

Article

Livelihood transformation of tribal women in mining regions: a critical review of multinational conglomerates in Jajpur district of Odisha

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Abstract

One of India's most socioeconomically deprived communities is the tribal community which continues to face obstacles in every sphere of their life, predominately in the areas of development, employability, education, mobility and market access etc. in the last nine or ten years Skill Development programs has been an essential tactics or strategy to support tribal women's social and economic inclusion, boost income and facilitate sustainable livelihoods. To determine the relevance, efficiency, difficulties and effects of livelihood transformation of 'Tribal Women' in mining regions and the role of multinational conglomerates is the main aim of this paper. Jajpur District has a lot of minerals and mining led industrialization which has encouraged regional economic growth, yet it has equally weakened traditional livelihoods, resulting in displacement, health issues and socio-economic vulnerability. This review paper critically analyses the role of multinational conglomerates, initiative in promoting economic self-sufficiency among tribal women. The study employs methodical and analytical examination of current literature, utilizing academic research, governmental reports and policy documents pertaining to mining industries, gender equality and tribal development. The analysis shows that multinational conglomerates have helped tribal women's small-scale business for their own company's advertisement and promotion.

Keywords: *Mining, Livelihood Transformation, Tribal Women, Multinational Conglomerates*

1 INTRODUCTION

Odisha is endowed with abundant and diverse mineral resources which making it one of India's leading Mineral-producing states. The state is equipped with substantial reserves of high- quality Iron-Ore, Bauxite, Chromite and Manganese Ore along with Coal, Limestone, Dolomite, Tin, Nickel,

Vanadium, Lead, Gemstone, Diamonds, other stones and minerals. These resources have fostered the growth of mineral-based industries, including steel, ferro-alloys, cement, alumina/aluminum, refractories and thermal power. All the mining companies work under the Steel and Mines Department. Odisha which is the fastest growing Industrial Hub of India and creating a better prospects for the people of Odisha which will strengths economic and social prosperity of the state. (Odisha, 2026)

Table-1 Mineral Resources of Odisha: District Distribution, National Share, and Estimated Reserves

Primary District	Minerals	Odisha's share of India's, Reserves	Estimated Reserve (Odisha)
Jajpur (Sukinda Valley), Dhenkanal, Keonjhar	Chromite	95-98%	111 million tonnes

Jajpur (Sukinda), Keonjhar	Nickel	92%	Data Limited
Koraput, Raygada, Kalahandi, Sundargarh, Keonjhar	Bauxite	49-59%	1,530 million tonnes
Keonjhar, Sundargarh, Mayurbhanj, Jajapur	Iron Ore	28-33%	Substantial (Exact figure varies)
Angul (Talcher), Jharsuguda (lb. Vally)	Coal	24%	51,571 million tonnes
Sundargarh, Keonjhar, Rayagada, Balangir	Manganese	Significant (national rank 1-2)	16 million tonnes

Sources: Economic survey of Odisha

Odisha produces the most minerals. Recent data shows that Odisha's share of India's total mineral production value was about 11.89%. Odisha made up 45% of India's major mineral production. The value of minerals in 2021-2022 was Rs 87, 086 crore, coal, bauxite, chromite iron ore and limestone made up about 99% of the total value of mineral production. Tribal women play a determining role collection of non-timber forest products, and livestock management, in addition to domestic caregiving responsibility. Tribal women have a very close and symbolic relationship with the ecology and environment and linked with the natural resources. However, it is also a fact that most often tribal women's livelihood depends on this forest related products. (Economic survey of Odisha)

1.1 Mining Related to India

India has a long history of land exploitation for mineral resources. Most minerals deposits and

mining operations are in forested regions that serve as habitats for tribal communities. Furthermore, mining has been included in all of India's Five-Year Plan. Mining is a big business in India that helps the country's economy a lot. The Ministry of Mines has done a lot of things to make 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' in the mining sector and to increase the share of domestic, mining in total mineral consumption. The Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1997 (MMDR Act, 1957) was amended on March 28, 2021. The amendment aimed to other objectives, to enhance mineral production and generate greater employment and investment in the mining sector (Bureau, 2024). Mining is still an important part of helping the world economy grow. The international Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM) says that mining and metals industry adds between 6% and 7% to the world's GDP. In 2024, the global mining market was valued at approximately 2.1 trillion. It is projected to reach 2.7 trillion by 2035.

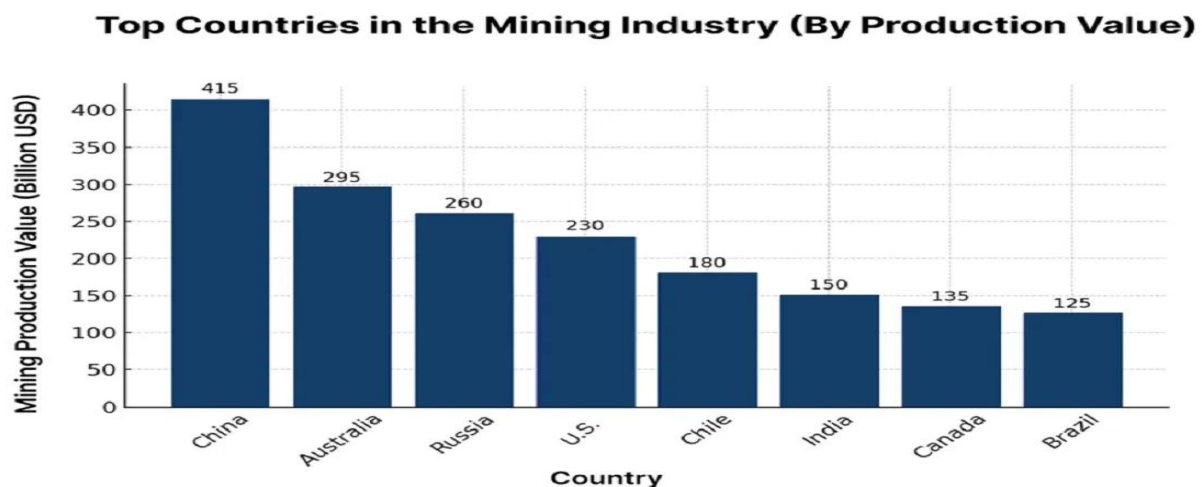


Figure-1 Top Countries in the Mining Industry (By Production Value)

Source: research nester 2025

1.2 Mining Impact on Women

According to the 2011 Census, the literacy rate among Scheduled Tribe was 59% compared to the national literacy of 73%. The literacy rate of Scheduled caste Female was 68.53% and Scheduled caste males was 49.35%. Since ancient times, the status of women has been shaped by the gender divide, exploitation, female infanticide, dowry deaths wage inequality, high illiteracy and mortality rates, caste-based discrimination and other social evils particularly within tribal communities. With this background on women's status, it's easy to guess what the situation is suitable for women who have displaced and affected by mining (Bhanumathi.K). This paper focuses on the experiences of women displaced and impacted by mining across various sectors. It also examines the challenges faced by the

women in the mining areas, particular emphasis on Jajpur district, Odisha. Jajpur district of Odisha which is the hub of India's Chromite Mining and the Sukinda Vally of Jajpur holding approximately 97% of country's deposits. (Singh Romesh, 2015)

1.3 Background of Jajpur District

As per the 2011 Census, Jajpur district covers an area of 2899 sq.kms and has a population of 18.27 lakh, comprising 1.86 percent of Odisha's total area and 4.35 percent of its population. Scheduled Tribe population, 151432 (8.3%), whereas the scheduled caste population is 433387 (23.7%) according to the 2011 census. There is a lot of potential for the Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) to start up in the district of Jajpur as it has abundant minerals and skilled laborers. (District Handbook, 2025)



Figure-2 Index Map

Sources. Google. Map of Odisha.

1.4 Industry

Table-2 Women's Employability through MSMEs: Units, Investment, and Employment by Social Category

Employability of Women	No. of MSME unit setup	Investment, (In Rs; -Crores)	Employment-Generated			
			General	Scheduled Tribe	Scheduled Caste	Total Numbers
933	2240	13038.95	4813	148	1112	6073

Sources: Odisha State Profile, MSME Development Institution

1.5 Heavy Mining Industries in the District

Table-3 Industrial Units in Kalinganagar–Jajpur Region: Location, Product, Capacity, and Status

Sl.no.	Location	Industries Name	Items	Capacity:MT	Status
1)	KalingaNagar	Nilachal Ispat Nigam, Ltd	Pig-Iron	492,000MT	Working
2)	Duburi	Tata Steel, Ltd	Steel	No Information	Working
3)	Kalinganagar	Jindal-Industries	Stainless- Steel	16,00000MT	Working
4)	Jajpur Road	IDCOL, Ferrocrome	High- Carbon	18,000MT	Working
5)	Kalinganagar	Maithan Ispat, Ltd	Sponge-Iron	74,0000MT	Working
6)	KHURUNTI	MESCO	Pig-Iron	60,0000MT	Working
7)	Kalinganagar	Dinabandhu steel and power, Ltd	Steel,	23,0000MT	Working
8)	Jakhapura	VISA Steel, Ltd	Mid-Steel	32,0000MT	Working
9)	Kalinganagar	Rohit Ferro Tech, Ltd	Ferroalloys	80,000MT	Working
10)	Kalinganagar	K.J. Ispat, Ltd	Sponge-Iron	30,000MT	Working

Sources: - District Industries Centre (DIC), Jajpur, Odisha

Mining will change the area's topography, which could influence the whole ecosystem. Mining changes how land is used, which can lead to different kinds of land disturbance and degradation.

1. Taking away forest cover, which hurts plants and animals and takes a long time to get back to the same amount.
2. Taking away top-soil and overburden hurts farming.
3. Dumping solid waste, Cutting-Roads, Abandoned Mines Pits, Land, sinking underground-mines.

4. Windblown Dust, coming from the stockpiles, overburden dumps and the roads.

Mining practices normally are the reason for deforestation, water, air and noise pollution, land degradation which affected the tribal women's livelihood practices.

1.6 Role of Tribal Women in Local Economy

Total population is, 8,148,081 in the state of Odisha, Women represent around 50.05 percentage of the tribal population of Odisha are living in village

communities (census, 2011). Tribal women have always been the latent part of the economic development of the country, and always faced the worst side of the society, i.e. ill health, domestic violence, early marriage, illiteracy and poverty. When women are empowered in the society then a stable society is built, they also need financially stable to overcome the vicious circle of poor conditions as well as the vicious circle of poverty. When women, work together to become self-reliant, their community and closed ones are benefited by them more significantly. Women have been the main link between tribal and forest-dwelling communities and the forests. Forests are the main resources which they use to meet their daily needs for food, fuel, wood, herbs and wild foods that help them in their livelihood etc. (Meher, 2025)

1.7 Tribal Women's Traditional Livelihood System

From the ancient time the tribal women have been earning good income from the forest products. The organic and ecofriendly forest products which include tendu leaves, Mahua Flowers, honey, bees wax, shikakai, tur, Jhunna, Lakha and some root vegetable are collected by the tribal women for their personal consumption as well as for the commercial purposes (let Sujata 2025). The demand for these forest products is seasonal and depends entirely on the natural growth, which makes productivity very unpredictable. The female tribal people are mainly dependent on collecting these forest products for their livelihood. Female tribal folks are mostly dependent on the forest or connected with the nature and collecting the natural products from the forest, by which they fulfil their livelihood and generating income from them. It enhances the purchasing capacity of tribal women population, as well as increases better access to better living. These women inhabitants have better knowledge of some medical plants, dyes, leaves, seeds, flowers, honey and may other products which can be extracted from the forests and sold to earn their living. The mahua flower is one of the luxuries of these local dwellers which they also use as medicines and sold in the local markets of Odisha. These products have enormous potential as they can promote sustainable rural

development and diversify rural economic development. It also supports cultural richness and is good for the sustainability of the environment. Some of such items have low cash values hence it is popular for self-consumption than being sold in the market. (Khurshid, 2020)

1.8 Transformation of Livelihood Due to Mining

It has been seen that livelihood of tribal women was affected in the mining area and it has been environmental, economic and cultural, value of its own. Forest conservation results in agricultural forestry. The production of new species of forests helps to produce biodiversity. Forests offer livelihood opportunities for the female tribal workforce. It is a source of some major non-timber farm products such as medicines made from herbs, natural dye, woodwork, honey etc. some of them even made access to the world market as well. These practices of forest preservation that is passed from generation after the generation by using the tribal female folks plays an indispensable role to pass out this knowledge to generations. It has its own cultural significance. These tribes mostly do preservation of forest as a way of living.

1. Degradation of Land
2. Displacement
3. Destruction of the traditional occupation
4. Shifting into low paid informal labor
5. Impact on economic and environmental as well as societal aspects (Meher, 2025)

1.9 Role of Multinational Conglomerates

Multinational conglomerates and big mining companies working in the district of Jajpur, Odisha, Jajpur as an essential industrial and mining hub especially for chromite and iron ore, have a complex dual role on tribal women. They are agents of economic disruption and mixed outcomes of social change, employment and displacement. The state has developed rapidly since then. However, these projects have failed to benefit the local population, which includes substantial tribal and non-tribal communities. Development interventions in tribal

areas have instead imposed heavy costs on these people. They have been displaced from their lands, homes, livelihoods and communities. Many remain uncompensated and face a certain future.

Major Companies in the Region: -

1. Vedanta
2. Tata Steel (Kalinga Nagar steel project)
3. Jindal Stainless steel limited
4. Odisha Mining Corporation
5. IMFA

In the mining areas of Jajpur these multinational conglomerate provided packing machines, phenyl mixing machine, plate and bowl making machine, Mudi making machine, Badi making machine to members of SHG Mission Shakti groups in Jajpur, Odisha and organize fairs for the participation of these members as part of its community outreach program. The initiative was aimed at supporting women's self-help groups by equipping them with equipment to start small-scale production and income generating activities. By supplying these machines, the company sought to strengthen local livelihoods while also improving its social image and community relations around its mining operations. The effort reflects a common corporate social responsibility approach where industrial firms engage with local groups to promote economic inclusion alongside their business activities.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The reviews of literature widely include or focused on the livelihood transformation of 'Tribal Women' in Jajpur District of Odisha particularly in the mining regions and explain about the Jajpur case aligns with this pattern, where multinational firms use SHG partnerships to promote local enterprise while reinforcing community acceptance of mining activities.

Tribal women are the primary collectors of Minor Forest Produce (MFP), including medical plants, leaves, fruits, honey, firewood and fodder. These resources are vital for both household sustenance and income opportunities.

Xaxa (2001) observes that tribal economies are fundamentally subsistence-based and heavily dependent on natural resources such as land, forests and water bodies. In such economies, tribal women have played a significant role in both the domestic sphere and in the fields of agriculture, animal husbandry, and collection of forest produce.

Xaxa further highlights that tribal women are co-producers of livelihood and work for longer hours than men, particularly during the peak agricultural seasons.

Singh., (2019), notes that while tribal women play a vital role in household and community economies, they are systematically excluded from the formal credit markets, skill development, and entrepreneurial activities. Singh, research indicates that tribal women are engaged in income generating activities such as bamboo work, handicraft etc. and find difficult to access larger markets for their products due to insufficiency of marketing channels and poor product standardization.

3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the role of Multinational Conglomerate and its impact on tribal women of Jajpur, Odisha
2. To analyze the transformation of livelihood patterns of tribal women in the mining regions

4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopts a secondary data analysis approach to explain the impact of multinational conglomerates initiative on livelihood activities of tribal women of Jajpur, Odisha in the mining regions. Collected data from multinational conglomerate operating in the region, as filed under section 135 of companies act, 2013. District statistical handbooks for Jajpur were used to contextualize economic and demographic indicators. The study also employs a critical literature review approach, peer-reviewed articles and government reports.

5 DISCUSSION & FINDINGS

The findings indicate that targeted equipment support has facilitated a partial but tangible livelihood transformation for tribal women in Jaipur's mining region, moving them from casual wage labor towards small-scale production and greater financial autonomy. However, the transformation remains uneven and dependent on complementary factors such as market linkages, training and infrastructure. The finding include that the tribal women faced huge number of huddles in the mining regions to survive and continue with their traditional livelihood practices. Findings illustrate that the tribal women are the main bearer of livelihood subsistence, economic welfare and local economic yet their contribution in formal economic discourse are often ignored and undervalued. The multinational conglomerate's intervention has produced measurable condition for the tribal women in accessing the livelihood practices in mining regions in the Jajpur district of Odisha.

6 CONCLUSION

The study analyzes the role of multinational conglomerates interventions in the transformation of the livelihood condition of tribal women in the mining regions of Jajpur district of Odisha. Moreover, the study indicates that the tribal women faced various problems and significant challenges in accessing the market and exploitation by the middleman. Therefore, the economic and social empowerment of tribal women is crucial for both their personal development and the development of tribal communities as a whole. Achieving this requires multiple policy interventions, structural reforms and community-level initiative that recognize tribal women as key agents in sustainable and inclusive development processes.

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