

Economic Potential of Tribal Medicine and Crafts: A Path to Sustainable Development and Cultural Preservation

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Abstract

A population's whole way of life, including its institutions, beliefs, and artistic expressions, that are transmitted from one generation to the next is referred to as its medicine and craft. The term sustainable development describes a strategy for attaining economic expansion and advancement that satisfies current demands without endangering the capacity of future generations to satisfy their own. Since tribal medicine and craft uses natural resources by emphasizing their protection and preservation, it supports sustainable development. Tribal culture cannot exist without the environment as it serves a practical purpose in meeting the demands of tribal culture.

Environmental preservation will be aided by sustainable development and tribal culture. The lifestyle of tribal people and its connection to environment will be the main topics of this research paper. Explaining the significance of the tribal cultures of the Baiga, Bharia, and Saharia as well as their identities for sustainable resource management is the goal of this article. The study talks about the natural environment of the tribe and other cultural events that have shaped their way of life, their man-nature-spirit, and their distinct identity as a result of their protracted adaption process. It also describes the subsistence economy of the tribe, which is founded on the whole ecosystem, including the water, forest, and land systems. The study shows that tribal people are knowledgeable about protecting forests, seeds, water, and biodiversity. Additionally included in this study is their everyday meteorology and naturopathy expertise. The research is based on secondary data and use the observations technique as its approach.

Keywords: SDGs, Cultural Preservation, Tribal Medicine, Economic Potential

Introduction

In addition to being an underutilized economic resource, tribal medicine and crafts reflect a rich cultural legacy. These customs, which have their roots in sustainability and indigenous wisdom, have a great deal of promise for environmental preservation, community empowerment, and economic progress. Tribal groups can attain sustainable development while maintaining their cultural identity by incorporating traditional customs into contemporary economies.

Herbal treatments, healing rites, and spiritual practices that have been handed down through the years make up traditional tribal medicine. These methods not only promote overall well-being and lessen dependency on synthetic pharmaceuticals, but they also offer a sustainable approach to treatment. In a similar vein, indigenous cultures' tales, beliefs, and talents are embodied in tribal crafts, which represent millennia of artistic expression. Every handcrafted product, whether it is woodworking, jewellery, ceramics, or textiles, embodies a distinct cultural heritage that may be turned into a prosperous business opportunity.

There are several advantages to identifying and utilizing the economic potential of native crafts and medicine. It maintains priceless cultural practices, promotes biodiversity protection via the sustainable gathering of medicinal herbs, and empowers indigenous communities by giving them sources of income. These ancient methods can be incorporated into international industries while preserving their integrity and moral underpinnings if the proper support systems are in place, such as market access, financial investment, and legal protection.

Economic Opportunities in Tribal Medicine

1. Traditional Herbal Medicine Market

Tribal medicine, often based on centuries-old knowledge of natural remedies, is gaining global recognition. The demand for herbal and alternative medicine is growing, creating an opportunity for indigenous communities to commercialize their medicinal knowledge.

- **Herbal Pharmaceuticals:** Many pharmaceutical companies are exploring traditional plant-based remedies for new drug development.
- **Wellness Industry:** Traditional healing practices, such as Ayurveda and tribal healing rituals, have found a market in wellness tourism and holistic healthcare.
- **Organic and Ethical Products:** Consumers are increasingly seeking ethically sourced and organic herbal medicines, which align well with indigenous knowledge and sustainable harvesting practices.

2. Legal and Ethical Considerations

The commercialization of tribal medicine must ensure the protection of indigenous intellectual property rights. Governments and organizations can support these efforts through:

- **Patent Protection:** Developing frameworks for protecting indigenous knowledge.
- **Benefit-Sharing Agreements:** Ensuring profits from traditional knowledge benefit tribal communities.
- **Certification and Branding:** Establishing quality standards and authenticity certification for traditional medicine products.

Economic Opportunities in Tribal Crafts

1. Handicrafts and Traditional Art

Tribal crafts, including textiles, pottery, jewelry, and woodwork, are valued for their authenticity and cultural significance. These crafts can create sustainable livelihoods for artisans if properly marketed and supported.

- **Export and E-commerce:** The global market for handcrafted goods is expanding, with e-commerce platforms enabling direct access to international buyers.
- **Cultural Tourism:** Museums, exhibitions, and craft fairs help generate income while preserving cultural heritage.
- **Collaborations with Designers:** Partnerships with contemporary designers can create modern interpretations of traditional crafts, increasing their appeal to new markets.

Review of literature

The importance of indigenous knowledge in fostering sustainable economic growth is shown by a number of researches. Traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) is a vital resource for biodiversity conservation and commercial activities like herbal medicine and handicrafts, according to scholars like Posey (1999). Furthermore, Berkes (2012) talks about how indigenous customs combine economic opportunity with cultural legacy to support sustainable lifestyles.

Nearly 80% of the world's population receives their main medical care from traditional medicine, according to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2019), which presents a substantial commercial opportunity for indigenous medicinal knowledge. Research by Heinrich et al. (2018) and Sharma & Chaturvedi (2020) highlights the importance of indigenous herbal medicine in the pharmaceutical and wellness sectors while addressing the growing consumer demand for herbal and organic goods. Fair commercialization is hampered by problems like biopiracy and intellectual property rights, though (Dutfield, 2004).

Studies like Dhamija (2004) and Scrase (2003) emphasize the contribution of tribal crafts to cultural preservation and economic empowerment. Handmade indigenous items now have more market prospects thanks to the growth of e-commerce and ethical consumerism (UNESCO, 2018). Additionally, research indicates that collaborations with designers and fair-trade associations might improve craftsmen's access to markets and financial security (Banerjee & Mukherjee, 2021).

Despite their potential for growth, indigenous businesses confront a number of obstacles. Growth is frequently hampered by a lack of infrastructure, restricted market access, and intermediary exploitation (Altman & Taylor, 2018). The significance of safeguarding indigenous intellectual property rights through international frameworks like the Nagoya Protocol and WTO agreements is emphasized in legal studies like those by Tobin (2014).

Objectives

1. Evaluate the potential of tribal medicine and crafts as sustainable economic resources for indigenous communities.
2. Analyze the demand for traditional herbal medicine and handmade crafts in domestic and global markets.
3. Investigate the legal, economic, and logistical challenges faced by indigenous artisans and traditional healers in commercializing their products.
4. Study the role of tribal medicine and crafts in promoting environmental sustainability and biodiversity conservation.
5. Assess existing government policies, intellectual property rights, and trade regulations affecting tribal medicine and crafts.

Research methodology

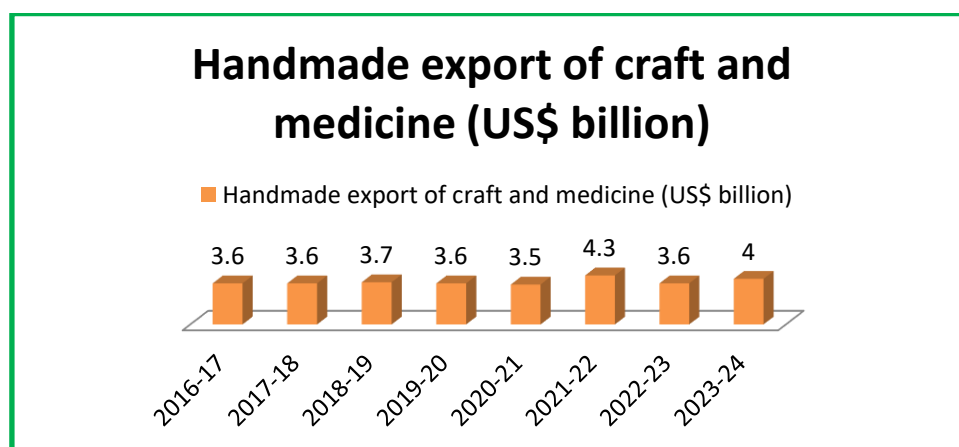
The research is empirical based. In this study the observation methodology has been used which gives the touch directness and the real time information. It has been collected within the natural environment of the tribe. The unstructured interview has been taken in the research which make the responded comfortable and easy to give answers. It is collected to find out the connection between the concept of sustainable development and tribal cultural practices. The secondary data has also taken into consideration which gave the direction to this research. The secondary has been collected for tribal development departments, planning commission, census and reviews of articles and books.

Data analysis

Table no.1

Sr. No.	Year	Handmade export of craft and medicine (US\$ billion)
1.	2016-17	3.6
2.	2017-18	3.6
3.	2018-19	3.7
4.	2019-20	3.6
5.	2020-21	3.5
6.	2021-22	4.3
7.	2022-23	3.6
8.	2023-24	4.0

Source: <https://www.ibef.org/exports/handicrafts-industry>

Chart no.1

The export value of handmade crafts and medicines has shown some fluctuations over the years, reflecting both market trends and external factors affecting global demand. In the fiscal year 2016-17, the export value stood at 3.6 billion US dollars, which remained consistent through 2017-18. The following year, 2018-19, saw a slight increase to 3.7 billion dollars. However, in the years 2019-20 and 2020-21, exports dipped slightly to 3.6 billion and 3.5 billion dollars, respectively, possibly due to economic slowdowns and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite these challenges, 2021-22 saw a significant rebound, reaching 4.3 billion dollars. The year 2022-23 marked a return to the previous level of 3.6 billion dollars, likely due to global economic recovery but facing competitive pressures. For 2023-24, there is a slight positive uptick to 4.0 billion dollars, indicating a promising recovery and growing international demand for handmade crafts and medicines. The overall trend shows resilience, with some fluctuations driven by global events, but a clear potential for recovery and growth in the sector.

Conclusion

Tribal crafts and medicine have enormous economic potential, providing a route to sustainable development while upholding native customs. We can build a future where tribal history flourishes alongside economic advancement by making investments in these areas through moral commercialization, legislative backing, and community-led projects. A strong tribal economy built on crafts and traditional medicine can promote self-sufficiency and lessen economic inequality. In addition to preserving indigenous knowledge, sustainable techniques guarantee that it continues to provide revenue and foster cultural pride. Consequently, this lessens reliance on outside resources and encourages independent economic systems that benefit whole communities.

Furthermore, indigenous groups may avoid exploitation and obtain just compensation for their contributions by bolstering intellectual property rights and putting in place fair trade procedures. By developing collaborative business models, educational initiatives, and legal protections, it is ensured that the advantages of commercialization will not diminish but rather strengthen cultural authenticity.

In the end, the values of inclusion, sustainability, and respect ought to direct the incorporation of indigenous medicine and crafts into contemporary economies. These ancient businesses may promote

environmental stewardship, cultural preservation, and economic resilience when backed by moral corporate conduct and prudent regulations, leaving a lasting legacy for coming generations.

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