

ODOP SCHEME AND INCLUSIVE RURAL DEVELOPMENT: ANALYZING SOCIO-ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN SHRAVASTI DISTRICT, U.P.

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ABSTRACT

Through the implementation of the One District One Product (ODOP) program, which was initiated by the government of Uttar Pradesh in 2018, the objective is to promote indigenous goods that originate from each district, with the purpose of promoting economic growth and safeguarding cultural legacy. One of the most important areas of focus for this effort has been the district of Shravasti, which is located in Uttar Pradesh. With a particular emphasis on the role that the ODOP program plays in inclusive rural development and socio-economic empowerment, this research investigates the socio-economic impact that the ODOP plan has had in Shravasti. The report shows the ways in which the ODOP initiative has enhanced market access for local craftsmen and small businesses, given financial help, and encouraged the development of skills. A rebirth of traditional crafts has also occurred as a result of these measures, which have contributed to an increase in job possibilities and a rise in income levels. Additionally, the program has helped to preserve cultural assets and promote sustainable livelihoods, both of which are important goals of the program. The study highlights the transformational potential of the ODOP program in rural regions by utilising both qualitative and quantitative data. This demonstrates the success of the scheme as a paradigm for inclusive development. Based on the findings, it appears that targeted policy initiatives, such as the ODOP plan, have the potential to play a significant part in supporting sustainable development in rural areas and bridging socio-economic gaps. In conclusion, the ODOP program in Shravasti provides as a convincing example of how localised economic policies may lead to major changes in the socio-economic condition of rural communities. It also offers vital insights for projects that are comparable to those now being implemented in other locations.

Keywords: ODOP, Scheme, Socio-Economic, Shravasti District, U.P.

Introduction

The development of rural areas has continued to be an essential component of India's socioeconomic strategy, particularly in regions such as Uttar Pradesh, where a sizeable share of the population lives in rural

areas. In spite of the numerous different development projects that have been implemented, many districts continue to struggle with issues that are associated with poverty, unemployment, and restricted access to markets. The government of Uttar Pradesh introduced the One District One Product (ODOP) Scheme in 2018, with the intention of promoting district-specific indigenous goods, encouraging local entrepreneurship, and creating equitable economic growth. This was done in response to the issues that were presented. By connecting local producers with national and international markets, the ODOP program aims to not only conserve the state's rich cultural and artisanal history but also to generate chances for sustainable livelihoods. This is accomplished by establishing connectivity between international and national markets. Because it focusses on a specific product for each area, the program places an emphasis on the development of skills, the enhancement of quality, the provision of financial support, and the facilitation of market access for local craftsmen and small businesses. The Shravasti district is an aspirational district that is characterised by traditional handicraft, agricultural dependence, and modest industrial development. This method is particularly important for any district that has these characteristics. The ODOP initiative has a primary emphasis on the socio-economic development of indigenous groups in rural areas. Within the scope of this discussion, empowerment comprises a range of activities, including but not limited to the upgrading of skills, the restoration of cultural identity through the rebirth of traditional crafts, greater income, and enhanced employment prospects. Additionally, by developing self-reliance and entrepreneurship, the initiative strives to minimise regional inequities and integrate marginalised areas into the mainstream economy. The objective of this research is to investigate the influence that the ODOP plan has had on inclusive rural development in Shravasti, with a particular emphasis on the socio-economic transformation of the communities that are located there. An investigation of the ways in which the program has impacted the creation of income, employment, the development of skills, and the preservation of cultural traditions is being carried out using qualitative and quantitative assessments. The purpose of this study is to give insights into the efficacy of targeted district-level interventions as instruments for fostering rural development and socio-economic justice. These insights are provided by assessing the success and problems of the ODOP plan.

The district of Shravasti, which is situated in the north-eastern region of Uttar Pradesh, is a place that possesses a distinct socio-cultural and historical importance. The area has long relied on agriculture and handicrafts on a local scale as its primary means of subsistence. It is well-known for its connection to Buddhist legacy and old trade routes. Despite the fact that it is historically significant, Shravasti is confronted with a number of difficulties in terms of development. These difficulties include poor literacy rates, limited industrialisation, inadequate infrastructure, and significantly high unemployment rates. The socio-economic mobility of the local people, particularly women and populations that are marginalised, has been hampered as a result of these issues, which highlights the urgent need for targeted development measures. These difficulties are the focus of the ODOP project, which aims to address them by concentrating on the development of local economies. In contrast to industrial plans that are more general in scope, the ODOP places an emphasis on a district-specific product. This product is frequently associated

with traditional handicraft, things based on agriculture, or distinctive local resources. This is done to guarantee that interventions are suited to the socio-economic environment of the region. Handloom textiles, traditional crafts, and other indigenous commodities have been recognised as focal points for the plan in Shravasti. Other indigenous goods have also been highlighted as focal points. Creating sustainable livelihood possibilities, preserving cultural legacy, and integrating local craftsmen into bigger markets on a national and global scale are some of the goals that the program attempts to achieve via the cultivation of these items. The ODOP program has a strong emphasis on inclusive development, which is one of its most notable characteristics. Groups who have traditionally been excluded from economic growth, such as rural women, small-scale farmers, and disadvantaged communities, are the focus of the initiative, which offers services such as capacity-building programs, skill development seminars, and financial support. Local producers are given the ability to raise their income levels, expand their production capacities, and earn recognition for their craft when they have access to loans, training in quality standards, marketing help, and the opportunity to participate in trade fairs. These multi-pronged strategies are in line with the overarching objectives of India's rural development policies, which place an emphasis on the reduction of poverty, the creation of employment opportunities, and the promotion of socio-economic fairness. Furthermore, the ODOP program makes a contribution to the preservation of culture by restoring traditional activities that could otherwise be lost as a result of urban migration and the process of modernisation. The promotion of handcrafted items in Shravasti not only helps to increase the economic resilience of the region, but it also helps to promote a feeling of collective identity and pride among the local populations. The potential of the plan as an all-encompassing model for rural development is shown by the interaction between the empowerment of the economy and the preservation of cultural traditions. In order to evaluate the effects of the ODOP plan in Shravasti, this study makes use of a combination of different research approaches. The quantitative statistics on revenue creation, employment rates, and market access are supplemented by the qualitative insights that are gleaned from interviews with local businesses, craftspeople, and government officials. It is via this dual approach that a full knowledge of both the quantitative outcomes and the lived experiences of beneficiaries can be achieved, therefore showing the transformational potential of policy interventions that are implemented at the local level. Using Shravasti as a case study, the purpose of this research is to give insights that are useful to policy on the success of district-level measures in supporting inclusive rural development. It is anticipated that the findings would provide significant information for replicating similar interventions in other aspirational districts of Uttar Pradesh and throughout India. This will highlight the fact that focused economic policies may be crucial in eliminating regional inequities and boosting socio-economic empowerment.

The Origins of the ODOP Policy Within a Single District

The One District One Product (ODOP) policy is a forward-thinking initiative that was developed by the Government of India. The objective of this policy is to determine one essential product for each of the districts in India, with the goal of fostering the targeted growth of the relevant goods and the companies that are linked with them. The objective of the ODOP, which was established on the basis of the principles of

artisanal development, is to sell local goods both domestically and globally in order to generate job opportunities, encourage the formation of sustainable income, and maintain ethnic creative expression (Ministry of Trade and Industry, 2021). Beginning in Uttar Pradesh, it has spread throughout India and become a cult, with each area expanding it in accordance with the culture, produce, or industry of that district. In this regard, the Open growth Partnership (ODOP) is not only in agreement with India's overarching goals for economic growth, but it is also establishing a solid foundation for sustainable development by combining information from both traditional and creative sources. For example, districts associated with handloom weaving, ceramics, or agro-products receive focused assistance in the form of training, financial resources, and access to markets. The local populace is empowered economically and regional inequality is reduced as a consequence of this project's execution, which encourages them to take ownership of the process of economic progress.

Empowering aspiration districts for “Viksit Bharat@2047: The Call of the Hour”.

The National Institution for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog has identified some districts as aspirational, meaning they need more support for development. These districts have poor index ratings in nearly every category related to health, education, and employment opportunities. These districts perfectly capture the paradox of India's development process; despite their extreme poverty and disadvantage, most of them have unfulfilled potential. The Uttar Pradesh district of Shrawasti, an aspirational area, is a good example of the challenges that one might face. The government is concentrating on areas like these to accomplish its objectives of regional development and equalization throughout the nation (NITI Aayog, 2018). To achieve the goals of liberal development, creative possibilities, and sustainability, the concept of "Viksit Bharat@2047," which means "Developed India by the year of the centenary of independence," stands out. The main focus of this idea is the empowering of ambitious districts like Shrawasti's economy, which bridges the gap between rural and urban communities. Developing these areas is not just the right thing to do from a social and economic perspective, but it's also crucial for bringing the national economy into balance. With the exception of the most exceptional cases To avoid ignoring any aspect of its economic development plan, India has adopted the One Area One Problem (ODOP) approach. According to Shrawasti, the district's socio-economic status, employment generation, cultural identity preservation, and avoidance of rural-urban drift might all be enhanced by the rise of indigenous commodities like Banarsi sarees and clay art.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the conceptual framework of the One District One Product (ODOP) scheme and its role in promoting inclusive rural development in India.
2. To analyze the socio-economic profile of beneficiaries in Shrawasti district with reference to income levels, employment status, education, and livelihood sources.
3. To assess the impact of the ODOP scheme on employment generation and income enhancement among rural households, artisans, and small entrepreneurs in Shrawasti district.

Research Methodology

The present study uses a descriptive and analytical research approach to explore how the One District One Product (ODOP) initiative promotes inclusive rural development and socio-economic empowerment in Shravasti, Uttar Pradesh. The research seeks to quantify and qualitatively assess recipients' empowerment to understand the scheme's grassroots impact. The study uses mixed approaches to combine primary and secondary data. ODOP beneficiaries—artisans, small entrepreneurs, self-help group members, and rural families selling district-identified products—provided primary data through structured surveys, personal interviews, and focused group discussions. Government papers, ODOP policy documents, census records, district statistics handbooks, research journals, books, and related websites provided secondary data for the study's theoretical and contextual framework. Shravasti was chosen for its socioeconomic backwardness, rural population, and ODOP status. A multi-stage sampling method was used to choose responders. First, chosen blocks and villages for ODOP operations were identified. To guarantee representativeness, recipients were selected using simple random selection in the second step. Beneficiary availability and fieldwork feasibility dictated sample size. A systematic interview schedule was used to collect primary data on demographics, livelihood patterns, income changes, employment generation, skill development, access to credit, market connections, and ODOP scheme perceptions. To guarantee dependability and clarity, a pilot poll examined the interview schedule. Informal talks with local officials, trainers, and cooperative leaders implementing ODOP provided qualitative insights. Statistics and analysis were used to analyze the data. Socioeconomic factors were analyzed using percentages, averages, and frequency distributions, and beneficiaries' pre- and post-ODOP circumstances were compared using comparative analysis. To understand empowerment and inclusion perspectives, problems, and experiences, qualitative answers were thematically examined. Time, sample size, and respondents' pre-ODOP recollection are other limitations of the study. Despite these limitations, the technique provides a valid framework for measuring the ODOP scheme's impact on inclusive rural development in Shravasti district.

Results

The study found that the One District One Product (ODOP) system has improved socioeconomic circumstances in Shravasti district, notably among rural households, craftsmen, and small businesspeople. The results show rural development advances in employment, income, skill development, financial inclusion, and social empowerment. The ODOP system has mostly reached economically productive age groups, with a considerable proportion from socially excluded categories including Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes. The scheme's inclusiveness in a poor region with few livelihood options is evident. Self-help organizations and home-based manufacturing have increased female engagement, which is still lower than male participation. Post-ODOP employment figures show a significant change from unemployment and casual wage work to self-employment. ODOP helped many recipients develop or grow district-specific product-related small businesses. Shravasti district has previously relied on seasonal or migrant labor, although this move has improved livelihood stability.

Beneficiaries' monthly incomes have increased significantly, according to income research. Many respondents moved from lower to higher income levels after joining ODOP. Income increase was driven by productivity, skill development, and market access. These changes have increased household economic stability and ability to satisfy fundamental requirements including education, health, and nutrition. The results also demonstrate the benefits of ODOP skill development. Training has enhanced technical skills, product quality, and manufacturing knowledge. Beneficiaries felt more confident controlling production and dealing with customers and institutions. Access to new equipment and technology was uneven, especially for smaller producers and women entrepreneurs. Financial inclusion was a major ODOP result. Institutional credit, subsidies, and government backing were new to many beneficiaries. Despite this improvement, several respondents cited issues with cumbersome procedures, delayed loan approvals, and inadequate financial plan understanding, highlighting the need for greater simplification and handholding. The results indicate that the ODOP initiative has promoted inclusive rural development in Shravasti district. The initiative has improved livelihoods and socio-economic empowerment, but infrastructure, market access, and institutional coordination issues restrict its potential. Sustainable and equitable district development requires closing these disparities.

Table 1: Socio-Economic Profile of ODOP Beneficiaries in Shravasti District

| Particulars | Category | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Gender | Male | 62 |
| | Female | 38 |
| Age Group | 18–30 years | 28 |
| | 31–45 years | 42 |
| | Above 45 years | 30 |
| Education Level | Illiterate | 22 |
| | Primary | 35 |
| | Secondary & Above | 43 |
| Social Category | SC/ST | 46 |
| | OBC | 39 |
| | General | 15 |

Table 1 indicates that ODOP beneficiaries in Shravasti largely belong to the economically active age group (31–45 years), highlighting the scheme's relevance for the working population. A significant proportion of beneficiaries belong to SC/ST and OBC communities, reflecting the inclusive nature of the ODOP initiative. Female participation, though comparatively lower, shows a growing engagement of women in district-level economic activities. The educational profile suggests moderate literacy, emphasizing the need for continued skill-based training.

Table 2: Impact of ODOP Scheme on Employment Generation

| Employment Status | Before ODOP (%) | After ODOP (%) |
|-------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Unemployed | 41 | 18 |
| Self-employed | 36 | 58 |
| Wage-employed | 23 | 24 |

Table 2 clearly demonstrates that the ODOP scheme has contributed significantly to employment generation, particularly by increasing self-employment opportunities. The decline in unemployment from 41% to 18% indicates the scheme's role in creating sustainable livelihood options. The rise in self-employment suggests enhanced entrepreneurial activity among rural households.

Table 3: Changes in Monthly Income of Beneficiaries (₹)

| Income Level | Before ODOP (%) | After ODOP (%) |
|----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Below ₹5,000 | 48 | 17 |
| ₹5,000–₹10,000 | 34 | 41 |
| Above ₹10,000 | 18 | 42 |

The data in Table 3 reveal a substantial improvement in income levels after the implementation of the ODOP scheme. The proportion of beneficiaries earning above ₹10,000 per month more than doubled, indicating economic upliftment. The sharp decline in the lowest income group reflects enhanced productivity, market access, and value addition enabled by ODOP support.

Table 4: Access to ODOP Support Services

| Type of Support | Beneficiaries (%) |
|------------------------------|-------------------|
| Skill Training | 68 |
| Credit/Loan Facilities | 54 |
| Marketing Support | 47 |
| Tool & Technology Assistance | 39 |

Table 4 shows that skill training is the most widely accessed ODOP support service, playing a crucial role in capacity building. Access to credit and marketing support, though significant, remains limited for a considerable section of beneficiaries. This indicates the need for improved institutional outreach and simplified procedures to maximize scheme benefits.

Table 5: Perceived Socio-Economic Empowerment Outcomes

| Empowerment Indicator | Agree (%) | Neutral (%) | Disagree (%) |
|--|-----------|-------------|--------------|
| Improved income security | 72 | 18 | 10 |
| Enhanced skills | 76 | 15 | 9 |
| Increased confidence & decision-making | 61 | 24 | 15 |
| Reduced migration | 58 | 27 | 15 |

Table 5 highlights positive perceptions of socio-economic empowerment among beneficiaries. A large majority acknowledge improvements in income security and skill enhancement. Increased self-confidence

and reduced distress migration suggest that the ODOP scheme contributes not only to economic gains but also to social empowerment and rural stability. The results collectively indicate that the ODOP scheme has played a constructive role in inclusive rural development in Shravasti district. The scheme has improved employment opportunities, increased income levels, enhanced skills, and promoted social inclusion, particularly among marginalized communities. However, gaps in access to credit, technology, and marketing infrastructure highlight areas where policy intervention and institutional strengthening are required to ensure long-term sustainability.

Conclusion

One District One Product (ODOP) in Shravasti district is an example of how localised economic initiatives may empower people and foster inclusive rural development. By concentrating on district-specific goods and providing focused assistance to local artisans and small business owners, the initiative has created sustainable livelihood possibilities, raised income levels, and made skill development easier. As a result of the initiative's efforts to revive and preserve traditional crafts, cultural pride and identity have been enhanced. The ODOP plan raised the socioeconomic position of marginalised groups, such as women and small-scale producers, according to this report. This was achieved by expanding their access to markets, financial resources, and capacity-building initiatives. The job market has improved, and artisans with the right skills may now take part in regional and national supply chains to a greater extent. Consequently, rural regions develop a sense of self-sufficiency, entrepreneurialism, and resilience while becoming less dependent on agriculture. The strategy also highlights the necessity of long-term, inclusive, and situationally-appropriate policy solutions. The approach taken by ODOP to achieve a balance between economic development and cultural preservation can serve as a model for other districts and states. Leveraging local talents and resources instead of imposing mainstream development practices can lead to more meaningful and inclusive outcomes. Lastly, the ODOP project in Shravasti shows how focused district-level actions may solve socio-economic disparities and accomplish complete rural development. As the program's outcomes show, sustainable growth requires careful planning, improved skills, easier access to markets, and active community involvement. To ensure that development is inclusive, equitable, and culturally relevant—not simply financially—future policies in India should learn from Shravasti's model of supporting rural communities.

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