

From Displacement To Sustainable Enterprise: Indigenous Memory-Mapping And Community-Based Entrepreneurship Among The Chakma Community In Tripura



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Abstract

This study examines how indigenous memory-mapping practices facilitate sustainable community-based entrepreneurship among the displaced Chakma community in Tripura. While displacement often disrupts livelihoods and ecological relationships, limited research has explored how indigenous memory functions as entrepreneurial capital in post-displacement contexts. Adopting a qualitative multi-site case study design, the research draws on 29 semi-structured interviews, five focus group discussions, and five participatory memory-mapping sessions conducted across three Chakma settlements. Thematic analysis and process tracing were employed to examine how displacement triggered memory reconstruction, opportunity recognition, collective mobilisation, and enterprise formation. The findings reveal that memory-mapping served as a foundational mechanism for reconstructing ecological knowledge, enabling the revival of agroforestry cooperatives, women-led weaving enterprises, and forest-produce collectives. Enterprises were characterised by collective governance, income diversification, social inclusion, and culturally embedded sustainability practices. However, land tenure insecurity, regulatory constraints, and limited market access moderated enterprise scalability. The study contributes to indigenous entrepreneurship and sustainable development scholarship by conceptualising ecological memory as a dynamic innovation mechanism rather than a static cultural resource. It demonstrates how culturally embedded knowledge systems can transform displacement into structured, community-driven economic resilience within complex institutional environments.

Keywords: Indigenous Entrepreneurship, Memory-Mapping, Community-based Enterprise, Displacement and Resilience, Sustainable livelihoods

1. Introduction

Indigenous entrepreneurship is becoming a different paradigm of entrepreneurship research which not only questions the traditional models of the market, but also previews a cultural embeddedness, shared identity, and localised knowledge system. Initial conceptualisations stressed the necessity of the globally relevant framework, which was able to embody the socio-cultural underpinnings of indigenous enterprise which are unique to each case (Hindle and Lansdowne, 2005). The sphere of indigenous entrepreneurship has also been enlarged by the contemporary scholarship with systematic and bibliometric analyses illustrating that this area has become the object of a growing scholarly interest as a historical, marginalized, and resilient domain (Derani et al., 2023). Instead of considering entrepreneurship as a solitary economic endeavor, it is being defined in more and more socially enfranchised studies as a phenomenon that is entrenched in identity, place, and continuity. Initial views have indicated that indigenous innovation, enterprise and community well-being are intertwined and that context matters in entrepreneurial paths (Mika et al., 2017).

Displacement greatly affects livelihood systems, social cohesion and ecological relations in such a way that they bring about structural vulnerabilities which need to be rebuilt by adaptive means. The conceptualisation of entrepreneurship, in terms of adversity, has been taken as a mechanism of responding to shocks where communities manage to balance them and rearrange the economic systems (Shepherd and Williams, 2020). Marginality is a common experience of indigenous communities when linked to dominant economic structures, but marginality may also be used to create particular organisational tensions that determine entrepreneurial innovation (Fortin-Lefebvre and Baba, 2021). Indigenous entrepreneurship resilience views focus on cyclical renewal, relational views of the world and innovation that is based on the continuity of cultural heritage and not disruption (Kawharu et al., 2017). These views are especially important in situations of displacement, where ecological memory and the traditional governance forms can be used as resources of stabilisation when transitioning into a new socio-economic set-up.

Re-establishing a livelihood following displacement is often anchored on the re-instatement of economic action in place-based knowledge regimes. In another

research, entrepreneurship scholars have opined that rural and peripheral economies should be conceived in terms of their embeddedness in space, in which opportunity recognition is defined by geography, social relations, and local resource structures (Muñoz & Kimmitt, 2019). This is a part of resilience, as it connects local enterprise with the territorial identity and trans-local networks, which enhances adaptive capacity (Vlasov et al., 2018). Such re-embedding in the context of displacement can take the form of reinterpretation of indigenous ecological knowledge that will allow communities to rebuild productive systems in line with new environmental realities. This is where larger theoretical trends come into play that place entrepreneurship in fluid global environments in which crisis and disruption can trigger new economic governance structures (Zahra, 2021).

The systems of the indigenous ecological knowledge are vital in determining the paths towards sustainable development. New sustainability theories develop the importance of structural, systemic, and enabling changes that incorporate social fairness with environmental stewardship (Scoones et al., 2020). In this context, indigenous knowledge is of value in resource management as well as to other sustainability transition. New terms like digitainability emphasize the need to combine technological adaptation with ecological awareness in order to facilitate the sustainable development processes (Gupta et al., 2023). Nevertheless, sustainability in the indigenous entrepreneurship is usually internalised instead of externally imposed, which is based on the value systems of relationality and long-term stewardship. This is consistent with the changing debate on purpose-oriented businesses, in which companies are no longer judged solely based on their ability to make profits but also their social and environmental agendas (Cucino et al., 2025).

This relational viewpoint is further reinforced by community-based entrepreneurship that puts collective agency at the centre of formation of an enterprise. The indigenous businesses are often governed by cooperative systems of governance and joint leadership approaches that put social cohesion at the same level with economic success. These businesses represent the conflicts between conserving cultures and market interactions, and they have to navigate a complicated institutional environment and ensure that they remain legitimate in the community (Fortin-Lefebvre and Baba, 2021). Theoretical progress in indigenous entrepreneurship highlights the significance of conceptualizing enterprise as an inherent culturally engrained process influenced by resilience, innovation and historical legacy (Kawharu et al., 2017). These dynamics become heightened in the context of displacement as communities have to rebuild

economic systems without cutting off connections with inherited knowledge systems.

Though the scholarly interest has been increasing, there are still major gaps in comprehending how indigenous memory plays the role of entrepreneurial capital in the post-displacement context. Bibliometric reviews have shown that it is necessary to further engage in an empirical activity in elaborating process-based mechanisms that connect knowledge reconstruction with enterprise formation (Derani et al., 2023). Although the resilience and adversity frameworks can offer macro-level understanding, the number of studies that focus on the micro-level processes in which ecological memory is converted into opportunity recognition and collective mobilisation are fewer. In addition, despite the popularity of sustainability transformations in the policy discourse, there are still not enough empirical studies of indigenous-led enterprises adaptation in situations of displacement (Scoones et al., 2020). To overcome these gaps, a common lens of ecological memory, collective governance, recognition of opportunities and institutional constraints needs to be put into a sensible analytical construct.

The research addresses these gaps in theory and empirical evidence by looking at how the practice of memory-mapping in the Chakma community in Tripura can lead to the rebuilding of livelihoods after displacement. Positioning memory as entrepreneurial capital, the research makes its contribution to the current discussions in the field of indigenous entrepreneurship research and transfers the ideas of resilience and sustainability to the context of displacement. The analysis predicts the manner in which culturally entrenched knowledge systems, when harnessed together, produce enterprises that are economically responsive, socially accommodative and environmentally stewarding. In this sense, indigenous memory is no longer understood as a remnant of culture but as an innovative process and can convert misfortune into a well-organised enterprise based on the community.

2. Method

2.1 Research Design

The proposed study is based on the qualitative multi-site case study design to explore the role indigenous memory-mapping practices of the displaced Chakma communities in the establishment of sustainable community-based enterprises. Qualitative method is chosen to influence the lived experience, the transmission of ecological knowledge across the generations and the socially embedded entrepreneurial processes that cannot sufficiently be quantified using quantitative methods. The multi-site design allows gaining comparative understanding of settlements and enhances process tracing to a greater level of analytical power. Overall, the research design includes three Chakma settlements, which

allows having a structured cross-case comparison, yet being contextually sensitive.

2.2 Study Area and Context

The study was done in three Chakma settlements in Tripura that were displaced because of conflict, development interventions and alterations in forest regulation. These settlements can be seen as the environments where livelihood systems were broken and then restored in a communal effort. The Chakma people have ancient practices of environmental knowledge, rotating arable practices (jhum), weaving and forest resource management. These knowledge systems were remembered and replicated to new settlement situations after being displaced. The chosen locations indicate the practice of agroforestry, weaving businesses, and forest-product groups, so they are suitable locations to investigate the issue of memory-based entrepreneurial change.

2.3 Sampling Strategy

2.3.1 Purposive Sampling

Participants who have direct experience in displacement, ecological memory reconstruction, and enterprise participation were chosen with the help of purposive sampling. Actors in the area who were actively involved in agroforestry cooperatives, weaving organizations, forest-produce collectives and local leadership organizations were specifically chosen so that the information would be deep and relevant. The ultimate sample was a total of 29 subjects that were spread out in the three settlements representing around 9-10 subjects per area.

2.3.2 Snowball Sampling

Purposive selection was supplemented by snowball sampling, which helped in identifying other participants who were referred to us, especially the elders and known knowledge custodians. This was important in accessing people with expert knowledge on traditional land-use systems and intergenerational knowledge transfer.

2.3.3 Participant Categories

The 29 respondents were a good representation of the various roles held by the members of the community such as the elders, weaving practitioners, agro forestry members, forest-produce participants and cooperative leaders. Participants of both sexes were used and the age of participants was widely distributed among adult and elderly members of the community. This variety also guaranteed the representation on the basis of gender, generational knowledge holders, and enterprise functions, which enhanced the ability of the study to track the association between memory reconstruction and collective enterprise formation.

2.4 Data Collection Methods

2.4.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

The number of semi-structured interviews that were carried out in the three settlements was 29. The interviews took place in March/April 2025 with a month time span in a sequential chronological arrangement. All the interviews examined the experiences of displacement, memories of the previous land-use systems, the identification of opportunities, the development of enterprises, and the problems of the institution. The semi-structured form also enabled the participants to describe in detail their experiences and allowed covering of thematic areas that were constant across cases.

2.4.2 Focus Group Discussions

There were five focus group discussions (FGDs) within the study sites. The FGDs consisted of six to eight participants and were devoted to the collective memory reconstruction process, cooperative organisation process, and shared enterprise decision-making processes. The group approach allowed to observe the process of consensus-building, dialogue across generations and a joint reflection on livelihood adaptation strategies.

2.4.3 Participatory Memory-Mapping Documentation

There were five participatory memory-Mapping sessions, and there was at least a single session within each settlement. In these meetings, the community members would re-establish the earlier land-use patterns, locate the traditional cultivation areas, the forest areas, the sources of water and the soil categories. The following mapping exercises recorded the spatial organisation of ecological memory and the way in which this knowledge was used in present enterprise initiatives. Liaisons between rebuilt land-use knowledge and modern agro forestry, weaving and forest-based enterprises were also documented in the sessions.

2.4.4 Policy and Institutional Review

Besides primary data, review of land tenure policies, forest policies, cooperative structures and market access terms was also undertaken. This contextual review allowed developing a perception about structural conditions in terms of enterprise sustainability and scalability.

2.5 Data Analysis Procedure

2.5.1 Thematic Coding

Thematic analysis was employed as a systemic way of coding all the 29 interview transcripts, FGD records and memory-mapping documentation. The presence of common patterns with respect to ecological memory, opportunity recognition, collective mobilisation, enterprise development, sustainability practices and institutional challenges were identified in the first open-coding process. Codes were repeatedly revised and categorised into general

analytical themes in accordance with the research questions of the study.

2.5.2 Cross-Site Comparison

To determine the common processes and those context-specific variations, cross-site comparison was done among the three settlements. The equal number of participants per site allowed comparison to be organized without losing the context of situations. This method increased the strength of critical interpretation.

2.5.3 Mechanism Mapping (Displacement → Memory Reconstruction → Opportunity Recognition → Enterprise Formation)

It was a process-tracing model in which the chain between the experiences of displacement and the sustainable enterprise results were mapped. Through combination of the interview narratives, FGD discussions and documentation of memory mapping, the study followed the process of displacement leading to memory reconstruction which enabled identification of opportunities, mobilisation and formation of an enterprise.

3. Results

Thematic analysis of the 29 interviews, five focus group discussions, and five participatory memory-Mapping sessions developed six thematic areas that in combination help to describe how the displacement became turned into sustainable enterprise development. The results are as given below and in a order that represents the processual mechanism that was found during the analysis.

3.1 Memory-Mapping as Ecological Knowledge Reconstruction

This analysis has shown that a memory-mapping was a basic process that aided in the reconstruction of ecological knowledge after displacement. In all the three settlements, respondents explained that elders and long-time inhabitants together remembered previous land-use systems, such as changing cultivation periods (jhum), bamboo belts, soil types, forest demarcations, and the location of water. These memories were not just the recollections of nostalgia but the organization of reinterpretation of the ecological knowledge concerning the new settlement conditions. The intergenerational dialogue was facilitated by participatory mapping sessions whereby the older knowledge custodians were able to pass this memory of space and environment to the younger generation. The re-created ecological memory was used as a guideline when restoring livelihood patterns. Instead of directly copying previous systems, communities applied the practices that they remembered selectively to new ecological and regulatory circumstances to create memory as a resource to action. As one elder explained, "We could not bring our old land here, but we remembered how

we used to grow and manage the forest, so we followed that knowledge.

3.2 Opportunity Recognition through Indigenous Knowledge

These results show that the opportunity was recognized in the displaced settlements, which was possible because of the reconstructed ecological memory. The traditional knowledge was not just symbolic but it was used to make tangible entrepreneurial choices. The memories of practices were always associated with the identification of the viable livelihood activities that fit the local environmental conditions among the participants. Weaving enterprises became the primary livelihood strategy in one of the settlements, whereas in the other, more agroforestry initiatives were more eminent, which indicates disparity in ecological resources and skill specialisation in sites.

3.2.1 Agroforestry Cooperatives

Memory reconstruction was closely connected with the formation of agroforestry cooperatives in the settlements where the traditionally practised activities were bamboo cultivation and mixed cropping. The participants reported remembering rotational farming methods and bamboo zone agro forestry that were later restructured into agro forestry models. The knowledge of soil classification and the conventional cropping mixtures was modified to bring about stability in yield and environmental sustainability. These cooperatives were in no way personal initiatives, but rather communal reactions to the effect of mutual ecological knowledge. The revival of bamboo-based systems and mixed cropping patterns give an idea of how memory was used as entrepreneurial capital, directing the agricultural diversification.

3.2.2 Women-Led Weaving Enterprises

The paper has also determined that indigenous memory was in the forefront as a way of rekindling weaving businesses especially among women. Participants reported the recollection of ancestral weaving patterns, dye methods and production villages. In the collective discussions, the group organization enabled women to change remembered skills into organized weaving enterprises. These endeavours usually came out as an organised group as opposed to being individual producers showing the assimilation of cultural continuity and economic necessity. The rebirth of weaving practices shows how the intangible cultural memory was transformed into a market-driven livelihood approach and strengthened identity and gendered knowledge systems.

3.2.3 Forest-Produce Collectives

In the settlements near forests areas, memory of the regulated harvesting, and forest stewardship,

contributed to the development of the forest-produce collectives. Respondents recollected the traditional rules that concerned seasonal harvesting, sharing of resources and respecting of boundaries. Remedied practices were rearranged into collaborative forest-product projects to market collectively and produce extraction through a limited approach. The restructuring of conventional

stewardship norms into formal enterprise arrangements proves the way that ecological memory constituted the resource governance and business interaction at the same time. Table 1 shows the type and the connection of enterprises to the reconstructed memory practices in settlements.

1. Table 1. Enterprise forms and associated memory-based practices across the three settlements

Settlement	Dominant Enterprise	Governance Structure	Memory Practice Applied	Sustainability Feature
Settlement A	Agroforestry Cooperative	Community Cooperative	Bamboo zone recall, crop rotation	Mixed cropping system
Settlement B	Women-Led Weaving	Women's Collective	Traditional motifs, dye knowledge	Local production networks
Settlement C	Forest-Produce Collective	Community Group	Seasonal harvesting norms	Regulated extraction

The distribution of enterprise participation across the three settlements is presented in Figure 1.

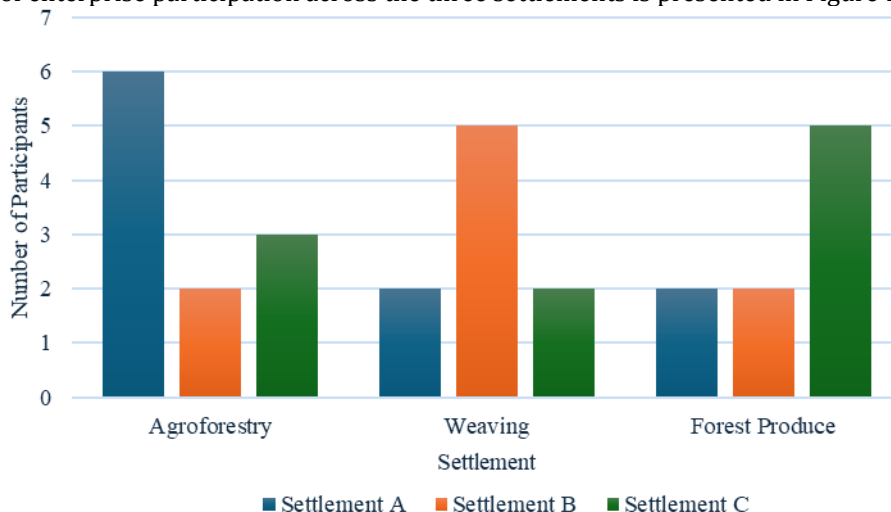


Figure 1. Distribution of enterprise participation across settlements

3.3 Collective Mobilization and Governance Structures

There was the mobilisation of the collective which turned out to be prominent in all the three settlements. Enterprise development was seldom explained as a personal endeavor and instead, it was presented as a collective one based on the experience of displacement and collective memory. One of the members remarked, "Nobody can begin something in isolation. We talked and made the decisions on what to grow and how to sell. The discussions in focus groups indicated that decision making was structured and the elders, women and cooperative leaders participated in enterprise planning. The informal leadership systems were transformed into organised cooperatives and groups of enterprises. The common governance mechanisms were to have shared responsibilities, rotational leadership and consensus based decisions. The power of collective

organisation implies that social capital and community cohesion were important mediating variables between memory reconstruction and enterprise formation. Collective mobilization was therefore not just a social process but also a facilitating institutional mechanism of sustainable entrepreneurship.

3.4 Economic Outcomes

The analysis shows that the businesses that arose as a result of memory-based reconstruction helped in the diversification of income and resiliency of livelihood. The participants reported a change towards being reliant on supplementary wage labour or erratic farming methods to diversified revenues such as agroforestry produce, woven goods and forest-produce sales. The diversification minimized seasonal variation and the market shocks. Although there was a disparity in income growth in the sites, the steady trend was stabilisation as opposed to rapid accumulation. The recovery of the economy

through the enhancement in the security of households, diminished dependence on foreign

assistance, and enhancement of the system in sharing income were described as economic resilience. Therefore, memory-based businesses helped in a slow yet a steady earnings restoration after relocation.

3.5 Social Outcomes

In addition to the economic gains, the results show serious social consequences especially in terms of inclusion and female leadership. Enterprises that were headed by women also enabled women to engage in economic decision making in a structured way. Respondents reported that they gained greater confidence, solidarity, and respect to women contributions in the community governance systems. Social cohesion was also enhanced further during intergenerational collaboration when the elders shared their knowledge with the younger generation as it became relevant to modern enterprise settings. The formation of enterprises was collective and hence the shared responsibility and enhanced community identity. These societal impacts show that sustainable entrepreneurship here was not only about economic benefit but it was also related to empowerment and inclusion.

3.6 Environmental Sustainability Practices

Environmental sustainability became an intrinsic aspect of enterprise formation as opposed to a predetermined goal that is imposed externally. Despite the fact that principles of sustainability could be traced in all three settlements, the precise practices were different according to the type of enterprise and the ecological situation in that place. Restored memory of crop rotation, soil management, season harvesting, and respect of forest boundaries were used as enterprise strategies. Agroforestry cooperatives considered the mixed-cropping systems to be in accordance with the remembered ecological cycles, and the forest-produce groups used the traditional harvesting norms to avoid the loss of resources. Adjustment of native indigenous stewardship principles towards current enterprise models implies that sustainability was not applied externally but internally embedded. The results show that ecological memory led to the development of environmentally responsible production systems, which balanced the needs to livelihood and conservation. Table 2 presents the multidimensional outcomes that arise due to enterprise development based on memory.

Table 2. Economic, social, and environmental outcomes of community-based enterprises

Outcome Dimension	Observed Impact	Illustrative Evidence
Economic	Income diversification and stabilisation	Reduced reliance on wage labour
Economic	Strengthened cooperative income-sharing	Collective marketing initiatives
Social	Increased women’s leadership	Women-led weaving groups
Social	Enhanced community cohesion	Intergenerational collaboration
Environmental	Adoption of crop rotation	Mixed agroforestry systems
Environmental	Regulated forest extraction	Seasonal harvesting norms

The integrated relationship between ecological memory, collective governance, and multidimensional sustainability outcomes is illustrated in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Integrated model of ecological memory, collective governance, and sustainable community-based enterprise outcomes

3.7 Institutional Constraints

Regardless of positive outcomes, institutional constraints in the context of scalability of enterprises

were constantly detected among the participants. Insecurity in tenure of land constrained long term agricultural planning especially in agro forestry projects. One of the participants commented, that the land documents are not entirely safe even when we wish to spread our farming. Forest regulations had limitations to access to resources and commercialisation of forest products. Also access to the markets and transport infrastructure were

on long-term enterprise growth was further established as review of land tenure and forest governance policies established that regulatory ambiguities and access barriers had a structural impact on the expansion of large-term enterprises, supplementing the findings of institutional barriers revealed in participant narratives. Table 3 summarises the key institutional constraints which moderate enterprise scalability.

limited and this limited expansion to other markets outside the local markets. Institutional constraints

Table 3. Institutional constraints affecting the scalability of memory-driven enterprises

Constraint Type	Affected Enterprise	Impact Level	Structural Source
Land Tenure Insecurity	Agroforestry	High	Incomplete land documentation
Forest Access Restrictions	Forest Produce	High	Forest governance regulations
Market Access Limitation	Weaving & Agroforestry	Moderate	Limited transport infrastructure
Capital Constraints	All enterprises	Moderate	Limited financial inclusion

While collective organisation mitigated some risks, structural barriers remained significant. The overall processual mechanism linking displacement to sustainable enterprise outcomes is illustrated in Figure 3.

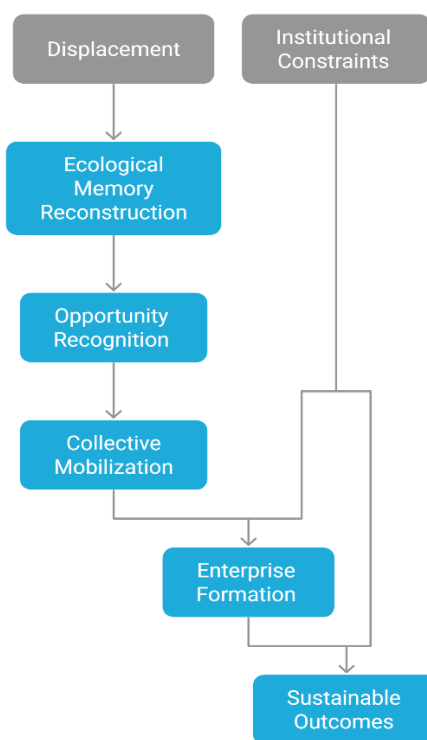


Figure 3. Processual mechanism linking displacement, memory reconstruction, collective mobilisation, and sustainable enterprise outcomes

These results are an indication that although the formation of enterprises was supported by indigenous memory and the mobilisation of the people in groups, institutional environments dampened growth possibilities. Sustainable enterprise development consequently fulfills in a dynamic relationship between community innovation and regulatory arrangements.

The results of this research make memory-Mapping an innovation mechanism by which the displaced communities of Chakma people re-build ecological knowledge and convert it into organization of enterprise development. Instead of presenting indigenous memory as a fixed cultural heritage, it implies that memory is dynamic in the process of shaping entrepreneurship and resilient livelihood approaches. This is in line with the recent literature that focuses on the idea that indigenous entrepreneurship is determined by context-dependent factors, mechanisms and socio-cultural

4. Discussion

backgrounds that are distinct of the traditional models (based on market forces) (AlMehrzzi et al., 2024). The reinterpretation of inherited knowledge as depicted by reconstruction of land-use systems, soil classification practices and knowledge of rotational cultivation is an example of how innovation can be developed through a process of displacement. These processes are indicative of larger trends in the world where native entrepreneurial ecosystems function within institutionally based on culture and historically situated institutional settings (Mika et al., 2024).

The article also shows that the indigenous memory is an entrepreneurial capital. Ecological knowledge, weaving traditions, and forest stewardship norms are not only figurative resources but productive and allow recognizing opportunities and creating enterprises. This is echoed by the fact that indigenous entrepreneurship makes use of the collective identity, social cohesion, and culturally transmitted knowledge systems as a strategic resource (Padilla-Meléndez et al., 2022). The results also extend the argument that the indigenous knowledge systems have a direct impact on the entrepreneurial diversification within the rural setting, in specific cases when they are associated with cultural practices and the localised economic activity (Cheteni and Umejese, 2024). In the current research, memory-based knowledge has been a stabilising factor during a situation of institutional uncertainty, which supports the position of knowledge as a continuity of culture as well as economic strategy. This resonates with more general theses that indigenous knowledge may be a means of achieving sustainable development through integrating economic programs into culturally authoritative contexts (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2025).

The study, in its contribution to the theory of sustainable entrepreneurship, builds on the available literature by explaining how sustainability can be internalised as opposed to being imposed in a culture. The studies on sustainable entrepreneurship start paying more and more attention to the inclusion of environmental responsibility into the opportunity recognition (Abbas and Bulut, 2024). The results indicate that crop rotation, controlled harvesting and mixed agro forestry practices were not formulated as adoption strategies due to compliance, but they were recollected ecological norms that were being reactivated in new settlement situations. This aligns with the previous systematic reviews that have found sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship to be frequently a result of context-specific knowledge systems and not necessarily technological innovation (Ali, 2021). The integration of sustainability among indigenous practices also indicates the emergent scholarship that highlights how the geographic and socio-cultural context influences the entrepreneurial performance of indigenous people (Ensign, 2023). Therefore, Chakma case makes a contribution to

theoretical discussions by showing how the displacement may trigger culturally based sustainable enterprise instead of undermining the traditional ecological practice.

The overall strength of collective mobilisation of the findings supports the conceptualisation of community-based enterprise as one of the potential models that may be implemented in the post-displacement economic reconstruction. The formation of enterprises in the examined settlements did not occur in individualistic ways, but rather it was structured in the form of cooperation, joint leadership, as well as the use of consensus-based decision-making. This group orientation coincides with the literature that the development of indigenous entrepreneurial education and ecosystem is largely based on the involvement of communities and the distribution of networks at the community level (Maritz and Foley, 2018). Community-based entrepreneurship is a process that has been found to support the development of the economy in both localised and social cohesion (Ndjama& Westhuizen, 2024). The current research contributes to these arguments by demonstrating that the relationship between memory reconstruction and the sustainability of an enterprise was mediated by collective mobilisation. Instead of viewing the act of entrepreneurship as an individual action, it has been argued that the role of community cohesion is a structural facilitator of economic resilience.

Policy and institutional environment, however, are some of the most important moderating variables to the scalability of enterprises. The results indicate that the tenure insecurity of land, forest policies, and access to the market inhibit the growth of memory-based businesses. The agenda of policy-oriented scholarship focuses on the idea that the economic development of indigenous communities relies on institutional frameworks that are supportive and access to entrepreneurial ecosystems (McDonald, 2019). Access to capital and financial inclusion are also critical to continuing the growth of indigenous enterprises especially in marginalised environments (De Gruyter et al., 2025). Although the Chakma communities were resilient and innovative, it was constrained by the structural barriers of the transformative nature of their efforts. Such dynamics are indicative of the larger-scale trends that are found in systematic reviews of indigenous entrepreneurship, where contextualised institutional environments have a firm influence on the outcome of entrepreneurship (Croce, 2017). It has been suggested to integrate culturally based enterprise planning tools as one of the avenues of reinforcing the indigenous economic programs and preserving the traditional knowledge systems (Maclean et al., 2024). Moreover, the recent academic literature emphasizes the necessity of actively maintaining the concepts of the indigenous

knowledge systems in the structures of contemporary development in order to guarantee their sustainable long-term performance (Yerramilli, 2025).

In sum, the paper is a contribution to new research topics on indigenous entrepreneurship and sustainable development since it demonstrates that displacement does not always lead to the loss of ecological memory but may trigger it as a strategic economic resource. The case of Chakma shows that knowledge institutionalised in cultures, when mobilised, have the potential to produce businesses that are economical, socially inclusive, and sustainable to the environment. Concurrently, the research highlights the remaining relevance of policy congruency and institutional aid to empower indigenous people to take their initiatives to an even greater level than subsistence stabilisation. Placing the memory-mapping in the current research of indigenous entrepreneurship, the results provide a subtle insight into the role of traditional knowledge systems as sources of innovation in displacement and structural constraint.

5. Conclusion

This paper shows that the indigenous memory can act as a strategic type of entrepreneurial capital when faced with the situation of displacement. The Chakma people through participatory memory-mapping and the collective reconstruction of knowledge, turned the ecological memory into an organized development of the enterprise. Instead of weakening the customary practices, displacement initiated reinterpretation and adaptation processes whereby agroforestry, weaving and forest-related projects have become a possibility in the livelihoods of the people. These are not individualistic businesses, but collectively structured businesses based on joint government, social cohesion and the sharing of knowledge across generations. The findings extend the indigenous entrepreneurship theory in that memory is a dynamic innovation of the mechanism, which connects cultural continuity to an adaptive economic change. The cultural internalisation of sustainability in these businesses was manifested in recovered ecological standards that proved that it is possible to come up with environmentally responsible practices by organically developing the local traditions of stewardship. Meanwhile, the paper highlights the moderating nature of institutional settings. There was insecurity of tenure to land, regulation barriers, and lack of access to markets which limited the growth of enterprises demonstrating the value of policy congruence and facilitative governance structures. The study can be used to enhance the existing arguments on resilience, sustainable entrepreneurship, and community-based development by embedding displacement into a processual framework of memory construction,

opportunity identification, and mobilisation. It confirms that when organised collectively, the indigenous knowledge systems have the potential to create economically sustainable, socially inclusive and ecologically sustainable businesses. Future studies can expand the studies even further into comparing the contexts of displacement and institutional interventions that enhance the ability of the culturally embedded entrepreneurial ecosystems to be scalable.

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