

Traditional Knowledge and Gender Dynamics: An Exploration of the Role of Women as Custodians of Indigenous Knowledge and their Contributions to its Preservation and Transmission in West Bengal

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Abstract

The gendered dimensions of traditional knowledge are explored in this research paper, with particular attention on women's participation in maintaining and passing on skills related to agriculture, health, handicap, and social events. Based on ethnographic research done in rural Bengal, the study employs qualitative methods incorporating in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and participant observation. To have a thorough understanding of gender dynamics, the sample contains of fifty women from rural and indigenous areas augmented with interviews with local people and community leaders. Mostly acquired informally by intergenerational transfer, the results show that women have particular knowledge in seed storage, traditional medicine, food preparation, and ceremonies. Still, patriarchal society-based customs that hide their importance sometimes undervalues their contributions. The study highlights how modernity, migration, and socioeconomic pressures have degraded indigenous knowledge, therefore disproportionately impeding women's ability to preserve customary traditions. The study stresses the need of realizing and supporting women as vital players in the preservation of traditional knowledge. Policy references cover the encouragement of gender-sensitive cultural preservation initiatives and the inclusion of women's expertise into projects of sustainable development. By appreciating women's voices and thereby ensuring that traditional knowledge stays a vital source for next generations, this study supports a more inclusive attitude to cultural heritage preservation.

Keywords: Tradition, knowledge, gender dynamics, role of women, and West Bengal.

Introduction

Generally described to as indigenous or local knowledge, traditional knowledge consists in the cultural legacy, customs, skills, and inventions fostered and conserved by people over several centuries. Indicating their relationship with environment and their strategies for survival, adaptation, and progress, it is deeply established in the cultural framework of communities. Women are the main defenders of this knowledge in many different countries. Maintaining community identity and advancing sustainable development depend on their safeguard and communication of traditional practices. Gender relations affect the availability, application, and spread of traditional knowledge. As keepers of knowledge, women often have knowledge in fields including food preservation, herbal medicine, and handcrafting. Still, patriarchal systems may cause their accomplishments to be overlooked.

Bengal's agricultural and rural economy is closely related with the continuation of traditional knowledge in the region. Bengal is known traditionally for its rich cultural legacy including traditional weaving, terracotta workmanship, herbal medicine, and farming methods. Women have been notably important in rural areas as well as in many other spheres. Industrial regulations imposed by British authorities caused several traditional businesses in Bengal, like weaving and indigo dying, to endure over the colonial period. Notwithstanding these obstacles, women continued in their vital contribution in retaining and modifying indigenous customs. Women have traditionally taken care of seed collection, preservation, and planting—all essential for agricultural sustainability—in rural Bengal. Using locally grown plants and herbs, they have been healers, midwives, and herbalists focusing

medical problems. These methods were passed on orally, therefore creating a legacy of knowledge still valuable for societies today. Traditional knowledge systems have been challenged by the advent of industrialization, urbanization, and modernization (Agarwal, 1992). Women's roles within these systems have been reduced by migration, loss of biodiversity, and changing socioeconomic frameworks. Younger generations often lack this information, therefore negotiating its continuance. Understanding the historical paths of women's involvements to traditional knowledge helps one in West Bengal to realize the need of quick actions to protect and grow these practices.

Review of literature

Here I investigated the pertinent secondary data to enable me to methodically evaluate this research work. From the data, I found important trends and patterns that gave the topic great new angles.

- ❖ **Patriarchal Dominance:** Women typically assigned to secondary jobs; these conventions result in gender inequity. According to surveys, many Indians feel males should have more employment rights than women and wives should follow their husbands (Nayak & Sinha, 2024). Legal and policy changes notwithstanding this embedded patriarchy continue. One important institution noted as supporting patriarchal beliefs is the family. Some of the ways patriarchy is maintained in homes are conventional gender roles, control over women's decisions, and the inclination for male offspring. Women are subjugated via gender-based violence, sometimes rationalized in the name of family honour, culture, custom, and religion. Patriarchy effects women's employment involvement and property rights as well. Legal changes nonetheless help to ensure that traditional customs favour male heirs. Women still participate nominally economically, and their rights are less than those of males. Through media, education, and organizations like religion, society conventions and cultural practices help to further support patriarchy. This book section gave importance to patriarchal dominance and its strong impact on women's lives and journeys. This paper overlooked the policies and programs implemented by the welfare government for women and their empowerment.
- ❖ **Women Participation:** Writings of George & Kuruvilla underlines the need of gender equality and the rising awareness of women's agency in sustainable development all around (George & Kuruvilla, 2020). It highlights how social, financial, and cultural obstacles still impede women's autonomy even if "women power" is acknowledged and the entire potential of women is needed to be used. The book promotes a change in emphasis toward gender mainstreaming, attending to strategic gender demands, and using refresh ideas and tactics to empower women in the period of globalization. Because it promotes social development and economic prosperity, this empowerment is not only important for individual women but also for communities and countries overall. Eliminating these obstacles and supporting inclusive policies would help us to establish an atmosphere where women's perspectives are heard and escalated, therefore fostering more sustainable and fair results of development. This chapter paid attention to women's participation in different sociocultural sectors and maintaining sustainability.
- ❖ **Empowerment and Development:** Studies from the worldwide research and communications project Pathways of Women's Empowerment make up this book. Initiated in 2006, the project looked at women's experiences with power, empowerment, and transformation in several spheres. It looked at the "hidden paths" of empowerment in addition to clear attempts to transform women's life. The studies present a nuanced view of empowerment, stressing that it is a road rather than a destination and include changes in consciousness as well as behaviour (Cornwall & Edwards, 2014). Emphasizing the value of women's movements and group action in bringing about change, the book also supports more appreciation of their part in attempts at worldwide development.
- ❖ **Judicial Dimension for the Empowerment of Women:** Legal steps towards women's empowerment in India. It underlines that social justice and equality depend on women's empowerment. The paper also emphasizes the several laws passed in India, both during the

British era and following independence, to safeguard women's rights and advance their empowerment from legal standpoint. These laws seek to give women equal rights, opportunities, and protection in all sectors of life—personal, social, financial, political, and legal ones (Balraj, 2021). Furthermore, covered in the paper are the value of education and skill development in empowering women and encouraging self-reliance. Equipping women with the required tools and resources will help society open the path for a fairer future in which women actively engage in all spheres of life.

- ❖ **Historical Journey:** Beginning with ancient Greece and Rome and working through the twentieth century, this article explores the history of women's emancipation. In prehistoric communities, women were assigned to reproduction while men fulfilled the role of guardian; inequality was the norm (Fagnoli, 2023). Because of this gender gap, women were seen as weak and in need of male power. Consequently, historical narratives mostly feature men and include quite few records of women's efforts. Examining the legal and social circumstances of women in ancient Greece and Rome, it especially shows how historical events shaped the subalternity of women for millennia. It also covers the ultimate challenge to the patriarchal social organization paradigm and the start of the female movement in the twentieth century meant to change women's situation. It helps me to figure out the historical root of women and their empowerment.
- ❖ **Empowerment and Disempowerment:** The idea of empowerment—especially in relation to women in underdeveloped nations—as discussed in this paper pertains to development strategies and results. The writers clarify that empowerment is a complicated concept with plenty of research done since the 1970s (Dutta & Kornberg, 2002). It entails not just taking charge of resources but also of influencing change. There are several degrees of empowerment: personal, organizational, and policy ones. It also discusses disempowerment, pointing out that occasionally development projects cause women to lose authority. It begs the issue of whether women's empowerment results in men's disempowerment and contends that empowerment should be seen as a process devoid of a zero-sum outcome. Emphasizing the need of a multilayered approach to empowerment—that which entails activities at the individual, organizational, and policy levels—the writers stress. They also underline how grassroots initiatives, national legislation, and international organizations help women to be empowered. It ends by underlining the significance of appreciating the various experiences of women in various developing nations and of implementing adaptable policies and tactics to support empowerment.
- ❖ **Women in Political Process:** The Government of India has undertaken multiple initiatives to uplift women and improve their lives. The 73rd amendment established a reserve of 33 percent of seats for women in politics. This was a commendable move by the Indian government to empower women. Through this amendment, women are able to participate in panchayats (Ambedkar & Nagendra, 2005). This kind of involvement improves their decision-making skills and motivates more women to participate in all spheres of government. Consequently, more fair growth in society is possible as the portrayal of women in political debates and policy has greatly changed.

Research Methodology

Based on ethnographic research done in urban and rural West Bengal, the study employs qualitative methods including in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and participant observation. To get a thorough understanding of gender dynamics, the sample consists of fifty women from rural and indigenous areas augmented with interviews with local male peers and community leaders. Using ideas from historical settings, sociological theories, and contemporary case studies in West Bengal, this paper analyses the interplay between traditional knowledge and gender dynamics using a sociological framework. It aims to highlight how important women are in preserving indigenous knowledge and offer strategies for increasing their empowerment as defenders.

Thinkers Perceptions

Sociological theories provide a structure for understanding how gender relations interact with traditional knowledge. Philosophers such as Émile Durkheim, Karl Marx, and Pierre Bourdieu offer viewpoints on the social systems that mould women's role as protectors of knowledge. Émile Durkheim's concept of collective consciousness stresses the shared ideas and behaviours that bind societies together. As the expression of collective consciousness, traditional knowledge reflects the norms and values of a society. Women's contributions to preserve and transmit this knowledge improve social cohesiveness and cultural continuity. Women's participation in ceremonies and festivities in rural Bengal not only preserves cultural customs but also fosters bonds among the people. Marx's analysis of labour and class relations clarifies the depreciation of traditional knowledge within capitalist economies—sometimes connected to unpaid or undercompensated labour. Women's contributions to healthcare, handicrafts, and agriculture are sometimes categorized as home or informal labour, therefore underlining their invisibility in economic calculations. This marginalization emphasizes the need of appreciating women's traditional knowledge as a kind of productive work and shows great gender inequalities.

Pierre Bourdieu's ideas of cultural capital and habitus help to clarify the spread of traditional knowledge. As protectors of cultural assets, women pass on knowledge, techniques, and values to next generations. The erosion of traditional knowledge resulting from contemporary education systems and global cultural influences shows a change in habitus endangering the survival of indigenous activity. This viewpoint allows one to investigate the decline in West Bengal's traditional weaving and medical techniques. Feminist sociologists highlight in affecting women's experiences the interactions of gender, class, and culture. Scholars like Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva argue that ecological sustainability and biodiversity are tightly entwined with women's knowledge systems. They offer an ecofeminist viewpoint that emphasizes the need of women's contributions to sustainable development and recognizes their responsibilities as protectors of the environment.

Research Findings

The research stresses how modernization, migration, and socioeconomic constraints have eroded indigenous knowledge, therefore disproportionately limiting women's capacity to retain traditional customs. The study emphasizes the significance of appreciating and helping women as they are essential participants in the preservation of traditional knowledge. Policy suggestions address the incorporation of women's knowledge into projects of sustainable development and the support of gender-sensitive cultural preservation programs. This study advocates a more inclusive attitude toward the preservation of cultural legacy by recognizing women's voices and so ensuring that traditional knowledge stays an important resource for the following generations. This inclusive strategy helps women to empower themselves and enhances the cultural scene, therefore promoting a closer awareness of legacy among many different groups. In the end, appreciating women's efforts will help to produce more sustainable and successful preservation initiatives that would help society at large. Accepting these gifts will help us to build frameworks honouring the past and motivating next generations to interact with their cultural identities. Resilience and adaptation in the face of global problems depend on this all-encompassing viewpoint, which guarantees that cultural legacy stays a dynamic and active element of our societies. Ensuring that all views are heard and valued will help us to improve our shared knowledge and respect of cultural variety as we negotiate a globe growingly linked. Here I provide detailed observations and findings from my research.

❖ Traditional Knowledge: Gendered Dimensions

With different roles and responsibilities allocated to men and women inside indigenous societies, traditional knowledge is naturally gendered. Like in many other countries, West Bengal is where women are typically in charge of activities intimately related to the home and the near surroundings. These pursuits comprise food cooking, childcare, medical treatment, and resource management including water, gasoline, and medicinal plants. Women have thus grown to have a great awareness of the local ecosystem, plant species, and sustainable behaviours necessary for the survival and welfare of their societies. For many households in West Bengal's rural districts, for instance, women are the

main caregivers of home gardens—a key supply of food, medication, and revenue. These gardens are grown utilizing age-old farming methods handed down through the years (Berkes, 2017). Maintaining the output and biodiversity of these gardens depends on women knowing seed selection, planting methods, and pest control. In the field of medicine as well, women are generally the first to react to disease and injury; they rely on herbal medicines and traditional cures they have learnt from their moms and grandparents.

Handcrafts and artisanal production also clearly show the gendered character of traditional knowledge. Women are typically the main creators of traditional West Bengal's crafts including embroidery, ceramics, and weaving. These crafts help to preserve cultural legacy and identity in addition to providing cash (Chakraborty, 2010). The continuity of these crafts, which are progressively under danger from industrialization and globalization, depends on women's understanding of traditional patterns, techniques, and materials.

❖ **Women's Traditional Knowledge**

Women's social and cultural identities define their position as protectors of traditional knowledge rather profoundly. Women are recognized in many West Bengal indigenous groups as the stewards of cultural customs and main teachers of information to the next generation. Rituals, rites, and daily activities stressing the value of women's knowledge and talents help to often support this role. For instance, among the biggest indigenous populations in West Bengal, the Santal community depends mostly on women to pass on traditional knowledge on cultural traditions, healthcare, and agriculture. Teaching their daughters how to grow crops, cook traditional cuisine, and utilize medicinal herbs falls on Santal women. Through dance, music, and narrative, they also greatly help to preserve and share traditional information. These events serve not only as a means of imparting useful skills but also help to strengthen community cohesiveness and cultural identity. In the Munda society, women also are the main keepers of information on forest resources and biodiversity. Deep awareness of the indigenous flora and wildlife, Munda women apply this knowledge to control and protect forest resources. For many families, non-timber forest products (NTFPs), a significant source of income and nourishment, are also collected and processed under their direction (Dasgupta, 2008). Maintaining the biological balance of the forest and guaranteeing the long-term availability of these resources depend on women knowing sustainable harvesting methods and resource management.

❖ **Women's roles in Agriculture: Carers of Soil and Seeds**

One of the most important fields where women's traditional wisdom is most clearly visible is agriculture. Women handle household gardens, small-scale farms, and seed preservation systems in many indigenous and rural societies. Food security and biodiversity protection depend on their knowledge of sustainable agricultural methods, soil management, and crop choice. Women have traditionally been the stewards of seed diversity, choosing and saving seeds from every harvest to guarantee the continuity of crop kinds suited to local conditions. For instance, women are quite important in maintaining native rice varieties among the Indian tribe villages of West Bengal. They are quite knowledgeable about the features of several rice strains, including their nutritional value, adaptation to particular soil types, and pest resistance. Generation after generation of people carries on this knowledge, ensuring the survival of traditional agricultural varieties sometimes more resistant to climatic change than contemporary hybrids. Women's traditional knowledge encompasses environmentally friendly farming methods meant to support ecological equilibrium. Women in many African villages engage in agroforestry, crop rotation, and intercropping which improve soil fertility and lower demand for chemical inputs (UNESCO, 2003). For example, women farmers in Kenya use age-old techniques to intercrop legumes with maize, therefore raising soil nitrogen levels and yields. These methods support climate resilience as well as sustain agricultural output.

Though they play a vital role, women farmers may have great difficulties with regard to land, loans, and agricultural extension services. Further compromising women's responsibilities as stewards of agricultural TK is the degradation of traditional knowledge resulting from modernization and the advent of industrial agriculture (Shiva, 2000). Nonetheless, programs like farmer cooperatives and

seed banks that help women lead in sustainable agriculture present chances to rejuvenate traditional knowledge and empower women economically.

❖ **Women's Roles in Health: Keepers of Healing Techniques and Herbal Medicine**

Long the major caregivers in their homes and communities, women have been in charge of preserving health and well-being by means of conventional therapeutic methods. A pillar of indigenous healthcare systems is their understanding of home cures, medicinal plants, and preventative care.

- **Herbal Medicine and Plant Knowledge:** Traditional medicine depends much on the knowledge of women in spotting, gathering, and cooking therapeutic herbs. Indigenous women, for instance, have great knowledge of medicinal herbs used to cure a variety of illnesses, including stomach problems and skin infections, in the Amazon rainforest. Often combining many plants to improve their potency, they make medicines in the forms of teas, poultices, and ointments.
- **Holistic Healing Practices:** Traditional healing goes beyond only physical health to include mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being (World, 2004). Women provide complete care to their communities in many societies; they are midwives, herbalists, and spiritual healers. For example, traditional birth attendants (TBAs) in rural Nepal help women during childbirth utilizing herbal medicines and massage techniques to guarantee safe deliveries, based on centuries-old customs.
- **Prospects and Difficulties:** Women's roles as healers are seriously threatened by Western medicine's marginalizing of traditional healing methods. Furthermore, the commercialization of herbal medicine sometimes results in the exploitation of indigenous knowledge without just pay or acknowledgment (Sontheimer, 1991). But initiatives to include traditional healing into official medical systems, such as the acceptance of traditional birth attendants in some nations offer chances to recognize and protect women's knowledge.

❖ **The Roles of Women in Craftsmanship: The Weavers of Culture and Identity**

Another area where women's traditional expertise excel is craftsmanship. Women artists make utilitarian and creative things reflecting their cultural background and identity from weaving and pottery to embroidery and basketry.

- **Weaving and Textile Arts:** Women are the main weavers in many societies, creating symbolic-minded fabrics with cultural themes. Traditionally woven by Ashanti women, Ghana's Kente cloth is known for its complex patterns and vivid colours, each design reflecting certain proverbs or historical events (Dennis, 2015). In India, too, women in rural areas carry on decades of passing down ancient needlework methods including Phulkari and Kantha.
- **Pottery and Ceramics:** Women potters from throughout the world use traditional techniques to produce both ornamental and useful ceramics. Women have been creating pottery for millennia in the Pueblo villages of the American Southwest using locally obtained clay and natural colours. Durable and aesthetically appealing pottery requires their understanding of clay preparation, shape, and fire.
- **Opportunities and Difficulties:** Traditional crafts have been endangered by the globalization of markets and mass-produced commodities, therefore erasing cultural legacy and depriving women artists of financial possibilities. Still, projects encouraging fair trade and cultural tourism—such as cooperatives and craft fairs—offer venues for women to highlight their talents and create revenue while safeguarding their customs.

❖ **Women's Role in Collective Rituals: Guardians of Spiritual and Cultural Practices**

A fundamental component of cultural identity, communal rituals are kept and passed on by women most of the time. From seasonal celebrations to religious rites, women's involvement guarantees the ongoing flow of cultural customs.

- **Ritual Leadership and Ceremonial Knowledge:** Many indigenous and rural cultures have women as the custodians of ceremonial knowledge, in charge of planning and directing events. In the matrilineal societies of Meghalaya, India, for instance, women supervise the conduct of agricultural rites including seed sowing and harvest celebrations. Maintaining the spiritual and cultural relevance of these events requires their awareness of songs, dances, and prayers.

- **Storytelling and Oral Traditions:** Women are often the main storytellers in their societies, orally passing on mythologies, stories, and historical accounts (Chowdhury, 2015). Through songs and stories, griots, female storytellers play a vital part in maintaining the history and cultural traditions of their nations in West Africa. These oral traditions serve not only as entertainment value but also as teaching tool for next generations about their background.
- **Challenges and Difficulties:** Women's roles as protectors of ceremonial knowledge are threatened by the decline in traditional rites brought on by urbanization and cultural absorption. Still, initiatives to record and revive oral traditions—community-led storytelling programs, for example—offer chances to honor women's contributions to cultural legacy.
- ❖ **Difficulties Faced by Women in Preserving and Transmitting Traditional Knowledge**

Though they are protectors of traditional knowledge, women in West Bengal have many difficulties keeping and sharing this knowledge. The destruction of traditional knowledge systems brought on by modernization, urbanization, and the dissemination of Western education presents one of the main difficulties. Younger generations leaving rural regions and conventional livelihoods disturbs the intergenerational flow of knowledge, therefore losing important cultural and ecological expertise (Hiranandani, 2023). The marginalizing of women in indigenous groups and larger society presents even another major obstacle. In local communities as well as in the larger framework of development and policymaking, women's contributions to traditional knowledge are sometimes underappreciated and disregarded. Gender disparities in access to education, resources, and decision-making authority compound this marginalization by restricting women's capacity to advocate for the preservation of traditional knowledge and to engage in activities aiming at sustainable development. Furthermore, endangering women's position as stewards of traditional knowledge are commercialization and exploitation of this knowledge by outside entities. Many times, companies and scholars seize traditional knowledge without first consulting or benefiting the indigenous people from whence it comes from (Subramanian, 2021). This not only compromises the cultural and economic rights of indigenous people but also disturbs the social and cultural activities vital for the spread of traditional knowledge.

❖ **Techniques for Assisting in the Roles of Women in Traditional Knowledge Maintenance**

Adopting a gender-sensitive strategy that appreciates women's efforts can help to solve these difficulties and encourage women's involvement in the preservation and dissemination of traditional knowledge. Grounded in the values of cultural respect, community involvement, and gender equality, this strategy should be. Encouragement of the documentation and resuscitation of traditional knowledge via community-led projects is one of the strategies. Working with women to record their knowledge and practices as well as to create instructional materials and initiatives including traditional knowledge into both formal and informal education systems is part of this can involve. Including women in these initiatives helps to guarantee that their knowledge is faithfully portrayed and that they have a role in choices on the use and dissemination of it. Encouragement of traditional crafts and sustainable livelihoods helps women to become more economically empowered as well. Along with funding projects that advance sustainable agriculture and natural resource management, this can entail giving women tools and training so they may market their traditional crafts (Beauvoir, 2015). Strengthening women's economic possibilities helps them to improve their position in their societies and generates incentives for the preservation and spread of traditional knowledge.

Advocacy for the acceptance and defence of indigenous peoples' rights to their traditional knowledge is also vital at last. Working with indigenous people to create legal and policy frameworks safeguarding their intellectual property rights and guaranteeing their control over the commercialization of their knowledge is part of this can involve (Mangan, 2019). Promoting awareness of the value of traditional knowledge among legislators, academics, and the general public as well as confronting the preconceptions and prejudices that minimize women's contributions is equally vital.

Conclusion

As keepers and communicators of traditional knowledge, women in West Bengal are especially important in helping to preserve cultural legacy and advance environmentally friendly development.

Their efforts are sometimes underappreciated and disregarded, though, and they struggle greatly to keep and share this information. Adopting a gender-sensitive strategy that acknowledges and supports women's participation in conventional knowledge systems can help us to solve these problems. This helps to guarantee the continuity of traditional knowledge, advance gender equality, and help indigenous people in West Bengal and abroad to grow sustainably.

Examining the relationship between traditional knowledge and gender dynamics finds a rich backdrop in West Bengal's socio-cultural setting. Rural Bengal women engage in a number of events aimed at preserving their cultural legacy and helping their local communities. Particularly in seed selection, preservation, and planting, women in West Bengal are absolutely essential for agricultural activities. Women often bring indigenous knowledge about crop rotation, insect control, and soil fertility. Understanding their unique soil and climate needs helps women to preserve traditional rice varieties. Women farmers often face challenges to land ownership, credit, and agricultural training despite their significant contributions, therefore impairing their capacity to preserve and improve these practices. Women have always been protectors of herbal medicine and healing customs in Bengal, traditional medicine and healthcare. Using locally grown botanicals, they create treatments for illnesses ranging from basic colds to problems following childbirth. Many times, this knowledge is passed on verbally inside families. Reductions in these practices follow from the commercialization of healthcare and the deterioration in biodiversity. Projects to document and include traditional medicine into current healthcare systems could help to protect this vital information.

Bengal's great tradition of crafts, including weaving, kantha embroidery, and terracotta artwork, depends much on the labour and imagination of women. Female artists keep these talents, often connected with social identities and cultural ceremonies. Still, the challenges of declining demand, market competition, and inadequate institutional backing compromise the feasibility of these crafts. Programs providing women craftsmen market access, training, and financial support can help them to preserve their culture. West Bengal's women are essential in carrying out and preserving customs connected to marriage, celebrations, and different spheres of life. Reflecting the group's cultural identity, these ceremonies often include sophisticated knowledge of symbolism, materials, and techniques. One example of creative mastery and spiritual significance is the *alpona*, a type of ceremonial floor painting created for holidays.

Though their vital roles, women face several challenges in the transmission and preservation of traditional knowledge. Often limiting their involvement and recognition are patriarchal ideals, educational gaps, and socioeconomic challenges. Furthermore, especially among younger generations, the forces of modernism and urbanization have caused ancient knowledge systems to be degraded. Still, there is possibility to empower women and improve the viability of conventional knowledge. Self-help groups and cooperatives as well as community-based enterprises can provide women venues to record and share their knowledge. Including traditional knowledge into development programs and formal education institutions will help to increase their relevance. Moreover, digital technologies offer fresh approaches to record, preserve, and share past activities. The preservation of cultural legacy and the progress of sustainable development depend on women safeguarding of traditional knowledge as they are indispensable. Their contributions in West Bengal cover several spheres, including agriculture, medicine, handicrafts, and ceremonies. By acknowledging and empowering women as stewards of knowledge, one can help to conserve traditional traditions and minimize the challenges posed by modernization. The need of gender-sensitive approaches in cultural preservation and policy development is underlined in this study. Recognizing and supporting women's traditional knowledge would help us to create a more inclusive and sustainable future for West Bengal and beyond.

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