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Research Article

The Role of Family Support and Social Networks in Shaping The Entrepreneurial Attitudes and Behaviours of Tribal Women

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ABSTRACT

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Purpose

Entrepreneurship among tribal women is a key driver of economic empowerment and social transformation; however, these women face significant barriers such as limited financial resources, socio-cultural constraints, and restricted market access. This study, grounded in the Resource-Based View (RBV) model, explores how family support and social networks function as valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN) resources in shaping their entrepreneurial attitudes and behaviors.

Methods/Measures

A quantitative research approach was employed, using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to examine the relationships between family support, social networks, entrepreneurial attitudes, and entrepreneurial behavior. Data was collected from tribal women entrepreneurs through a structured questionnaire utilizing a five-point Likert scale.

Findings

The results indicate that family support and social networks significantly influence entrepreneurial attitudes, which, in turn, positively impact entrepreneurial behavior. Financial assistance, emotional support, and skill-sharing from families enhance self-efficacy and risk-taking, while social networks provide mentorship, market access, and financial linkages, fostering business sustainability and innovation.

Originality

This study contributes to entrepreneurship literature by highlighting the crucial role of intangible resources in tribal women's business success. By applying the RBV framework, it offers new insights into how family and social capital drive entrepreneurship, providing policy implications for financial inclusion, capacity-building programs, and gender-focused entrepreneurial development.

Keywords: Tribal women entrepreneurs, Resource-Based View, Family support, Social networks, Entrepreneurial attitudes, Entrepreneurial behavior.

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship plays a crucial role in economic development and social empowerment, particularly for marginalized groups such as tribal women (Mair & Marti, 2006). The Resource-Based View (RBV) model posits that individuals and firms gain a competitive advantage by leveraging valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN) resources, including intangible assets such as family support and social networks (Barney, 1991). For tribal

women entrepreneurs, these intangible resources serve as key enablers, helping them navigate socio-cultural constraints, financial exclusion, and market access limitations (Sirmon & Hitt, 2003). Family support, encompassing financial assistance, emotional encouragement, and skill transfer, is an essential resource that enhances entrepreneurial motivation, self-efficacy, and resilience (Danes et al., 2009). Prior research has shown that familial backing provides financial stability, reduces business-related uncertainties, and enables women to take calculated entrepreneurial risks (Kim et al., 2013). Moreover, family members serve as early-stage investors, offering capital, mentorship, and business knowledge, which are particularly critical in low-income and resource-constrained environments (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003). Similarly, social networks play a vital role in shaping entrepreneurial intentions and behaviors, as they provide access to market opportunities, mentorship, and business collaborations (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). Social capital allows tribal women to expand their businesses, build trust-based relationships, and adopt innovative business strategies, aligning with RBV's assertion that knowledge-sharing and networking offer long-term competitive advantages (Lin, 2001). Strong social ties with community organizations, trade associations, and government agencies help tribal women overcome institutional barriers and gender biases (Putnam, 2000).

Despite the growing interest in women's entrepreneurship, research on the impact of family support and social networks on entrepreneurial attitudes and behaviors of tribal women remains limited (Gedajlovic et al., 2013). This study aims to bridge this gap by applying the RBV framework to explore how family and social capital function as critical entrepreneurial resources (Sirmon & Hitt, 2003). Understanding these relationships will contribute to entrepreneurship policy, financial inclusion strategies, and gender-focused economic development programs (Mair & Marti, 2006).

CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

The Resource-Based View (RBV) model emphasizes that unique, valuable, and inimitable resources drive competitive advantage, including intangible resources such as family support (Barney, 1991). In the context of tribal women entrepreneurs, family support serves as a crucial resource that shapes their entrepreneurial attitudes and behaviors (Danes et al., 2009). Family support, both financial and emotional, acts as a rare and valuable resource that enhances entrepreneurial engagement among women in marginalized communities (Kim et al., 2013). According to RBV theory, resources that are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN) provide long-term competitive advantages (Barney, 1991). This aligns with research suggesting that family backing provides tribal women with essential capital, skills, and moral support, thereby enabling them to enter entrepreneurship (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003). Entrepreneurial attitudes, such as self-efficacy, risk-taking, and proactiveness, are strongly influenced by the support received from family members (Krueger et al., 2000). Research on tribal women entrepreneurs highlights that family encouragement helps overcome socio-cultural barriers, boosting their confidence in pursuing business ventures (McElwee & Al-Riyami, 2003). Emotional and financial backing from families reduces perceived uncertainty and fear of failure, thereby fostering a positive entrepreneurial attitude (Bandura, 1997). Moreover, families serve as a source of entrepreneurial learning, passing down traditional skills and knowledge that shape the business mindset of tribal women (Cabrera & Cabrera, 2005). This aligns with RBV's claim that knowledge and capabilities embedded within family structures can serve as sustainable competitive advantages (Sirmon & Hitt, 2003). Beyond shaping attitudes, family support also influences actual entrepreneurial behavior by providing the necessary financial, social, and emotional capital (Danes et al., 2009). Women entrepreneurs who receive financial assistance from their families are more likely to start and sustain businesses, particularly in low-income and rural areas (Kim et al., 2013). Research on tribal entrepreneurship has found that family involvement increases the likelihood of business continuity by enabling women to make strategic decisions, manage risks, and seek market expansion opportunities (Gedajlovic et al., 2013). Additionally, strong family backing allows women to engage in innovative behaviors, such as adopting digital marketing strategies and modern production techniques (Welter, 2011). From the RBV perspective, family support acts as an intangible resource that provides tribal women with a sustainable competitive advantage in entrepreneurship (Barney, 1991). This aligns with research showing that families not only provide financial capital but also enable access to crucial social networks that help women establish and expand their businesses (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998).

- H₁: Family support is positively influence tribal women entrepreneurial attitude
- H₃: Entrepreneurial attitude is positively influence tribal women entrepreneur behaviour
- H₄: Family support is significant direct relationship with tribal women entrepreneur behaviour

Moreover, family support mitigates challenges related to gender biases, financial exclusion, and market access, helping women entrepreneurs overcome institutional barriers (Mair & Marti, 2006). Thus, RBV suggests that leveraging family-based resources enhances entrepreneurial persistence, resilience, and long-term business sustainability (Sirmon & Hitt, 2003).

The Resource-Based View (RBV) model posits that firms and individuals achieve a competitive advantage by leveraging unique and inimitable resources, including social networks (Barney, 1991). For tribal women entrepreneurs, social networks serve as a key intangible resource, shaping their entrepreneurial attitudes and behaviors by providing access to knowledge, capital, and market opportunities (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). Social networks act as a valuable and rare resource, offering entrepreneurial women access to information, mentorship, financial resources, and market linkages (Gedajlovic et al., 2013). In the RBV framework, resources that are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN) contribute to sustainable business success (Barney, 1991). For tribal women entrepreneurs, networks provide cultural capital and business knowledge, helping them navigate the challenges of entrepreneurship (Lin, 2001). Moreover, social ties with other entrepreneurs, government agencies, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) enhance business resilience and sustainability, aligning with RBV's emphasis on leveraging strategic resources for long-term success (Putnam, 2000). Entrepreneurial attitudes, such as self-efficacy, proactiveness, and risk-taking, are shaped by social network interactions (Bandura, 1997). Mentorship and peer influence from social groups contribute to a positive mindset, encouraging tribal women to pursue entrepreneurship despite cultural and economic barriers (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003). Research suggests that social networks act as a source of motivation and confidence by providing emotional and informational support, thereby reducing fear of failure and risk aversion (Krueger et al., 2000). Furthermore, access to role models and successful entrepreneurs within social circles strengthens entrepreneurial intention and ambition (McElwee & Al-Riyami, 2003). From an RBV perspective, these social interactions enhance the human capital of tribal women by equipping them with entrepreneurial knowledge and business skills, leading to a more proactive and risk-taking attitude (Sirmon & Hitt, 2003). Beyond shaping attitudes, social networks directly influence entrepreneurial behavior, such as business initiation, innovation, and expansion (Birley, 1985). Strong social ties provide access to financial capital, either through informal lending, microfinance institutions, or government grants, increasing the likelihood of business success (Kim et al., 2013). Studies on tribal women entrepreneurs indicate that participation in community organizations, trade associations, and digital networking groups leads to higher business sustainability and profitability (Gedajlovic et al., 2013). Moreover, social capital enhances marketing strategies, as tribal women rely on word-of-mouth promotion and local community endorsements to expand their customer base (Putnam, 2000). Additionally, networks facilitate knowledge-sharing, helping women adopt new technologies and innovative business models, aligning with RBV's emphasis on leveraging intangible resources for competitive advantage (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). From an RBV perspective, social networks serve as a strategic resource that contributes to entrepreneurial resilience and market competitiveness (Barney, 1991). The inimitability of trust-based networks provides a sustainable competitive advantage, as they are difficult to replicate or substitute (Sirmon & Hitt, 2003). Furthermore, network-based collaboration enhances knowledge exchange, business growth, and economic participation, enabling tribal women to overcome gender and financial barriers (Mair & Marti, 2006). By leveraging social capital as a key resource, tribal women entrepreneurs can achieve business sustainability, higher income levels, and improved community development (Lin, 2001).

H₂: Social network is positively influence tribal women entrepreneurial attitude

H₅: Social network is significant direct relationship with tribal women entrepreneur behaviour

Existing studies highlight family support and social networks as key entrepreneurial resources (Barney, 1991; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998), but gaps remain. Research applying the Resource-Based View (RBV) to tribal women entrepreneurs is scarce (Sirmon & Hitt, 2003). The interaction between family support and social networks in shaping entrepreneurial persistence is underexplored (Kim et al., 2013). The impact of digital networks in overcoming market barriers remains unexamined (Welter, 2011). Context-specific socioeconomic challenges affecting resource utilization lack analysis (Mair & Marti, 2006). Most studies focus on business initiation rather than long-term sustainability (Birley, 1985). Addressing these gaps will refine RBV-based strategies to support tribal women's entrepreneurship.

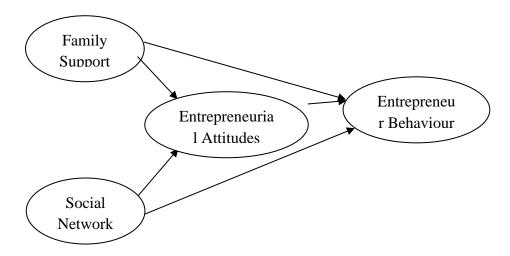


Figure: 1. Conceptual model

Source: Barney, (1991); Danes et al., (2009); Gedajlovic et al., (2013); Aldrich & Cliff, (2003) & Klyver et al., (2008)

METHODS

This study employs a quantitative research design to examine the influence of family support and social networks on the entrepreneurial attitudes and behaviors of tribal women entrepreneurs, using the Resource-Based View (RBV) framework. A cross-sectional survey approach is adopted, targeting tribal women engaged in entrepreneurship across Nilgiris district. The study utilizes 362 respondents in simple random sampling to ensure diverse representation from different tribal communities. The sample size is determined using Cochran's formula, ensuring statistical significance for generalizability. For data analysis, Reliability analysis is conducted using Cronbach's Alpha to test the internal consistency of survey items. To ensure construct validity, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) is employed, while Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is used to test the relationships between family support, social networks, entrepreneurial attitudes, and behaviors. Ethical considerations include obtaining informed consent, ensuring voluntary participation, and maintaining data privacy by anonymizing responses and securely storing data. This methodology ensures a rigorous and reliable assessment of the factors influencing tribal women's entrepreneurship through the RBV lens.

MEASURES

Primary data is collected through a structured questionnaire featuring a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). The survey is administered to enhance accessibility. The key variables measured include family support (financial, emotional, and informational) based on Kim et al. (2013), social networks (business ties, community support, and digital networks) adapted from Nahapiet & Ghoshal (1998), entrepreneurial attitude (self-efficacy, risk-taking, and proactiveness) from Krueger et al. (2000), and entrepreneurial behavior (business start-up, growth, and innovation) as identified by Birley (1985).

Table: 1.This table represents the construct, statements, factor loading, reliability and source of the variables.

Statements	Factor Loadings	Cronbach alpha	Source		
Family Sup	Family Support (FS)				
My family provides financial support to start or expand my business.	0.963		(Danes et al., 2009); (Aldrich &		
My family encourages me to take risks in business.	0.987	0.971	Cliff, 2003); (Welter, 2011); (Cabrera & Cabrera, 2005)&		
I receive emotional support from my family to continue my entrepreneurial journey	0.934				
My family shares business knowledge and skills with me.	0.912		(Kim et al., 2013)		

My family members assist in the daily operations of my business.	0.911				
Social Networ	ks (SN)		1		
I receive valuable business advice from my community and peers.	0.933		(Gedajlovic et al.,		
I have access to mentorship programs or business training within my social network.	0.963		2013) (Klyver et al.,		
I rely on community relationships to expand my business network.	0.941	0.966	2008) (Putnam, 2000)		
My business benefits from recommendations and word- of-mouth marketing within my social circle.	0.912		(Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998)		
I collaborate with other entrepreneurs within my social network to improve my business.	0.932		(Lin, 2001)		
Entrepreneurial Atti	itudes (EATT)				
I am confident in my ability to successfully run a business.	0.956		(Bandura, 1997);		
I enjoy taking calculated risks in business.	0.974		(Krueger et al., 2000); (Shane		
I believe that innovation and creativity are essential for business success.	0.943	0.974	&Venkataraman, 2000); (Ajzen,		
I actively seek new business opportunities.	0.931		1991) & (McClelland,		
I remain persistent despite challenges in my entrepreneurial journey.	0.952		1961)		
Entrepreneurial Be	haviors (EB)	•			
I have started my own business or plan with the help of my family and peers	0.922		(Gartner, 1989) (Baron &		
I regularly seek ways to improve or expand my business.	0.945		Markman, 2003)		
I actively adopt new technologies or strategies to enhance my business performance.	0.971	0.959	(Venkatesh et al., 2003)		
I engage in networking activities to grow my business.	0.962		(Birley, 1985) (Mair & Marti,		
I ensure my business contributes to the economic and social well-being of my community.	0.929		2006)		
Overall		0.982			
Note: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.		•	•		

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The outcomes and results of the numerous statistical tests carried out to determine the measures' reliability and validity as well as to evaluate the conceptual model are presented in this part. The validity and reliability of the concept were established using CFA. The CFA provides important information for determining if the scales being employed have convergent validity (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988), such as whether the observed variables are loading on their respective latent components (Kline, 2010). The method given by Fornell and Larcker (1981) was used to prove discriminant validity. As proof of construct reliability, average extracted variance and composite reliability were utilized. The suggested model was validated through a full structural equation modeling (SEM) process with AMOS (Version 26).

Table: 2. This table represents CFA model fit indices

Fit indices	Value	Accepted value	Result
Cmin/df	2.176	Less than 3	Supported
GFI	.974	Value greater than .90	Supported

CFI	.973	Value greater than .90	Supported
IFI	.974	Value greater than .90	Supported
RMSEA	.063	Value less than .08	Supported

Source: Kline, 2010

Table 2 represents the CFA model fit indices, demonstrating the overall goodness-of-fit of the proposed research model. The Cmin/df value is 2.176, which is within the acceptable threshold of less than 3, indicating a well-fitted model. The Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI) is 0.974, exceeding the recommended value of 0.90, confirming strong model fit. Similarly, the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and Incremental Fit Index (IFI) both achieve values of 0.973 and 0.974, respectively, surpassing the 0.90 benchmark, further supporting the model's validity. Additionally, the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) is 0.063, which is well below the acceptable limit of 0.08, indicating a close fit to the data with minimal error. Based on these indices, the model meets all the recommended criteria, confirming its robustness and suitability for testing the hypothesized relationships. These results align with the guidelines proposed by Kline (2010), reinforcing the model's reliability in explaining the impact of family support and social networks on the entrepreneurial attitudes and behaviors of tribal women entrepreneurs.

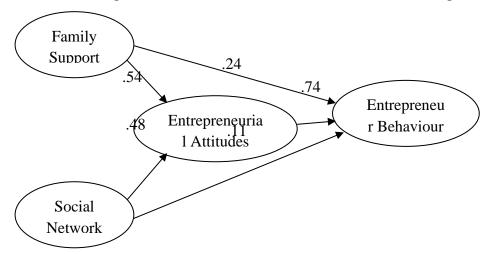


Figure: 2. Hypothesis Model

Table: 3. This table represents SEM model fit indices

Fit indices

Value

Accepted value

Fit indices	Value	Accepted value	Result
Cmin/df	2.764	Less than 3	Supported
GFI	.926	Value greater than .90	Supported
CFI	.924	Value greater than .90	Supported
IFI	.926	Value greater than .90	Supported
RMSEA	.072	Value less than .08	Supported

Source: Kline, 2010

Table 3 presents the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) fit indices, demonstrating the adequacy of the model in representing the observed data. The Cmin/df value is 2.764, which falls within the acceptable threshold of less than 3, indicating a well-fitting model. The GFI is 0.926, exceeding the recommended 0.90 cutoff, confirming a strong model fit. Additionally, the CFI and IFI both hold values of 0.924 and 0.926, respectively, surpassing the 0.90 benchmark, which suggests that the model fits the data well. Furthermore, the RMSEA is 0.072, remaining below the accepted limit of 0.08, indicating a reasonable approximation error and a satisfactory model fit. Based on these results, all fit indices meet the required standards, confirming that the SEM model is statistically robust and suitable for testing the hypothesized relationships. These findings are consistent with the recommendations by Kline (2010), reinforcing the model's effectiveness in examining the impact of family support and social networks on the entrepreneurial attitudes and behaviors of tribal women entrepreneurs.

Path	Hypothesis	Estimate	P value	Sign	Result
FS→EATT	H_1	.538	*** (P<0.001)	+	Supported
SN→EATT	H_2	.481	***(P<0.001)	+	Supported
EATT→EB	H_3	.743	***(P<0.001)	+	Supported
FS→EB	H_4	.239	***(P<0.001)	+	Supported
SN→EB	H_{5}	.109	* (P<0.05)	+	Supported

Table: 4. This table represents the hypotheses and relationships between variables

Source: Primary Source

Table 4 presents the results of the hypothesis testing, examining the relationships between family support (FS), social networks (SN), entrepreneurial attitude (EATT), and entrepreneurial behavior (EB) within the Resource-Based View (RBV) framework. The results indicate that family support (FS) positively influences entrepreneurial attitude (EATT) (H_1 : β = 0.538, p < 0.001), supporting previous research that emphasizes the role of familial backing in fostering self-efficacy and risk-taking behavior among women entrepreneurs (Kim et al., 2013; Aldrich & Cliff, 2003). Similarly, social networks (SN) significantly impact entrepreneurial attitude (EATT) (H_2 : β = 0.481, p < 0.001), aligning with studies highlighting the role of peer networks and community engagement in shaping business mindsets (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998; Lin, 2001).

Entrepreneurial attitude (EATT) is found to have a strong positive influence on entrepreneurial behavior (EB) (H_3 : β = 0.743, p < 0.001), reinforcing prior findings that attitudes such as proactiveness and risk-taking lead to business initiation and sustainability (Krueger et al., 2000; Bandura, 1997). Moreover, family support (FS) directly influences entrepreneurial behavior (EB) (H_4 : β = 0.239, p < 0.001), indicating that financial and emotional backing enables business establishment and growth (Danes et al., 2009; Gedajlovic et al., 2013). Finally, social networks (SN) show a weaker but significant effect on entrepreneurial behavior (EB) (H_5 : β = 0.109, p < 0.05), suggesting that while networking provides access to resources, its direct impact on business performance may be less pronounced compared to family support (Putnam, 2000; Mair & Marti, 2006).

Overall, these findings validate the RBV perspective, confirming that intangible resources like family support and social networks contribute to tribal women's entrepreneurial success by shaping their attitudes and behaviors (Barney, 1991; Sirmon & Hitt, 2003).

IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study have significant theoretical and practical implications for understanding the role of family support and social networks in shaping entrepreneurial attitudes and behaviors among tribal women entrepreneurs within the Resource-Based View (RBV) framework.

Theoretical implications

This study extends the RBV model by demonstrating that intangible resources, such as family support and social networks, serve as valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN) resources, fostering entrepreneurship among marginalized communities (Barney, 1991). These results align with prior research suggesting that family-based resources provide a sustainable competitive advantage, enabling women to overcome socio-economic barriers (Sirmon & Hitt, 2003). Furthermore, this study contributes to the entrepreneurial intention literature by confirming that supportive environments enhance self-efficacy, proactiveness, and risk-taking behavior, which are essential for business success (Krueger et al., 2000).

Practical implications

Policymakers and development agencies should focus on strengthening family-based support systems to promote women's entrepreneurship, especially in tribal communities where access to financial and institutional resources is limited (Danes et al., 2009). Initiatives such as family business training programs, microfinance support, and mentorship initiatives could enhance the entrepreneurial engagement of women by leveraging family capital (Kim et al., 2013). Additionally, social networks should be actively promoted through community-based

entrepreneurship programs to facilitate knowledge-sharing, mentorship, and market access (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998).

The findings also highlight the importance of policy interventions that foster social capital by strengthening networking opportunities for women entrepreneurs (Lin, 2001). Governments and NGOs should invest in business incubators, trade associations, and digital platforms to enable tribal women to expand their market reach and enhance business sustainability (Putnam, 2000). Furthermore, the role of entrepreneurial education should be emphasized in rural and tribal regions, equipping women with business management skills, digital literacy, and financial knowledge, which are crucial for entrepreneurial success (Mair & Marti, 2006).

By integrating family support and social networks into entrepreneurial policies and training programs, stakeholders can foster inclusive economic development and empower tribal women to achieve long-term business sustainability (Gedajlovic et al., 2013). These findings reinforce the RBV perspective, emphasizing that intangible resources play a fundamental role in enhancing entrepreneurial capabilities and driving economic empowerment among marginalized women (Sirmon & Hitt, 2003).

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the critical role of family support and social networks as key intangible resources that shape entrepreneurial attitudes and behaviors among tribal women entrepreneurs, aligning with the Resource-Based View (RBV) model (Barney, 1991). The findings reinforce the idea that family support, both financial and emotional, acts as a valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN) resource, enabling tribal women to overcome sociocultural and economic barriers in entrepreneurship (Sirmon & Hitt, 2003). Furthermore, the study confirms that social networks provide access to mentorship, knowledge-sharing, and financial capital, which significantly influence entrepreneurial self-efficacy, proactiveness, and risk-taking behavior (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). These results support prior research demonstrating that strong social ties enhance market linkages, business innovation, and longterm sustainability among marginalized women entrepreneurs (Lin, 2001). From a behavioral perspective, the study establishes that entrepreneurial attitudes act as a mediating factor between family support, social networks, and entrepreneurial behavior, indicating that psychological empowerment plays a vital role in business success (Krueger et al., 2000). Additionally, the direct influence of family support and social networks on entrepreneurial behavior suggests that leveraging intangible resources enhances business resilience and economic participation (Gedajlovic et al., 2013). The implications of these findings extend beyond academia, emphasizing the need for policy interventions that strengthen family-based resources and networking opportunities to promote inclusive entrepreneurship (Mair & Marti, 2006). Governments and NGOs should focus on capacity-building programs, financial inclusion policies, and entrepreneurial education initiatives to empower tribal women with the necessary skills and support systems (Kim et al., 2013). Overall, this study affirms that family and social capital serve as crucial enablers of tribal women's entrepreneurial success, aligning with RBV's perspective that intangible assets provide a sustainable competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). Future research should explore the interplay of institutional support, digital transformation, and policy frameworks in further enhancing tribal women's entrepreneurial potential (Putnam, 2000).

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