tribal women authors in the literary community can help create a more inclusive environment and provide opportunities for their work to be recognized and appreciated.
- v). **Providing Access to Digital Platforms:** Providing access to digital platforms, such as e-book publishing,

can make it easier for tribal women authors to share their work and reach a wider audience.

- vi). **Translation of Works:** Translating their works in different languages can help to reach a larger audience.
- vii). **Preservation of Indigenous Languages:** Encouraging the use of indigenous languages in literature can help to preserve these languages and cultural heritage.
- viii). **Collaboration:** Collaborating with organizations and individuals that advocate for the rights and empowerment of tribal women can help to amplify their voices and address the systemic issues that contribute to their marginalization.
- ix). **Recognition and Award:** Encouraging the recognition and award for the work of tribal women authors can help to acknowledge their contributions and inspire others to follow in their footsteps.
- x). **Creating Awareness:** Creating awareness among the general public about the work and contribution of tribal women authors can help to break stereotypes and encourage support for their work.

Impacts of Digitalization on Tribal Women Authors: Opportunities

Digitalization has brought several opportunities and challenges for tribal women in India. On the one hand, digitalization has provided them access to information, education, and financial services, which were previously unavailable to them. On the other hand, it has also created new forms of inequality and exclusion, especially for those who lack access to digital technologies.

One of the significant impacts of digitalization on tribal women is in the area of education. With the availability of online learning resources and digital education platforms, tribal women can now access education and skill-building programs from remote areas. This has led to an increase in literacy rates and has provided them with new job opportunities.

Digitalization has also opened up new avenues for financial inclusion for tribal women. Digital payment platforms have made it easier for them to access financial services such as loans, savings, and insurance. This has helped to improve their economic status and has also increased their financial independence.

However, the digital divide is still a significant challenge for tribal women in India. Many tribal communities still lack access to basic digital infrastructure, including electricity and internet connectivity. This has created a digital divide, with some tribal communities being left behind in the digital era.

Moreover, cultural barriers also hinder the adoption of digital technologies among tribal women. Many tribal communities have limited exposure to technology and may face resistance from traditional leaders and family members who view technology as a threat to their cultural identity.

In conclusion, digitalization has brought several opportunities and challenges for tribal women in India. While it has provided them access to education and financial services, it has also created new forms of inequality and exclusion. Addressing the digital divide and cultural barriers are crucial steps in ensuring that tribal women can fully benefit from the opportunities that digitalization offers.

Digitalization has created new opportunities for tribal women authors to showcase their work and reach a broader audience. With the proliferation of digital publishing platforms, social media, and e-commerce websites, tribal women authors can

now publish their works digitally and market them to a global audience.

One of the primary benefits of digital publishing is that it eliminates the need for traditional publishing gatekeepers, such as agents and publishers, who may have discriminated against tribal women authors in the past. Now, with the availability of self-publishing platforms, tribal women authors can publish their works independently and gain recognition for their writing skills.

Moreover, digital platforms have made it easier for tribal women authors to connect with readers and build a following. Social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram have enabled authors to engage with readers directly and promote their works. Tribal women authors can also create their blogs and websites to showcase their writing and connect with readers interested in their work.

Digitalization has also made it easier for readers to access the works of tribal women authors. E-books and audiobooks are readily available online, and readers can access them instantly, regardless of their location. This has helped to overcome traditional publishing's geographical barriers, where access to books was limited to urban areas.

In conclusion, to showcase their work and reach a global digitalization has opened up new opportunities for tribal women author's audience. Self-publishing platforms, social media, and e-commerce websites have enabled tribal women authors to publish their works independently and connect with readers directly. This has helped to promote diversity in literature and provide a platform for underrepresented voices to be heard.

Impacts of Digitalization on Tribal Women Authors: Challenges

Tribal women in India face a number of challenges, particularly when it comes to access to education and opportunities for self-expression. Despite this, a growing number of tribal women authors are emerging in India, using writing as a means of telling their stories and raising awareness of the issues that affect their communities. One of the major challenges that tribal women authors in India face is lack of education. Many tribal women come from communities where education is not a priority, and as a result, they may not have had the opportunity to develop the writing skills necessary to become authors. Additionally, many tribal women writers come from remote and rural areas with limited access to resources and opportunities for training and development. Another challenge that tribal women authors face is the lack of representation and visibility in the literary world. Many tribal women writers have to struggle to find publishers and audiences for their works. The literary scene in India is dominated by the mainstream and dominant culture and tribal women writers often find it hard to break into it. Despite these challenges, many tribal women authors in India are finding ways to make their voices heard. They are using writing to document their experiences and to raise awareness of the issues that affect their communities, such as displacement, discrimination, and loss of cultural heritage. These works also serve as a powerful means of resistance and resilience for their communities. Tribal women authors are also using digital platforms and social media to reach a wider audience, bypassing traditional gatekeepers and connecting directly with readers. This has allowed them to build communities of readers and supporters, who are interested in their stories and perspectives. In recent years, there have been initiatives to promote and support tribal women authors in

India. Many NGOs and organizations are working to provide education, training and mentorship opportunities to tribal women writers. This is helping to create a supportive ecosystem for tribal women authors in India and to increase their visibility in the literary world. In conclusion, the situation of tribal women authors in India is complex and challenging, but it is also an exciting time as more and more tribal women are finding ways to make their voices heard. Their works are important contributions to the literary world and also serve as a powerful means of resistance and resilience for their communities.

Suggestions for Policy Formation for the Upliftment of Tribal Women Authors

- i). Establishing a Grant Program for Tribal Women Authors:** A grant program specifically for tribal women authors could provide financial support for writing, publishing, and promotion of their work.
- ii). Creating Mentorship Opportunities:** A mentorship program for tribal women authors could connect them with established authors, editors, and literary agents who can provide guidance and support.
- iii). Providing Education and Training Opportunities:** Offering writing workshops and classes specifically for tribal women authors could help them develop their skills and improve their writing.
- iv). Increasing Representation and Visibility:** Encouraging publishers, literary festivals, and bookstores to feature and promote the work of tribal women authors could help to increase their representation and visibility in the literary community.
- v). Providing Access to Digital Platforms:** Partnering with digital platforms and technology companies to provide access and training for tribal women authors to use digital tools and platforms for publishing, marketing, and distribution of their work.
- vi). Translation Support:** Providing support for the translation of tribal women authors' works into different languages can help to reach a wider audience.
- vii). Promoting Indigenous Languages:** Encouraging the use of indigenous languages in literature and providing resources for the preservation and promotion of these languages can help to preserve cultural heritage.
- viii). Collaboration with NGOs and other Organizations:** Partnering with organizations that work on the empowerment and rights of tribal women can help to address the systemic issues that contribute to their marginalization.
- ix). Recognition and Awards:** Establishing awards and recognition programs specifically for tribal women authors to acknowledge their contributions and inspire others to follow in their footsteps.

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