
MAPPING THE RESEARCH LANDSCAPE OF TRIBAL WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP: A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS (2000–2025)

Firozkhan Khurshit Khan¹ and Prof. (Dr.) Kanchan S. Fulmali²¹Research Scholar and ²Associate Professor, M. L. Dahanukar College of Commerce, Vile Parle East, Mumbai, Maharashtra, 400057**ABSTRACT**

This bibliometric study maps the evolving research landscape of tribal women entrepreneurship from 2000 to 2025, using publication data sourced from the Dimensions database. The study aims to identify key contributors, collaborative patterns, thematic clusters, and citation dynamics in this underexplored yet critical area of scholarly inquiry. Using VOSviewer for data visualization, the analysis incorporates a range of bibliometric indicators including co-authorship analysis, citation analysis, keyword co-occurrence, and bibliographic coupling.

A total of 2,502 peer-reviewed articles were analyzed following rigorous screening criteria. The results indicate a notable surge in publications post-2016, with research primarily concentrated in healthcare, education, and social empowerment domains. Keywords such as “tribal women,” “indigenous women,” “status,” and “education” dominate, while terms like “entrepreneurship,” “microfinance,” and “digital inclusion” appear less frequently. Highly cited works by authors such as Gabrysch (2009) and Moreton-Robinson (2013) reflect foundational contributions, particularly in maternal health and indigenous feminist perspectives. Institutions from Australia, Canada, and India emerge as key hubs of research activity. The study reveals substantial gaps in economic and entrepreneurial dimensions of tribal women’s development, emphasizing the need for interdisciplinary engagement and broader regional inclusion. These findings serve as a roadmap for future research, policy-making, and academic collaboration aimed at empowering tribal women as agents of socio-economic transformation.

Keywords: Tribal Women Entrepreneurship, Indigenous Women, Bibliometric Analysis, VOSviewer, Co-authorship Network, Keyword Co-occurrence.

1. INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship has long been recognized as a driver of economic development, social transformation, and individual empowerment. In particular, women’s entrepreneurship is increasingly acknowledged for its role in enhancing household income, promoting gender equity, and fostering inclusive growth (Brush et al., 2009). However, within this broader discourse, the voices and ventures of tribal or indigenous women often remain marginalized despite their crucial role in sustaining local economies and cultural traditions. The intersection of tribal identity, gender, and entrepreneurship is a domain that has historically received limited scholarly attention but is now gaining recognition as a field of both academic and policy relevance (Kabeer, 2005).

The tribal population in India, for instance, accounts for over 8.6% of the total population (Census of India, 2011), with similar or greater percentages in countries like Bolivia, Peru, and Papua New Guinea. In many such contexts, tribal women serve as the custodians of community-based enterprises—ranging from craft production and medicinal herb trade to agro-based microenterprises (Xaxa, 2014). However, systemic marginalization, patriarchal norms, lack of access to capital, and geographical isolation hinder their entrepreneurial potential (Boserup, 1970; Baruah, 2013). The need to map the intellectual landscape and research output in this domain is thus both timely and critical.

The evolving field of bibliometric analysis offers a robust way to assess the volume, growth, and thematic spread of scientific research. It uses quantitative methods to evaluate patterns in publication data, thereby revealing research trends, leading scholars, key institutions, and collaboration networks (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). With the advancement of specialized tools such as VOSviewer, it has become easier to visualize complex co-authorship networks, keyword clustering, and citation trends.

While studies on women entrepreneurship have grown substantially over the past two decades, very few have focused specifically on tribal or indigenous women. Notable works such as by Henry et al. (2015) and Jennings & Brush (2013) discuss gender and entrepreneurship broadly but often omit cultural specificity. Conversely, studies on indigenous livelihoods by Peredo & McLean (2010) and Dana (2007) underscore indigenous knowledge systems without explicitly addressing entrepreneurial dynamics among women.

The objective of this study is to map the research landscape of tribal women entrepreneurship through a bibliometric lens, focusing on scholarly articles indexed in the Dimensions database between 2000 and 2025. The bibliometric indicators used include co-authorship analysis, citation analysis, keyword co-occurrence, and bibliographic coupling, all visualized using VOSviewer.

This research is significant for several reasons. First, it highlights academic blind spots by quantifying the extent and nature of research on tribal women entrepreneurs. Second, it identifies emerging themes, key authors, and influential publications, offering a roadmap for future scholarship. Finally, it contributes to policy formulation by showcasing areas that require institutional and developmental support.

To summarize, this study aims to bridge the academic gap at the intersection of tribal identity, gender, and entrepreneurial research. By employing a systematic bibliometric methodology, it seeks to provide an evidence-based understanding of how this niche yet crucial area is evolving, who the key contributors are, and what research trends are emerging across countries and institutions.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Data Source and Collection

This bibliometric study utilized the Dimensions database, known for its extensive coverage of peer-reviewed literature and integrated citation data. Data was retrieved in March 2025 using the Boolean search query: ("tribal women" OR "indigenous women" OR "aboriginal women"), with filters applied for the time period (2000–2025), article type, and English language.

An initial 6,755 records were identified. After removing duplicates and irrelevant items, 2,502 peer-reviewed articles were finalized for analysis based on inclusion criteria such as relevance to entrepreneurship among tribal women and complete metadata availability.

2.2 Bibliometric Indicators and Techniques

The analysis employed the following indicators:

- Co-authorship Analysis (Authors, Institutions, Countries) to examine collaboration patterns.
- Citation Analysis (Documents, Journals) to evaluate research impact.
- Bibliographic Coupling to reveal intellectual linkages between countries.
- Keyword Co-occurrence and Density Mapping to identify thematic trends and research hotspots.

2.3 Software Used

All visualizations were generated using VOSviewer (v1.6.20), which supports network, overlay, and density visualizations. Data preprocessing was conducted in Microsoft Excel and OpenRefine to ensure data accuracy and consistency.

2.4 Ethical Considerations

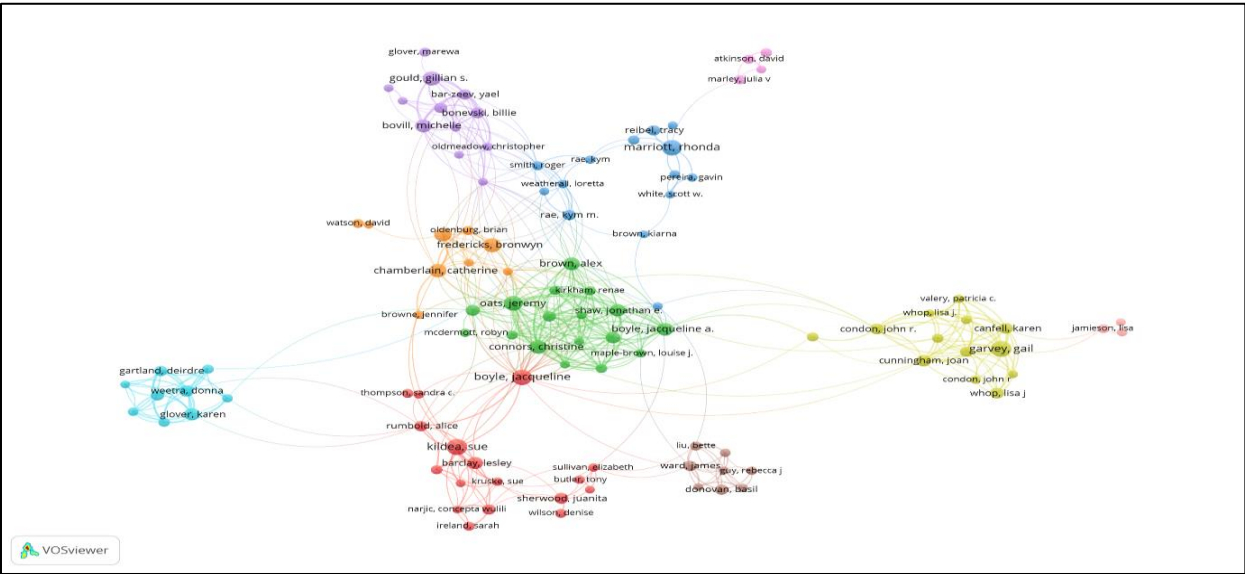
This study is based entirely on secondary data and does not involve human or animal subjects. All analyses complied with the usage policies of the Dimensions database and VOSviewer.

3. KEY VISUALIZATIONS RESULTS

This section presents visual network maps generated through VOSviewer to illustrate various bibliometric dimensions. Each figure below is followed by an interpretation elaborating on the patterns, clusters, and implications observed.

Figure 1: Co-authorship Analysis (Authors) – 106 Items, 10 Clusters

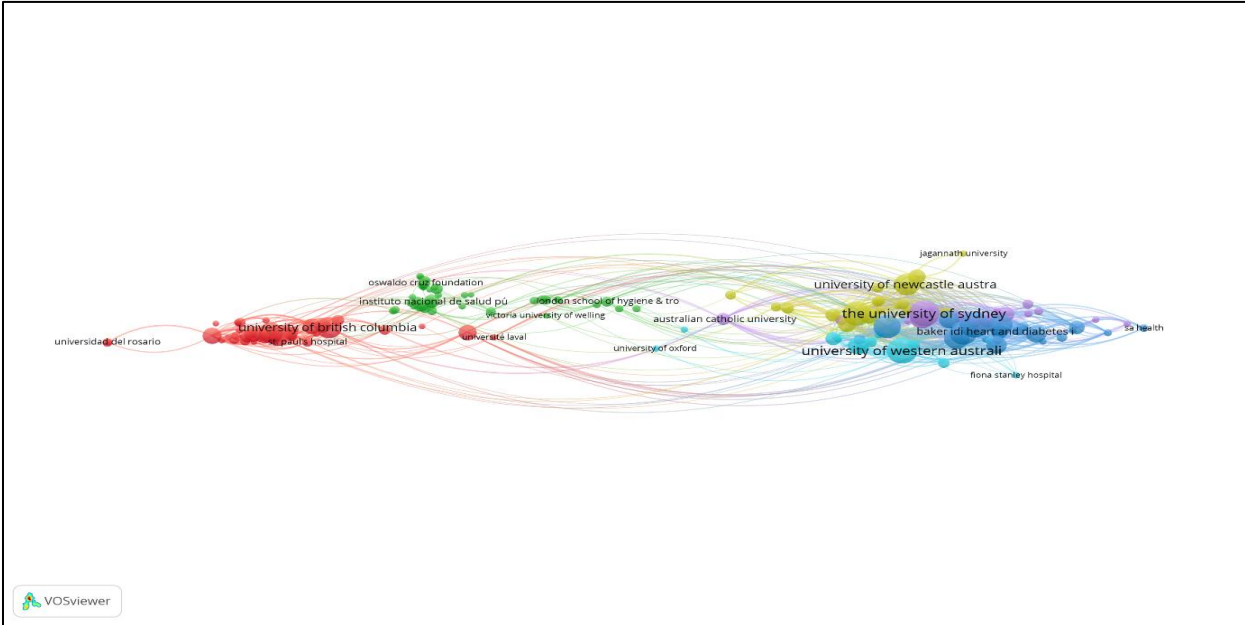
This visualization shows collaboration patterns among the most active researchers in the domain of tribal women entrepreneurship. Distinct clusters represent groups of authors frequently publishing together. Notably, names like Boyle, Jacqueline and Garvey, Gail are prominent, indicating their influential roles. The density and centrality of nodes reveal high-impact contributors and their collaborative linkages with regional and international co-authors.



Interpretation: The figure illustrates a well-structured co-authorship network, highlighting active academic collaboration among prominent scholars. The green cluster featuring Boyle, Jacqueline shows tight-knit internal collaboration and cross-linkages with other researchers such as Connors, Christine and Kirkham, Renae. The presence of separate clusters such as the blue and violet ones indicates parallel research threads. The diversity in cluster colors reflects a broad academic interest in this field. However, the low number of cross-cluster links suggests some degree of fragmentation, implying a potential for greater interdisciplinary collaboration. This insight can help future researchers identify leading authors and collaborative circles for joint work or meta-studies.

Figure 2: Co-authorship Analysis (Organizations) – 159 Items, 6 Clusters

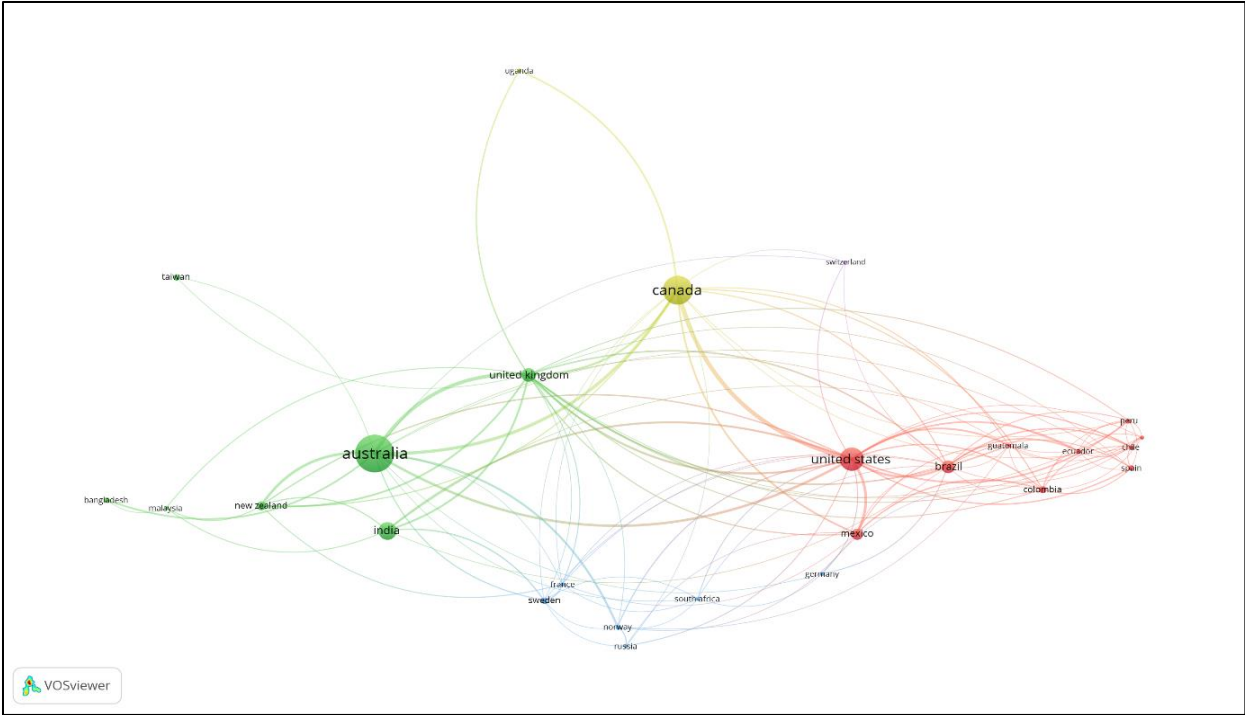
This figure reveals institutional collaboration in the field. Major institutions like University of Western Australia, The University of Sydney, and University of British Columbia appear centrally located, indicating high connectivity and productivity.



Interpretation: Institutional co-authorship indicates the formation of academic hubs across Australia, Canada, and the UK. The largest cluster, centered around Australian institutions, shows dominance in tribal women's research, especially in health-related entrepreneurship and empowerment. Inter-organizational collaboration appears moderately dense, with significant links among top institutions. The map suggests policy-linked academic agendas, particularly through medical or indigenous studies departments. Institutions on the periphery, like South American or African universities, seem underrepresented—highlighting a possible regional research gap.

Figure 3: Co-authorship Analysis (Countries) – 26 Items, 5 Clusters

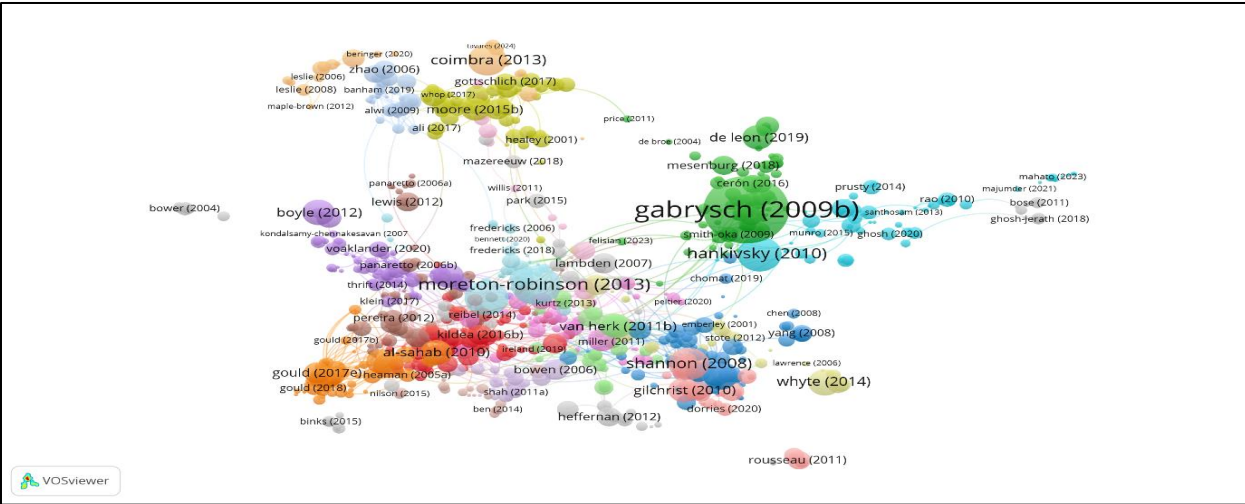
This map presents country-level collaboration patterns. Key nations such as Australia, India, Canada, and the United States dominate the network.



Interpretation: The co-authorship linkages between these countries demonstrate strong transnational research relationships, particularly between Australia and India. The large green node of Australia underscores its leading role. Canada forms a bridge between Northern and Southern collaborations, while countries like Bangladesh, Uganda, and Malaysia appear in satellite positions. The visual confirms a global research interest with concentrated leadership in Anglophone regions, suggesting the need for deeper integration of Latin American and African perspectives into mainstream scholarship.

Figure 4: Citation Analysis (Documents) – 976 Items, 25 Clusters

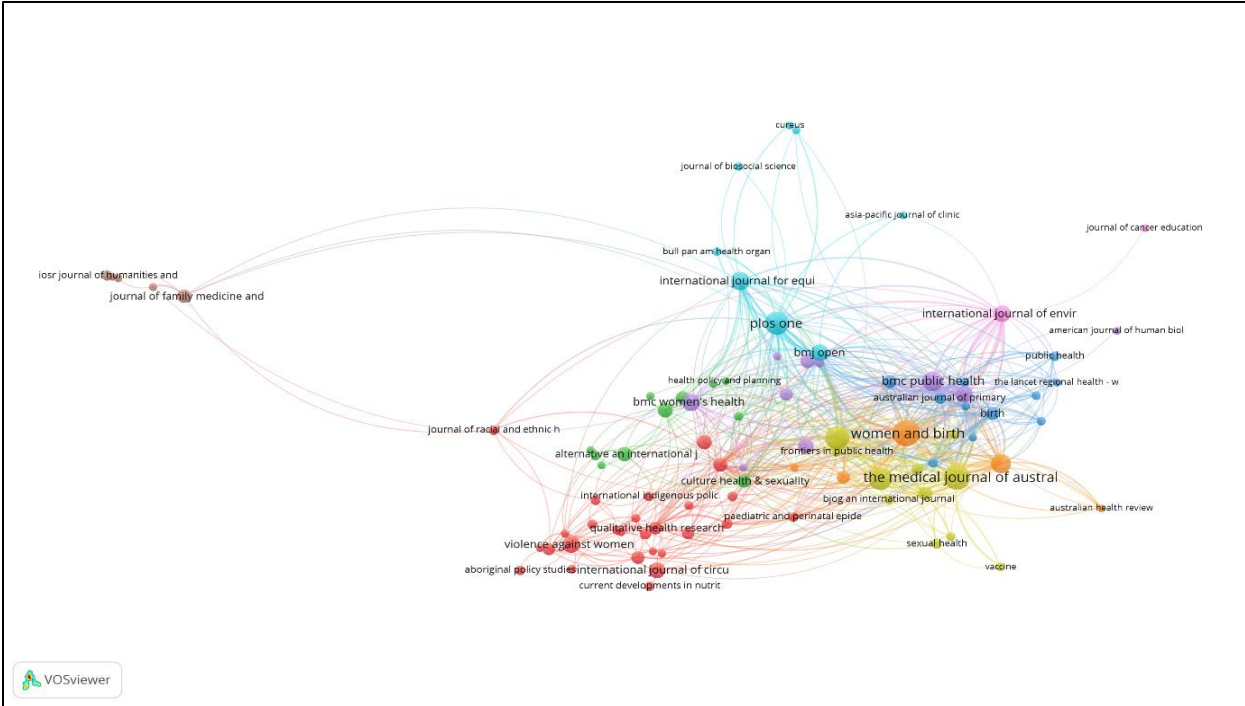
This figure shows clusters of articles based on citation links. Large nodes represent highly cited papers such as Gabrysch (2009) and Moreton-Robinson (2013).



Interpretation: Gabrysch (2009) stands out as the most cited document, indicating foundational work likely on health and maternal outcomes among indigenous women. The colorful clustering reflects thematic zones—ranging from public health to feminist indigenous theory. The citation network helps identify canonical texts, enabling future scholars to anchor their reviews and arguments. This map also shows intellectual silos, where certain clusters have dense internal citations but weak external ties—indicating specialized subfields within broader tribal women research.

Figure 5: Citation Analysis (Sources) – 90 Items, 9 Clusters

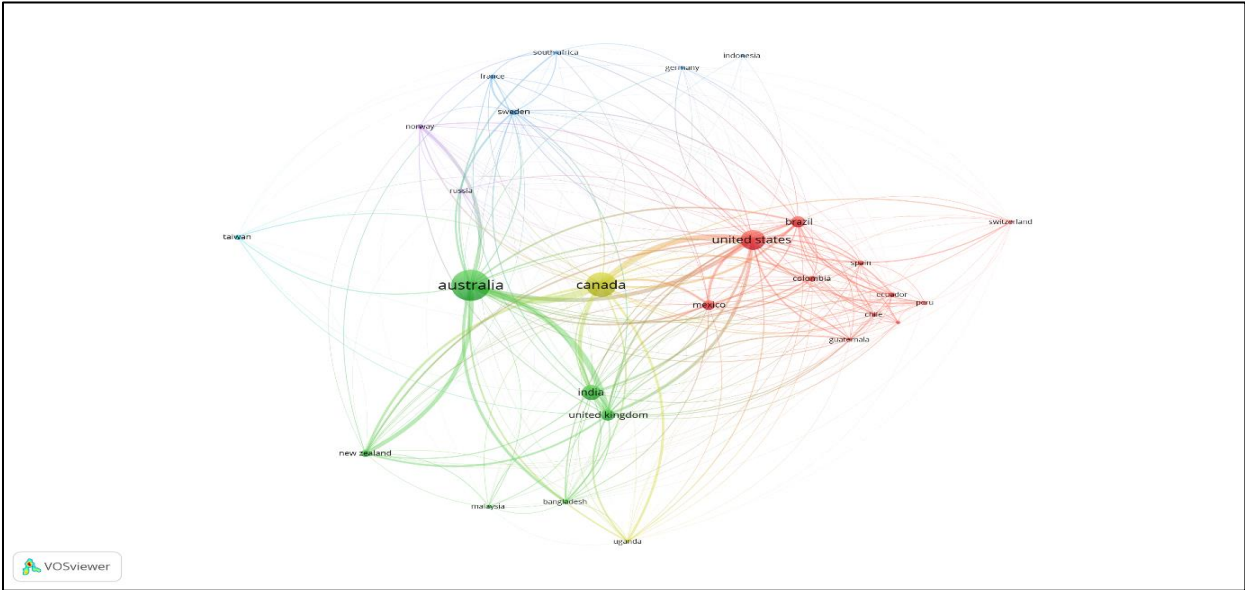
This figure displays journals most frequently cited in the dataset. Prominent ones include Women and Birth, The Medical Journal of Australia, BMC Public Health, and International Journal for Equity in Health.



Interpretation: Public health, gender, and indigenous studies journals dominate the source citation landscape. The clustering suggests interdisciplinary engagement, particularly between health sciences and gender research. The density of links in the center demonstrates cross-citations among journals. Journals like PLOS ONE and BMJ Open indicate methodological openness, while others like *Violence Against Women* reflect specific thematic foci. This map can guide scholars toward suitable journals for publication or review sourcing.

Figure 6: Bibliographic Coupling (Countries) – 27 Items, 6 Clusters

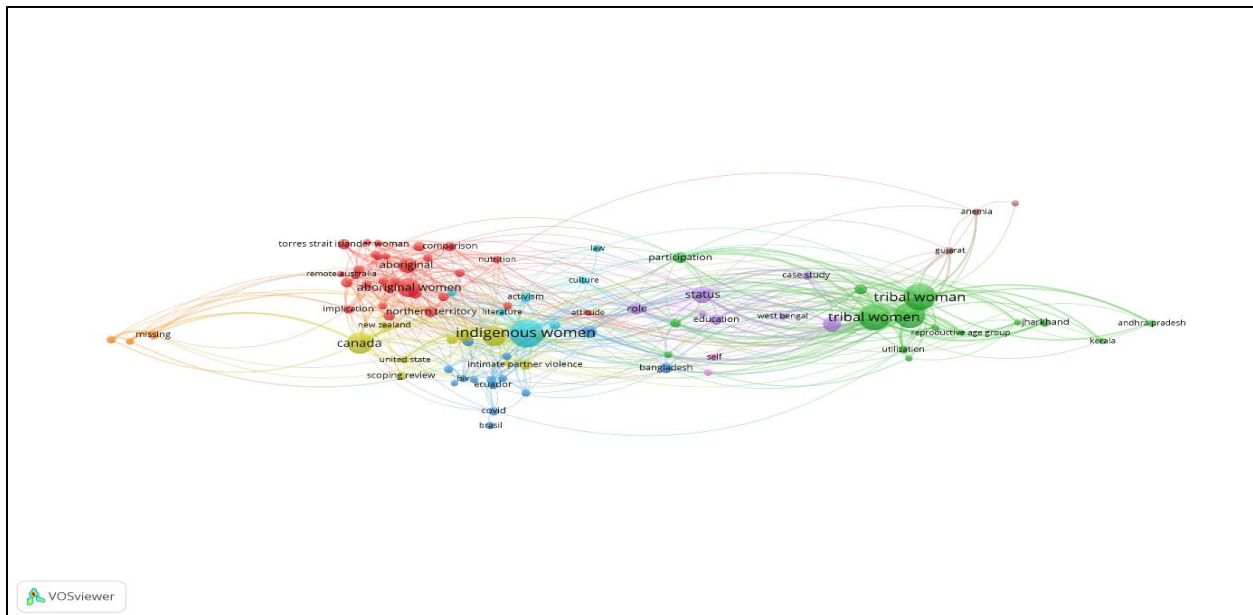
This map groups countries based on shared reference patterns, not direct collaboration.



Interpretation: The coupling indicates intellectual alignment between countries such as Australia–India, Canada–United States, and UK–Uganda. This reveals how different nations anchor their research on similar foundational texts. Notably, countries like Bangladesh and Ecuador appear at the periphery, reflecting their unique or less-cited reference bases. The figure offers insight into global diffusion of knowledge and shows which regions might benefit from integrating mainstream literature to elevate research visibility.

Figure 7: Keyword Co-occurrence Analysis – 90 Items, 9 Clusters

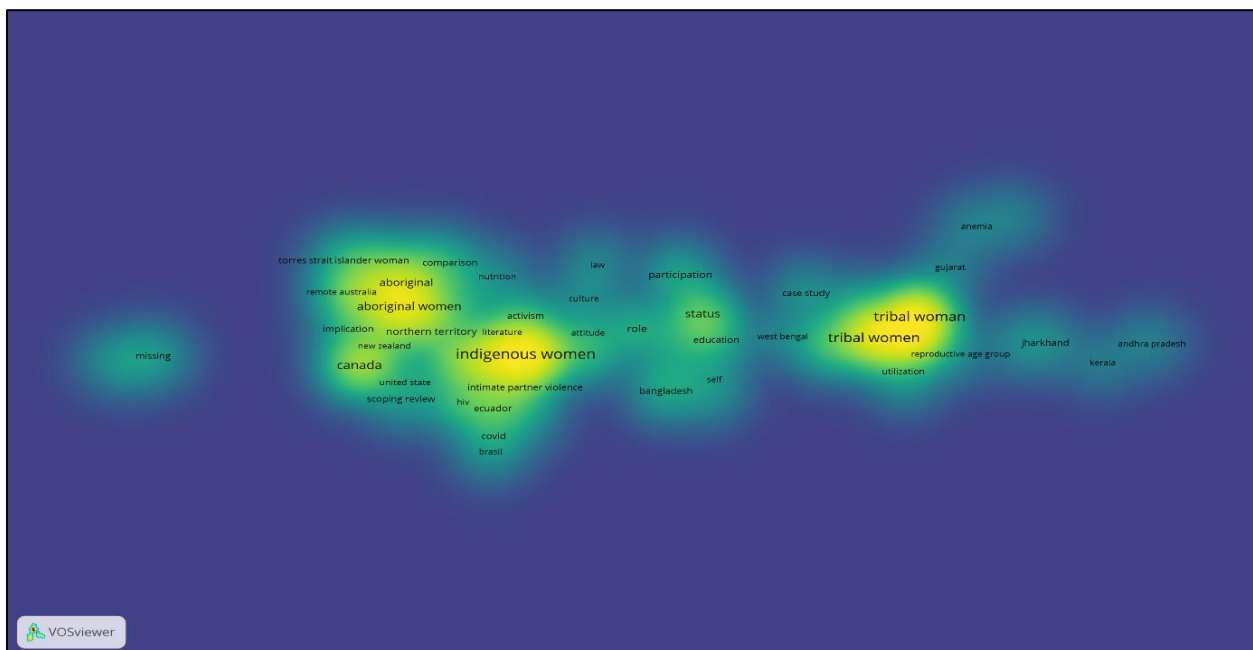
This map visualizes the co-occurrence of keywords, showing clustered themes such as reproductive health, indigenous rights, violence, and entrepreneurship.



Interpretation: Keyword clusters reveal dominant themes such as *"tribal women," "indigenous women," "education,"* and *"status."* The green and red clusters represent reproductive health and social participation, respectively, while smaller clusters include geographical tags like "Jharkhand" or "Andhra Pradesh." The visual suggests that tribal women entrepreneurship is studied through a multidisciplinary lens, but health topics dominate. This insight may guide future thematic expansions into business models, digital inclusion, or policy innovation.

Figure 8: Keyword Occurrence Density Map

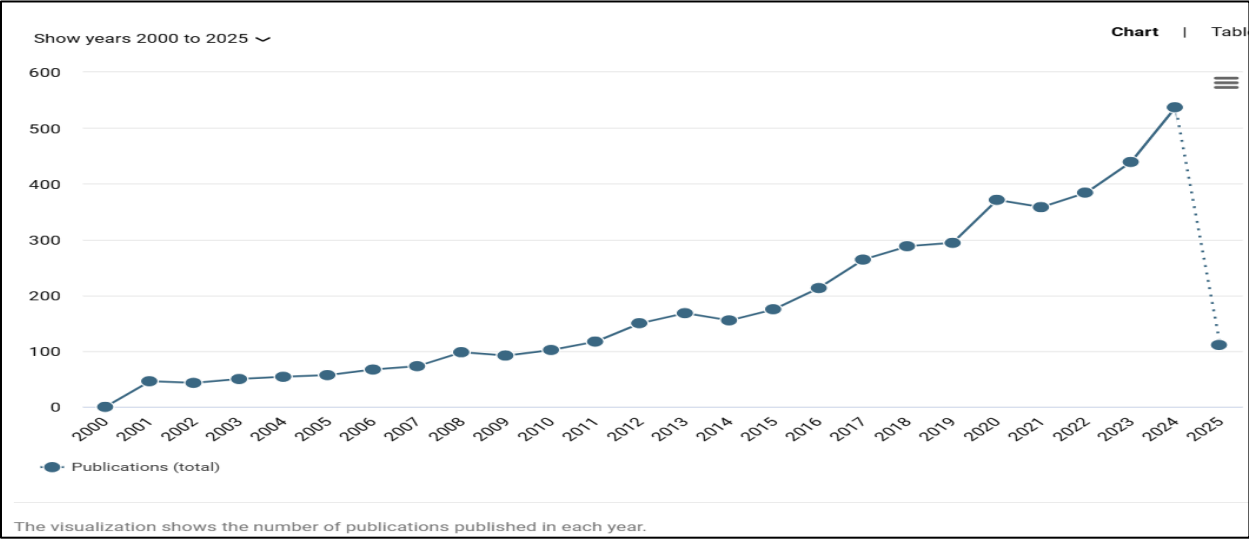
This heatmap-style visualization shows where research focus is densest based on keyword frequency.



Interpretation: The high-density areas around “tribal women,” “indigenous women,” and “aboriginal women” reveal concentrated scholarly attention. Peripheral areas like “Jharkhand,” “education,” and “entrepreneurship” indicate emerging interest zones. Interestingly, certain important development themes such as “microfinance,” “digital inclusion,” or “green entrepreneurship” are absent or faint—suggesting thematic gaps. Researchers can use this map to identify underexplored or trending areas to position their future studies.

Figure 9. Annual Research Output: Total Publications (2000–2025)

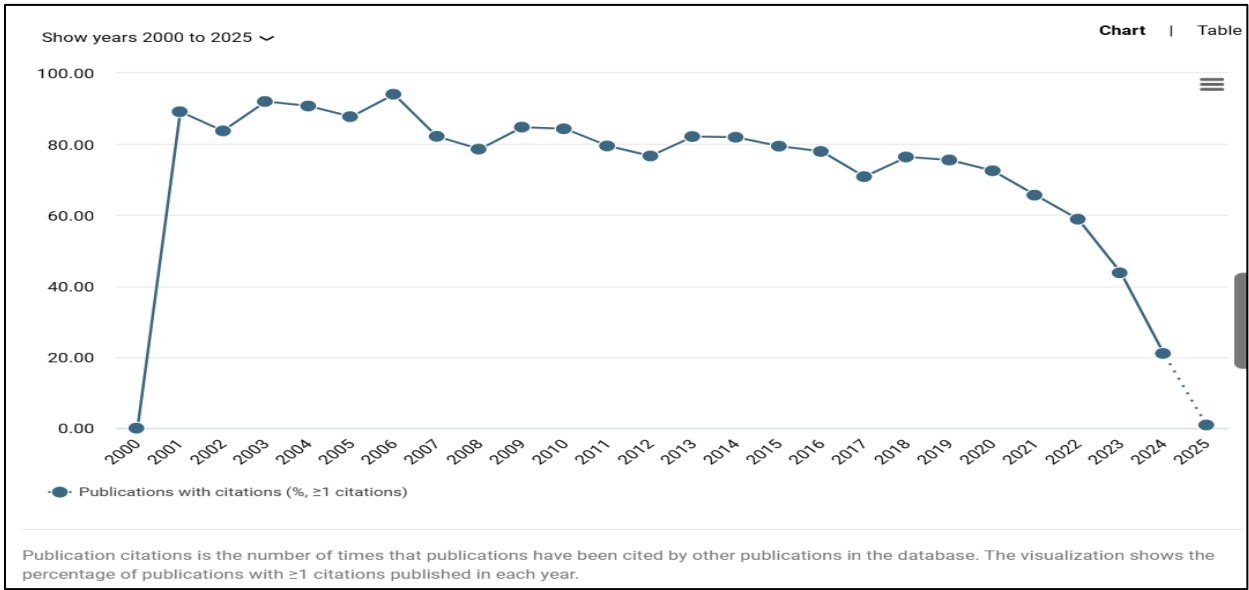
Figure 9 depicts the annual number of publications in the field of tribal women entrepreneurship from 2000 to 2025. The trend shows a steady increase from 2000 to 2015, followed by a sharp rise post-2016, peaking in 2024 with over 550 publications. This surge reflects increased global attention to indigenous women's rights, gendered entrepreneurship, and intersectional development challenges.



Interpretation: The rising trend in publication volume highlights the growing scholarly interest in tribal and indigenous women, particularly over the past decade. Early 2000s show modest activity with under 100 publications annually, but from 2016 onward, the graph exhibits exponential growth—possibly influenced by global policy shifts, such as the United Nations’ SDGs and local initiatives like India's Van Dhan Yojana. The slight drop in 2025 is likely due to incomplete indexing for the current year. This trend underscores a maturing research field moving from exploratory studies toward more diverse, policy-linked, and regional investigations, particularly in health, education, and entrepreneurship.

Figure 10 Citation Performance: Percentage of Publications with ≥1 Citation

Figure 10 presents the percentage of publications with at least one citation from 2000 to 2025. The curve remains relatively high—between 75–95%—for most of the time span but declines steadily after 2018, dropping sharply in 2023–2025.



Interpretation: The high citation percentage from 2001 to 2017 reflects strong scholarly engagement and knowledge circulation within the domain. This consistent performance suggests foundational works during this period are widely referenced, reinforcing their impact. However, the steep decline in citation percentages in recent years (post-2020) can be attributed to the time lag in citation accrual—recent papers naturally require a

few years to accumulate citations. Additionally, the explosion in the number of papers may have diluted citation frequency per paper. It is crucial for future bibliometric studies to revisit these figures periodically as newer publications mature. This trend also signals the importance of open-access publishing, better keyword strategies, and collaborative dissemination to improve visibility and citation rates for emerging scholars.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1. Key Findings

This bibliometric analysis of tribal women entrepreneurship research from 2000 to 2025 provides a multifaceted overview of how the field has evolved. The results drawn from Dimensions data and visualized using VOSviewer yield valuable insights into publication patterns, collaborative structures, thematic trends, and geographic diversity.

A clear trend emerges showing that healthcare, social status, and empowerment dominate scholarly interest in tribal women-related topics, while direct discussions on entrepreneurship models, innovation, and financial inclusion appear less central. For instance, in the keyword co-occurrence analysis, dominant terms such as “tribal women,” “indigenous women,” “status,” and “participation” suggest a sociological and public health orientation rather than a purely economic or entrepreneurial one.

In the co-authorship analysis (authors), several influential scholars, including Boyle, Jacqueline and Garvey, Gail, emerge as central figures within distinct clusters. These authors not only contribute prolifically but also serve as nodes connecting interdisciplinary networks. The author network reveals a mix of dense clusters and relatively isolated groups, pointing to both regional collaboration strengths and the need for more global, integrative partnerships.

At the institutional level, the University of Western Australia, The University of Sydney, and University of British Columbia stand out in the co-authorship (organizations) visualization. These universities have maintained strong publication records and wide-ranging collaborations. The prominence of Australian institutions in multiple maps confirms Australia’s academic leadership in research involving aboriginal and indigenous communities—particularly in relation to healthcare and community engagement.

Geographically, the country collaboration map reveals Australia, India, Canada, and the United States as central research hubs. Particularly notable is the connection between India and Australia, reflecting strong bilateral academic interest in tribal populations. This is reinforced in the bibliographic coupling map, where countries such as India, Canada, and Australia display shared citation behaviors, implying a convergence in their foundational research references.

When evaluating citation impact, the documents citation map highlights Gabrysch (2009) and Moreton-Robinson (2013) as highly influential publications. The former likely focuses on maternal health outcomes among indigenous populations, while the latter contributes to indigenous feminist perspectives. Such papers serve as intellectual anchors, forming the theoretical and empirical base for subsequent studies in the domain.

From a publishing perspective, the citation analysis of sources demonstrates that journals like “*Women and Birth*,” “*The Medical Journal of Australia*,” and “*BMC Public Health*” are leading dissemination channels. Most of these journals are from the public health and gender studies domains, further supporting the observation that the field leans toward health-focused and empowerment-centric research, with less attention to technical, managerial, or entrepreneurial aspects of tribal women’s engagement in economic activities.

The keyword occurrence density map reinforces these trends by visually emphasizing dominant themes. High-density keywords include “tribal women,” “indigenous women,” and “aboriginal women,” while peripheral and underrepresented terms like “entrepreneurship,” “microfinance,” and “economic development” suggest potential gaps or emerging areas yet to be explored. Taken together, the analysis shows a clear imbalance: while health, social welfare, and education of tribal women are well-studied, the economic agency, enterprise-building, and entrepreneurial ecosystems around them are insufficiently represented in current literature.

4.2. Implications for Future Research

The bibliometric insights generated through this study have several important implications for academic researchers, funding bodies, policy makers, and development practitioners.

First, there is a pressing need to expand the disciplinary scope of tribal women entrepreneurship studies. While current work has done well to document sociocultural and health dimensions, entrepreneurial themes such as value-chain participation, digital inclusion, green enterprise, social innovation, and indigenous knowledge

commercialization remain largely underexplored. Integrating theories from entrepreneurship studies, innovation management, and development economics could bring fresh perspectives to this research domain.

Second, future researchers can leverage this bibliometric mapping to identify high-impact sources and collaboration networks. For instance, scholars aiming to publish or collaborate internationally should look toward Australian and Canadian research ecosystems, as they appear central to the field. Simultaneously, there is an opportunity to foster stronger regional collaboration in Africa, Latin America, and South-East Asia, where many tribal women-led enterprises exist but remain underrepresented in global academic discourse.

Third, this study suggests that keywords and themes could be refined to enhance discoverability and relevance. Emerging topics like climate-resilient entrepreneurship, indigenous e-commerce, circular economy, or eco-tourism among tribal women can be emphasized in future keyword selection and research scopes to capture interdisciplinary and contemporary relevance.

From a policy standpoint, the findings offer guidance to governments and NGOs working in tribal development. The current academic focus on health and status indicates successful engagement in those domains, but to truly empower tribal women, support systems need to be extended toward entrepreneurship incubation, microfinancing, digital training, and leadership development.

Moreover, bibliometric studies like this could serve as a baseline for tracking academic response to national programs such as India's *Van Dhan Yojana* or global movements like the *UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues*. Such tracking would help determine how well academia aligns with real-world policy developments and community needs.

Finally, this study can serve as a model for similar bibliometric analyses in adjacent fields—such as tribal education, indigenous land rights, or rural innovation ecosystems—helping to uncover both knowledge gaps and intellectual synergies.

5. CONCLUSION

This bibliometric analysis provides a comprehensive mapping of the research landscape on tribal women entrepreneurship from 2000 to 2025, using publication data extracted from the Dimensions database and analyzed through VOSviewer. Through key bibliometric indicators—such as co-authorship, citation analysis, bibliographic coupling, and keyword co-occurrence—this study uncovers dominant patterns, collaborative structures, and thematic concentrations within the existing literature.

The results clearly demonstrate that while tribal and indigenous women are a significant focus within global academic research, the bulk of this attention has concentrated on healthcare, social status, reproductive issues, and cultural empowerment. Keywords like “tribal women,” “indigenous women,” “status,” and “education” appear frequently, revealing a primarily sociological and health-centric lens. However, explicit scholarship on entrepreneurial dimensions—such as economic agency, enterprise models, financial access, and market participation—remains relatively sparse.

Authors and institutions from countries like Australia, Canada, and India are the primary contributors to this field. Highly cited authors and articles act as intellectual anchors, particularly in health-related studies. Likewise, dominant publishing venues include public health and gender journals, pointing to a disciplinary bias that may be overlooking business, innovation, or management-oriented perspectives.

The co-authorship networks among authors, institutions, and countries point to well-developed regional collaborations, especially among Anglophone nations. However, the lower representation of African, Southeast Asian, and Latin American countries highlights the need to democratize and diversify global research dialogues on tribal women's entrepreneurship.

This study not only consolidates the current state of academic knowledge but also identifies key research gaps—particularly the limited focus on entrepreneurial capability building, digital inclusion, and sustainable business models among tribal women. These insights provide a valuable roadmap for researchers, institutions, and funding agencies aiming to broaden the field and foster inclusive, interdisciplinary exploration.

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