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Global Situations of Violence against Women for Schedule Tribes

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ABSTRACT

The study examines the global situation of violence against women within Scheduled Tribes, a demographic that faces acute and multifaceted marginalization. Indigenous women often face unique challenges rooted in historical marginalization, cultural discrimination, and socio-economic disparities. Across various regions, incidents of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking disproportionately affect tribal women, exacerbating their vulnerability. The research examines the prevalence, types, and underlying causes of violence against these women, drawing on case studies from various countries to provide a comprehensive analysis. It explores the socio-cultural, economic, and legal contexts that perpetuate this violence and evaluates the effectiveness of current interventions and policies. In many cases, legal frameworks inadequately address the specific needs of indigenous women, leading to a lack of protection and justice. Limited access to education and healthcare further perpetuates their susceptibility to violence. The intersectionality of gender, ethnicity, and socio-economic factors creates a complex web of discrimination, hindering the empowerment of tribal women. Efforts to combat this issue require a multi-faceted approach, encompassing legal reforms, culturally sensitive awareness programs, and economic initiatives to uplift tribal communities. Collaboration between governments, NGOs, and local communities is essential to break the cycle of violence and promote the rights and well-being of indigenous women worldwide. By shedding light on the systemic nature of the abuse faced by tribal women, the study aims to inform more inclusive and effective global strategies to combat violence against women. The findings underscore the necessity of culturally sensitive approaches and the empowerment of indigenous communities to foster a world where the rights and dignity of all women are upheld.

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INTRODUCTION

Violence against women, particularly within the context of Scheduled Tribes, remains a pressing global concern that demands focused attention. This issue involves a complex interplay of historical, cultural, and socio-economic factors, shaping the experiences of indigenous women within diverse tribal communities worldwide. Research indicates that women belonging to Scheduled Tribes often face unique challenges, including domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking. The severity of these challenges is exacerbated by a confluence of factors, including marginalization, discrimination, and limited access to education and healthcare. Historically, indigenous communities have faced colonization, displacement, and the erosion of their cultural practices, contributing to the vulnerability of tribal women. The legacy of colonialism and historical injustices continues to impact the socio-economic and political status of indigenous women, leading to their disproportionate exposure to violence. The intersectionality of gender and ethnicity further complicates their experiences, requiring a comprehensive understanding of the diverse contexts in which these women live. The scarcity of literature specifically addressing violence against women in Scheduled Tribes underscores the urgency of exploring this issue comprehensively. Existing studies often focus on broader gender-based violence or indigenous rights, neglecting the nuanced challenges faced by tribal women. This research seeks to bridge this gap by delving into the global situations of violence against women within Scheduled Tribes, offering insights into the unique dimensions of their experiences. Addressing the issue necessitates an exploration of legal frameworks, socio-economic disparities, cultural norms, and the effectiveness of existing support systems. By understanding the intricacies of violence against tribal women, we can formulate targeted interventions that respect their cultural diversity and empower them within their specific contexts. The importance of this research lies not only in highlighting the challenges faced by indigenous women but also in contributing to the development of evidence-based strategies and policies to rectify these issues. By combining data-driven insights with real-life narratives, this research aims to provide a holistic understanding of the global situations of violence against women for Scheduled Tribes. For example, the Banwari case, where a social worker stopped a child marriage in an influential Gujjar family, highlights the challenges faced by tribal women. Despite her commendable efforts, Banwari faced protests and threats, and later, a sexual assault by the same assailant. The Vishaka Guidelines, introduced in 1997, aimed to address sexual harassment at the workplace, but the challenges faced by tribal women in accessing justice remain significant. In the 21st century, despite changes, the achievement of justice for tribal women remains a major issue. The ultimate goal is to contribute meaningful recommendations for policies and interventions that prioritize the rights, protection, and empowerment of tribal women on the global stage. In navigating this exploration, it is crucial to remain cognizant of the rich cultural diversity within Scheduled Tribes and approach the research with a sensitivity that respects and values the unique experiences of tribal women. This study aspires to be a stepping stone towards fostering positive change and amplifying the voices of those who have long been marginalized within the broader discourse on violence against women.

Review of Literature

Literature review is an essential component of research as it helps identify existing gaps in knowledge and provides a foundation for the study. By incorporating the following articles, the research aims to address the existing gaps and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the topic. Violence against women is a major social problem even in developed countries. For instance, in the United States, national surveys estimate that at least 2 million women each year are battered by an intimate partner, and crime data from the Federal Bureau of Investigation record 1,500 murders of women by husbands or boyfriends each year (Simpson, 1996). Intimate partner violence against women is a global public health problem with numerous short-term and long-term effects on the physical and mental health of women and their children

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In developing countries like India, bringing about transformations is challenging due to the diversity of regions, religions, and castes. However, development has been facilitated by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs call for the elimination of violence against women in target 5.2. To monitor governments' progress towards SDG target 5.2, a study aimed to provide global, regional, and country baseline estimates of physical or sexual, or both, violence against women by male intimate partners (Lancet, 2022). The prevention of violence against women and girls (VAWG) takes a significant place in the SDGs compared to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). While the MDGs provided a framework within which the impact of violence could be measured against other developmental dimensions, they lacked a direct focus on VAWG. MDG-3 aimed to promote gender equality and empower women with a target to eliminate gender disparity in education, but other goals also had implications for preventing gender discrimination. Although indicators of gender equality have improved after implementing MDGs, gender disparities still exist (Kusuma, 2017)

The global situation of violence against women within Scheduled Tribes, a demographic that faces acute and multifaceted marginalization, is particularly alarming. Indigenous women often face unique challenges rooted in historical marginalization, cultural discrimination, and socio-economic disparities. Across various regions, incidents of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking disproportionately affect tribal women, exacerbating their vulnerability. The research examines the prevalence, types, and underlying causes of violence against these women, drawing on case studies from various countries to provide a comprehensive analysis. It explores the socio-cultural, economic, and legal contexts that perpetuate this violence and evaluates the effectiveness of current interventions and policies. In many cases, legal frameworks inadequately address the specific needs of indigenous women, leading to a lack of protection and justice. Limited access to education and healthcare further perpetuates their susceptibility to violence. The intersectionality of gender, ethnicity, and socio-economic factors creates a complex web of discrimination, hindering the empowerment of tribal women Efforts to combat this issue require a multi-faceted approach, encompassing legal reforms, culturally sensitive awareness programs, and economic initiatives to uplift tribal communities. Collaboration between governments, NGOs, and local communities is essential to break the cycle of violence and promote the rights and well-being of indigenous women worldwide. By shedding light on the systemic nature of the abuse faced by tribal women, the study aims to inform more inclusive and effective global strategies to combat violence against women. The findings underscore the necessity of culturally sensitive approaches and the empowerment of indigenous communities to foster a world where the rights and dignity of all women are upheld.

Statement of problems

Violence against women is a pervasive issue worldwide; cutting across cultures, regions, the global landscape reveals alarming trends of violence against women among Scheduled Tribes, reflecting pervasive challenges that demand urgent attention. Despite international efforts and legal frameworks aimed at safeguarding women's rights, indigenous communities face unique socio-cultural and economic barriers that exacerbate their vulnerability. The study aims to comprehensively examine these issues, identifying root causes, assessing existing interventions, and proposing targeted strategies to mitigate violence and empower tribal women globally.

Significance of study

The global situation of violence against women, particularly among Scheduled Tribes, is a pressing human rights issue that demands urgent attention. The study is significant as it seeks to uncover the multifaceted dimensions of violence experienced by tribal women, who often face compounded marginalization due to their ethnicity and gender. Understanding the unique socio-cultural and economic factors that contribute to their vulnerability is crucial for developing targeted interventions and policies. By highlighting their lived experiences, the research aims to inform global

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strategies to combat violence against women, promote gender equality, and uphold the rights of marginalized communities, thereby contributing to a more just and equitable world.

Objectives

The study investigates global violence against women among Scheduled Tribes, focusing on abuse and trafficking. It aims to analyze the historical, cultural, and socio-economic factors contributing to this violence and evaluate the effectiveness of legal frameworks while proposing reforms. The study explores the availability and accessibility of support services for tribal women, examines the socio-economic impact of violence, assesses cultural sensitivity in awareness programs, and explores opportunities for collaboration to prevent violence against tribal women.

Methodology

The study adopts a descriptive and analytical qualitative approach to explore global violence against women among Scheduled Tribes. It includes a comprehensive methodology: a literature review to establish context and identify gaps, legal analysis for evaluating frameworks and suggesting reforms, case studies for regional insights, collaborative fieldwork with local stakeholders, and cultural sensitivity assessments to enhance awareness programs. This approach aims to inform evidence-based policies and interventions for addressing the challenges faced by indigenous women. Secondary data utilized includes books, articles, and reports from national and international websites.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Global Violence Against Scheduled Tribes: Focus on Abuse and Trafficking.

Data from India shows a concerning rise in violence and crimes against Scheduled Tribes (STs) in recent years. According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), crimes against STs increased by over 26% from 2018 to 2019, reaching 8,272 reported cases. This upward trend has continued, with 8,802 crimes reported in 2020.The most common forms of violence against STs include physical assault, rape, sexual harassment, torture, arson, social boycotts, economic exploitation, and forced displacement. In 2020, the NCRB data reveals that 1,137 of the 3,676 reported crimes against tribal women and girls were rape cases. Trafficking of tribal women and girls is also a major issue, with many being forced into sex work or domestic servitude. Tribal communities in central and northeastern India have been particularly affected by violence from both state security forces and armed opposition groups. Extrajudicial killings, custodial deaths, and torture by police and military personnel have been documented. Tribal activists and human rights defenders have also faced threats, attacks, and arbitrary arrests. The drivers of this violence are complex, stemming from historical marginalization, and lack of access to resources and opportunities, and conflicts over land and natural resources. Weak implementation of protective laws like the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act has also contributed to a climate of impunity. Conviction rates for crimes against STs remain low, at just 22.8% between 2009-2018.Addressing violence against Scheduled Tribes requires a multi-pronged approach. This includes strengthening law enforcement, improving access to justice, and tackling the socioeconomic disparities that leave tribal communities vulnerable. Greater political representation and self-governance rights for tribal populations, as enshrined in laws like the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, are also crucial. Ultimately, dismantling the deep-rooted caste-based discrimination and inequalities that enable such violence is an urgent priority for India.

Causes of Violence against Tribal Women: Historical, Cultural, Socio-Economic Analysis

Violence against tribal women in India and the United States is a complex issue with multiple root causes, spanning historical, cultural, and socio-economic dimensions. Understanding these factors is crucial to developing effective strategies for prevention and mitigation. Historical factors play a significant role in the perpetuation of violence against tribal women. In India, the colonial

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legacy has contributed to the ongoing marginalization and exploitation of tribal communities. The colonial State apparatus, which enforced neo-liberal aggression and governmentality on Adivasis, has led to their mental and physical distress. Similarly, in the United States, the colonial period saw the targeting of Native American women as a strategy for conquest and genocide. Violence against Native women was rare before European colonization, but it became a central element in the colonial strategy, contributing to significant population decline and ongoing trauma.

Cultural practices and beliefs also contribute to the violence. In India, tribal women are often considered "less than human" by the majority of Indians, making them more prone to sexual violence. This cultural perception is deeply ingrained and perpetuates the idea that tribal women are inferior and can be subjected to abuse with impunity. In the United States, the historical trauma and cultural erasure of Native American communities have led to a normalization of violence against Native women. The lack of recognition and respect for Native women's traditional roles and contributions has further exacerbated the issue.

Socio-economic factors are also significant contributors to the violence. In India, tribal communities face severe economic and social exclusion, with a high percentage of the ST population living below the poverty line. This economic vulnerability makes them more susceptible to exploitation and violence. Similarly, in the United States, Native women experience high rates of poverty and lack access to essential services, which exacerbates their vulnerability to violence.

In India, specific factors include the ease with which perpetrators get acquittal in most cases, leading to a lack of faith in the justice system. The conviction rate for offenses under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act is low, and victims often face external pressure to retract their cases. The caste-based distribution of resources in India means that upper castes have greater control over material resources, leaving Adivasis and Dalits vulnerable to economic and social exclusion. In the United States, specific factors include the high rates of sexual violence against Native women, with more than half experiencing sexual violence at some point in their lives. The majority of these crimes are committed by non-Indigenous perpetrators, who are rarely brought to justice. The cultural and historical trauma experienced by Native American communities has led to a crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women, with thousands going missing and being murdered at rates many times higher than the national average. Violence against tribal women is a multifaceted issue with historical, cultural, and socio-economic roots. Addressing these factors requires a comprehensive approach that acknowledges and addresses the historical trauma, cultural beliefs, and socio-economic vulnerabilities that contribute to the violence. This includes improving access to justice, addressing economic and social exclusion, and promoting cultural respect and recognition. Only by understanding and addressing these root causes can meaningful progress be made in reducing violence against tribal women.

Legal Frameworks for Indigenous Women: Effectiveness and Reform Proposals

The existing legal frameworks have significant limitations in addressing the unique challenges faced by indigenous women, and reforms are necessary to provide more effective protection and empowerment. Current human rights laws and instruments often fail to adopt an intersectional approach that considers the compounded discrimination faced by indigenous women due to their gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. Many legal frameworks focus primarily on individual rights, neglecting the collective rights of indigenous communities that are crucial for protecting indigenous women's knowledge, livelihoods, and self-determination. Indigenous women are often absent from decision-making processes, and their knowledge and contributions are overlooked in the design of programs and policies that affect them. Even when legal protections exist, they are often poorly implemented, and perpetrators of violence against indigenous women frequently evade justice due to systemic biases and lack of accountability.

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To address these limitations, comprehensive legal reforms are necessary. Firstly, legal frameworks should adopt an intersectional approach that recognizes the unique and intersecting forms of discrimination faced by indigenous women, and ensure that their individual and collective rights are protected. Secondly, legal instruments should enshrine the rights of indigenous peoples to self-determination, autonomy, and control over their lands, territories, and resources, as these are fundamental to protecting indigenous women's knowledge and livelihoods. Thirdly, the full and effective participation of indigenous women in all decision-making processes that affect them, from the local to the international level, should be mandated. Fourthly, robust monitoring and enforcement mechanisms should be established to hold states accountable for the implementation of laws and policies protecting indigenous women's rights, and provide accessible avenues for redress. Finally, indigenous-led solutions should be empowered, allowing indigenous women to develop and lead initiatives that address the root causes of violence and promote the preservation and transmission of their knowledge, in line with their own cultural practices and aspirations. By addressing these key reforms, the legal frameworks can become more effective in protecting the rights and addressing the unique challenges faced by indigenous women, ultimately contributing to their empowerment and the preservation of their invaluable knowledge and cultural heritage.

Support Services for Tribal Women: Availability and Accessibility

Access to support services for tribal women who have experienced violence is crucial for their recovery and empowerment. However, the availability and accessibility of these services are often limited and inadequate, leading to significant challenges for these women.

Counseling Services

Counseling services are essential for the emotional and psychological well-being of tribal women who have experienced violence. These services help them process their trauma, develop coping mechanisms, and regain confidence. Unfortunately, many tribal communities lack adequate counseling resources, particularly in remote areas. For instance, in Papua New Guinea, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) supports community-led initiatives to provide counseling and other support services, but these efforts are often overwhelmed by the scale of the need.

Healthcare Services

Healthcare services are also vital for the physical and mental health of tribal women who have experienced violence. These services include medical accompaniment, crisis intervention, and counseling. However, healthcare facilities in many tribal areas are under-resourced, leading to long wait times and limited access to specialized care. For example, in the United States, the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) provides funding for healthcare services, but the allocation is often inadequate, particularly for smaller tribes.

Legal Assistance

Legal assistance is essential for tribal women to navigate the justice system and seek redress for the violence they have experienced. This includes legal advocacy, accompaniment to court, and support in filing complaints. However, legal services are often underfunded and under-resourced, leading to delays and inefficiencies. For instance, the Tribal Sexual Assault Services Program (TSASP) supports the establishment and maintenance of legal services, but the funding is limited, and many tribal women still face significant barriers in accessing justice.

Community Outreach and Awareness

Community outreach and awareness programs are crucial for preventing violence and supporting survivors. These programs include educational activities, support groups, and community engagement. For example, tribal domestic violence programs in the United States conduct various

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community outreach activities, such as hosting talking circles and participating in public events, to raise awareness and provide support.

Cultural and Linguistic Barriers

Cultural and linguistic barriers further complicate access to support services. Many tribal women may not have access to services that are not culturally sensitive or do not provide interpretation in their native languages. This can lead to feelings of isolation and mistrust. For instance, the StrongHearts Native Helpline, a national helpline for Native Americans experiencing domestic violence, provides culturally appropriate services and support, addressing some of these barriers. Access to support services for tribal women who have experienced violence is a multifaceted issue requiring comprehensive and culturally sensitive approaches. Ensuring adequate funding, training, and community engagement is essential for providing effective support services that meet the unique needs of these women.

Socio-Economic Impact of Violence on Tribal Women

Violence against tribal women has a profound and multifaceted impact on their socio-economic well-being, exacerbating existing inequalities and vulnerabilities. Addressing this issue requires a comprehensive approach that empowers tribal women economically and socially. The socio-economic impact of violence on tribal women is severe. Studies have shown that intimate partner violence and other forms of abuse can lead to loss of income, reduced productivity, and increased healthcare costs for tribal women. For instance, a 2022 study in the Indian Journal of Public Health found that domestic violence was more prevalent among tribal women in the Siliguri subdivision of Darjeeling district, with younger and less educated women being more vulnerable. This economic burden not only affects the individual woman but also has ripple effects on her family and community.

The social stigma and isolation experienced by tribal women who have faced violence can further limit their access to education, employment, and other essential services. This, in turn, perpetuates the cycle of poverty and dependence, making it increasingly difficult for them to achieve financial independence and security. A 2014 study on the socio-economic status of Kuki tribal women in Manipur, India, highlighted the challenges they face in accessing education and economic opportunities due to deep-rooted gender biases and discrimination. To empower tribal women economically, a multifaceted approach is necessary. This includes improving access to education, vocational training, and entrepreneurship opportunities, as well as providing financial literacy and business development support. Initiatives like the Tribal Women Empowerment and Livelihood Programme (TWALP) in India, which aims to enhance the socio-economic status of tribal women through skill development and income-generating activities, can serve as models for such interventions. Strengthening social protection mechanisms, such as cash transfers, subsidies, and insurance schemes, can help mitigate the financial impact of violence and enable tribal women to achieve greater economic stability. The Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) in the United States, for example, provides funding for essential services and support for survivors of domestic violence, including tribal women. Ultimately, addressing the socio-economic impact of violence on tribal women requires a holistic approach that tackles the root causes of gender-based violence, promotes gender equality, and empowers tribal women to become self-reliant and resilient. By investing in the economic and social well-being of tribal women, we can not only improve their individual lives but also contribute to the overall development and prosperity of their communities.

Cultural Sensitivity in Awareness Programs: Enhancing Outreach

Promoting cultural sensitivity in awareness programs is crucial for effectively reaching and educating tribal communities about violence against women. However, many existing programs fall short in this regard, highlighting the need for improvements. One of the key challenges is the lack of understanding and incorporation of indigenous knowledge, practices, and worldviews in the design

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and implementation of these programs. For example, a 2019 study on domestic violence awareness campaigns in Australia found that the messaging and approaches often failed to resonate with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, as they did not align with their cultural values and communication styles. To address this, awareness programs should be developed in close collaboration with tribal leaders, elders, and women's groups, ensuring that the content and delivery methods are culturally appropriate and sensitive. The Maori Women's Welfare League in New Zealand, for instance, has been at the forefront of developing culturally-grounded domestic violence prevention programs that draw on traditional Maori practices and values. Another important aspect is the use of indigenous languages and the involvement of community members as facilitators and educators. This helps to build trust, foster open dialogue, and ensure that the information is accessible and meaningful to the target audience. The Tribal Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Coalitions in the United States have made strides in this direction, providing training and resources in native languages and engaging tribal members as advocates and educators. Awareness programs should acknowledge and address the historical and ongoing trauma experienced by tribal communities, particularly in the context of colonization and systemic oppression. This requires a nuanced understanding of the intersections between gender-based violence, cultural identity, and the legacy of colonialism. The Healing Native Hearts Coalition in Canada, for example, has developed a trauma-informed approach to domestic violence prevention that centers the experiences and resilience of Indigenous women. By prioritizing cultural sensitivity, awareness programs can foster greater engagement, trust, and ownership within tribal communities. This, in turn, can lead to more effective prevention and response strategies that are aligned with the unique needs and aspirations of tribal women and their communities.

Collaboration for Preventing Violence against Tribal Women

Addressing the issue of violence against women among Scheduled Tribes requires a collaborative approach involving governments, NGOs, and the tribal communities themselves. By leveraging the strengths and resources of these diverse stakeholders, holistic strategies can be implemented to prevent and address this pressing concern. One successful example of such collaboration is the Tribal Women's Empowerment and Livelihoods Programme (TWEL) in India. Launched in 2015, this initiative is a joint effort between the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, the Government of India, and several NGOs, including the Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED) and the Aga Khan Development Network. The program aims to empower tribal women economically and socially, thereby reducing their vulnerability to violence. Through TWEL, tribal women are provided with vocational training, entrepreneurship development, and access to markets for their traditional crafts and products. This not only enhances their financial independence but also strengthens their position within their communities. Simultaneously, the program works to raise awareness about gender-based violence and the rights of tribal women, engaging both the community and local authorities. Another successful model is the Maori Women's Welfare League in New Zealand, which has been at the forefront of addressing domestic violence in indigenous communities. The league collaborates closely with the government, providing culturally-appropriate support services and advocating for policy changes to better protect Maori women. This partnership has been instrumental in developing holistic strategies that address the unique cultural and historical context of Maori communities.

In the United States, the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) has facilitated collaboration between the federal government, state and tribal governments, and local NGOs to address domestic violence in Native American communities. Through this program, funding and resources are channeled to tribal organizations to provide essential services, such as emergency shelters, counseling, and legal assistance, while also supporting community-based prevention efforts. These examples demonstrate the power of collaboration in addressing the complex issue of violence

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against women among Scheduled Tribes. By bringing together the expertise, resources, and community connections of governments, NGOs, and tribal communities, holistic strategies can be developed and implemented to tackle the root causes of this problem, while respecting the cultural and traditional practices of these marginalized groups. Fostering such collaborative partnerships requires a commitment to open communication, mutual understanding, and a shared vision for empowering and protecting tribal women. It also necessitates the active participation and leadership of tribal communities in the design and implementation of these initiatives, ensuring that they are truly responsive to their unique needs and aspirations. By embracing this collaborative approach, we can create a more inclusive and equitable society where the rights and well-being of tribal women are safeguarded, and they are empowered to thrive and contribute to the development of their communities.

CONCLUSION

The global issue of violence against scheduled tribe women is a complex and multifaceted challenge that requires a comprehensive, collaborative, and culturally sensitive approach. Historical, cultural, and socio-economic factors have contributed to the disproportionate levels of abuse, exploitation, and trafficking faced by indigenous women. While legal frameworks exist to protect their rights, their effectiveness has been limited, necessitating reforms to strengthen enforcement and accessibility. The availability and accessibility of support services for tribal women remain inadequate, exacerbating the socio-economic impact of violence on their communities. Addressing this issue requires a holistic strategy that combines strengthening legal protections, improving support services, fostering cultural sensitivity in awareness programs, and promoting collaborative efforts among stakeholders, including governments, civil society, and indigenous communities. Only through a concerted and sustained effort can we hope to empower scheduled tribe women, safeguard their rights, and create a more just and equitable world.

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