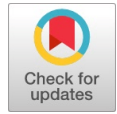


Role of 'Unexplored Bastar' in Strengthening the Socioeconomic Status of Tribal Communities: A Case Study Approach

Rajkumar Das, Vivek Nema



Abstract: A tribal community, an indigenous or aboriginal group, consists of people with common ancestry, cultural heritage, and often traditional lifestyles. These communities are distinguished by their unique social, linguistic, and cultural practices, setting them apart from mainstream society. Tribes typically have social structures, governance, and belief systems passed down through generations. In India, the socioeconomic status of tribal communities is influenced by historical marginalisation, geographic isolation, and contemporary challenges. These groups have historically faced discrimination, forced displacement, and exploitation, leading to a persistent socioeconomic gap. Their struggles are exacerbated by limited access to quality education, inadequate healthcare, and scarce employment opportunities. Traditional livelihoods, often tied to agriculture and forest-based activities, are becoming increasingly unsustainable due to environmental changes and modernisation. Unexplored Bastar is a travel startup based on a social entrepreneurship model in Bastar, Chhattisgarh. It focuses on sustainable tourism through a community-based approach, promoting the natural and historical sites of Bastar, as well as its rich tribal culture, both within India and internationally. Currently, Unexplored Bastar positively impacts the lives of over 200 tribal youth in Bastar. APS has trained around 240 local tribal individuals in the tourism and hospitality sector to improve their employment prospects, including hosting tourists in their homes, serving as local guides, and selling handicrafts to visitors. These local communities are the primary service providers for Unexplored Bastar, which implements various grassroots innovations. They organize themselves into Self Help Groups (SHGs) in Chitrakote, Tirtha, Dantewada, Palnaar, Phoolpad, Dholkal, and Barsoor. Consequently, Unexplored Bastar has created numerous sustainable employment opportunities for local tribal youth. This research paper examines the socioeconomic implications of the 'Unexplored Bastar' on the tribal community by analysing various activities and initiatives undertaken by the aforementioned independent organisation. Additionally, this case study will shed light on the future challenges and opportunities for growth and fostering tribal communities in various regions.

Keywords: Tribal Community, Socioeconomic Development, Unexplored Bastar, Eco-Tourism.

Abbreviations:

APS: Arya Prerna Samiti
SHGs: Self-Help Groups

TECA: Tourism, Environment, Culture Awareness
MGNREGA: Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act

I. INTRODUCTION

In India, Adivasis, or tribal communities, are recognized as the original inhabitants, significantly impacting the country's history. Known for their harmonious relationship with nature, Adivasis maintain a strong bond with their land and forests. Originally structured around different occupations, these communities later experienced the rise of chiefs or Pradhans and the formation of monarchies, while their traditional tribal institutions remained intact. These communities are characterized by their distinct social, linguistic, and cultural practices that set them apart from the mainstream society in which they live. They typically have their own social structures, governance systems, and belief systems passed down through generations. Mostly, Indian tribes live in forest areas close to nature. It provides them with their basic needs for survival and livelihood. Food, Water, Wood, Shelter, and most importantly, medicinal plants; therefore, in return, they protect their forest and surroundings for a sustainable future and co-living. (Sonowal, C., 2008) [1] On the one hand, they enjoy the company of nature and natural places, but from the perspective of a growing world, there are several challenges faced by the tribal people in their lives. Tribal societies face sociocultural and economic difficulties due to their exclusion from the dominant culture, development paradigm, infrastructure, education, and health facilities. (Bala, D. A., 2018) [2] Dr. B.R. Ambedkar drafted the Indian Constitution to create an egalitarian society based on equality, liberty, and fraternity. He fought for the emancipation and upliftment of downtrodden sections, including tribals, by providing safeguards, rights, and legal provisions. However, many provisions have failed to deliver welfare to tribals, with neoliberal policies exploiting natural resources without considering their impact on tribal livelihoods. However, the modern initiatives of a few startups, in collaboration with local tribes and self-help groups, have shown some rays of hope for fostering and strengthening these tribal societies, their livelihoods, and their surrounding environments. Humans have an intrinsic need to travel, driven by a primal urge to move, explore, and discover the unknown. (Dandge, D. K., 2022) [3].

The COVID-19 pandemic has starkly highlighted the depth of this drive, revealing its fundamental place in human nature. As travel for leisure becomes increasingly popular and the impacts of climate change intensify, it is essential to

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examine whether traditional modes of travel can remain sustainable. Additionally, what are the possibilities for locals to make the travel process smoother, allowing travellers to experience the essence of the sites by being immersed in the local culture, food, and traditions? In response to the need for initiatives in the tourism sector, groups like Unexplored Bastar emerged positively yet humbly. With a decade of experience in the corporate world and recognition from esteemed platforms such as TEDx, the Indian Responsible Tourism Award, and the Government of India and Ministry of Tourism, Jeet Singh Arya has solidified his position as a fervent advocate for preserving indigenous cultures. He advocates conserving the environment and generating local livelihoods in the tourism sector. His leadership style reflects a dedication to positively impacting the region and uplifting the lives of the tribal communities. Unexplored Bastar, a travel startup from Bastar, Chhattisgarh, focuses on sustainable tourism through a community-based approach. Initially started as a Facebook page in 2011, it evolved into a Tourism Promotion Agency and travel organization in 2016 when co-founder Jeet Singh Arya left his corporate job to work at the grassroots level. To promote tourism in Bastar by engaging the local tribal community, Unexplored Bastar diligently highlights the region's natural and historical sites, as well as its rich tribal culture, reaching audiences both within India and internationally. It started offering exclusively customized Bastar tour packages through social media infusion. The active participation of various stakeholders in these tours, categorised under Bastar Eco Tours, Bastar Adventure Tours, Bastar Leisure Tours, Bastar Backpack Tours, and Bastar Ethno Tours or Bastar Cultural Tours, enabled the successful implementation of the proposed activities. Meanwhile, the group also started organizing several other promotional events with the support of the Chhattisgarh Tourism Board, the District Administration of Bastar and Dantewada, and other local partners instead of changing the perception of the visitors who think of Bastar as a conflict zone. The entire approach is characterised by the large-scale involvement of local tribal people from Bastar, which generates their livelihoods. Presently, Unexplored Bastar is impacting the lives of many tribal families and youth of Bastar, which will be examined in the upcoming points of the paper. The group has committed to changing the tourism scenario in the tribal region of Bastar, working tirelessly to provide visitors facilities and change people's behavioural traits towards the ecosystem. The group successfully conserved Bastar's cultural and biodiversity heritage through responsible tourism practices. (Unexplored Baster)

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- Dr Archana Rani and Dr Himanshu Agarwal (2019) in their research work, "Tribes in India: Their Socioeconomic Development Through Art," explore the potential for economic development through tribal art, promoting traditional knowledge systems and supporting tribal livelihoods. The paper highlights the significance of tribal art in the evolution of modern art, with artists drawing inspiration from tribal rhythm, colour composition, dance movement, and more. [4] It emphasizes the importance of preserving tribal art through recognition of artists, cultural exchanges, exhibitions, and documentation. The authors aim to
- explore the role of tribal arts as a means of livelihood and preservation of indigenous culture and propose strategies for protecting and integrating tribes for their overall development.
- Dr Anju Bala (2018), in her study Tribes in India: The Regional Analysis, indicates that tribes in India face several challenges, including low literacy rates, land alienation, dependence on forests for livelihood, alcoholism, poverty, and fear of extinction. These issues are attributed to inadequate facilities, lack of recognition of tribal languages, exploitation by moneylenders, and an unsatisfactory state of land records. The study also emphasizes the need for improved infrastructure, protection against land alienation, and special policies for vulnerable tribal groups to address these challenges.
- C.J. Sonowal (2017), in the study Indian Tribes and Issue of Social Inclusion and Exclusion, discusses the social inclusion and exclusion of tribal communities in India. It argues that tribal societies have experienced both inclusion into and exclusion from the country's dominant culture and development paradigm. The text defines social inclusion and exclusion and discusses how these concepts have affected tribal communities. They have also been excluded from infrastructure, education, and health facilities, which has made it difficult for them to compete. The consequences of inclusion and exclusion have been sociocultural and economic. Tribal groups have lost traditional entities and identities. Economically, they have lost land and forest resources due to state policies. Inclusion has also led to migration, cultural maladjustment and exploitation of tribal people. The text argues that tribal societies have begun asserting their distinct identities after experiencing the negative consequences of assimilation. While being inclusive economically, they selectively exclude themselves to preserve their culture and identities.
- Virginius Xaxa (2005), in their study Politics of Language, Religion, and Identity: Tribes in India, says that Assertions of tribal identity have increased in recent decades, driven by the emergence of a tribal middle class. [5]. These assertions relate to land, forest rights, language, culture, and autonomy issues. Additionally, there are growing socioeconomic disparities within tribes due to land alienation, government policies, and limited access to education. However, tribal solidarity has come under strain due to these divisions.
- J.P. Arles, in their study The Economic and Social Promotion of the Scheduled Castes and Tribes in India, discusses that Members of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in India, totalling around 95 million people, face significant economic inequality and lack of opportunities in education, employment, and income. They have lower literacy rates, lower education and vocational training levels, and are concentrated in lower-paying agricultural jobs. They also face high unemployment and underemployment [6]. The Indian government has implemented policies to promote equality of opportunity for these groups through



reservations in education and government jobs, community development programs, land redistribution, and minimum wage laws. However, these policies have had limited success due to factors such as inadequate implementation, insufficient resources, poor program design, and institutional and social barriers. Social obstacles stem from the conflict between the traditional social order based on castes and the constitutional goal of equality. This makes it difficult for policies aimed at equality to be accepted and implemented effectively. International labour standards and conventions ratified by India aim to ensure equal opportunity in employment through legislation, education programs, and the involvement of employers' and workers' organizations. However, more needs to be done, especially in expanding education programs. While some progress has been made, significant economic inequality and lack of opportunities persist for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in India.

- Dr. Kautik N. Dandge (2022), in his research work, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's thoughts on the Tribal. In his text, Ambedkar discusses the history and situation of tribal communities and lower castes in India. He argues that the Tribal and depressed classes suffer from a lack of education and economic opportunities compared to the advanced castes. Ambedkar criticises the advanced courses for not doing enough to help. The government classifies different communities as scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, backwards classes, and minorities. These groups have disparities in education levels. Ambedkar cites constitutional provisions related to scheduled tribes, tribal areas, and the promotion of education and economic interests in backward communities.
- D. Harshavardhan (2017), in his study Deciphering Dr B.R. Ambedkar's Views on Tribal Development: Retrospect and Prospect, discusses Dr B.R. Ambedkar's views on tribal development and how his vision has not been fully realized. He included various provisions in the Indian constitution to promote tribal welfare, development, and rights, including exceptional representation, reservation policies, and scheduled area administration. However, tribal development plans and policies have largely failed to improve the socioeconomic conditions of tribes due to a lack of proper implementation and a limited understanding of tribal culture and diversity [7]. Tribal communities continue to face issues like poverty, illiteracy, lack of basic amenities, high infant and child mortality rates, and unemployment. They are still socially excluded and discriminated against. The text argues that Dr Ambedkar's vision for tribal progress will only be achieved if his constitutional provisions are correctly implemented and future policies are framed with a comprehensive knowledge of tribal communities and a focus on empowering them through education, health, and employment opportunities.

III. OBJECTIVES

- A. To understand the role of the Unexplored Bastar group in the socioeconomic development of tribals in the Bastar region.

- B. To evaluate eco-tourism initiatives and their impact on local groups.
- C. To look into the experience shifts of tourists after the initiatives of eco-tourism.
- D. To explore the benefits of an environmental perspective through an eco-tourism initiative.

IV. METHODOLOGY

This work will primarily employ qualitative methods to gather facts and information about the group and its impact on tribal life. Quantitative methods will be used to present data and figures in numerical form.

We have incorporated a literature review method for collecting and analysing both online and offline data. The website of the Unexplored Bastar group, as well as other essential vlog posts, news websites, and district administration websites, were utilised, along with some hard copies of brochures. Additionally, interviews with the group's key members and responses from clients and tourists were conducted to gather in-depth data and reviews about the initiative.

A. Overview of Unexplored Bastar

Unexplored Bastar's initiatives practically embody Dr. Ambedkar's vision for the development of tribal communities. By promoting liberty, equality, and fraternity, providing modern education and skills, and creating sustainable livelihoods, the organization not only empowers tribal communities but also integrates them into the broader socioeconomic framework. According to the facts and figures gathered by various study methods, here are a few facts about the Unexplored Bastar group that align with Dr Ambedkar's view on tribal development. There are several working groups under the Unexplored Bastar group. Some self-help groups were established with the assistance of the local gram panchayat, district administration, and a supporting body named Arya Prerna Samiti (APS), as well as the unexplored Bastar region. Most of the community's members are from the Mahra and Muriya tribes. When not working at their primary job, they enjoy cooking or stitching leaf bowls (dona pattal). In addition, they enjoy various other activities, including modelling, taking pictures, watching cricket and Photography [8].

Unexplored Bastar has facilitated the formation of over 30 Self-Help Groups (SHGs) across various locations in Bastar, including Chitrakote, Tirtha, Dantewada, Palnaar, Phoolpad, Dholkal, and Barsoor. These SHGs are integral to implementing grassroots innovations and community-based tourism initiatives. Additionally, the organization has established more than 25 homestays and provides authentic and immersive tourist experiences while generating income for the local tribal hosts. Dr. Ambedkar advocated for uplifting vulnerable sections of society through education, modernization, and creating opportunities that would enable them to contribute meaningfully to the reconstruction of society. Thus, we can observe that the group has successfully implemented its vision to uplift the community through SHGs. These groups encourage collective action, mutual support, and the sharing of resources, fostering



a sense of unity and solidarity among tribal members. Continuing to follow the holistic view of Dr Ambedkar, Unexplored Bastar has directly and indirectly involved over 3,000 individuals, with a gender distribution of 70% male and 30% female. This significant involvement highlights the organization's impact on employment and income generation within the tribal communities. The emphasis on involving local youth, both male and female, in various tourism-related activities demonstrates a commitment to inclusive and equitable development. Unexplored Bastar promotes liberty by empowering tribal communities to take charge of their economic and social futures. The economic impact of Unexplored Bastar's initiatives is substantial. For the financial year 2023-24, the Tirtha campsite alone hosted over 1,100 clients, generating earnings of more than ₹ 20 lakh from services such as boat rides, trekking, and homestays. The total revenues for other campsites and people involved directly and indirectly in these activities amount to over one crore rupees. This influx of income has significantly improved the socioeconomic status of the tribal communities, providing them with sustainable livelihoods and reducing their reliance on traditional, often unsustainable, forms of income. By providing time-to-time training and opportunities in the tourism and hospitality sectors, the organization helps individuals achieve financial independence and self-reliance. This empowerment fosters a sense of freedom and self-worth among the tribal population. By ensuring that both men and women from tribal communities benefit from their initiatives, with a gender distribution of 70% male and 30% female members, the organisation actively involves women in various economic activities, promoting gender equality and providing them with opportunities to contribute to their families and communities. The sense of fraternity is strengthened through the formation of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and community-based tourism initiatives. Unexplored Bastar plans to scale its venture by promoting other remote areas in the heartland of Odisha and the North Eastern states of India. This expansion will further enhance the socioeconomic status of tribal communities in these regions, replicating the successful model implemented in Bastar. By focusing on sustainable tourism, cultural preservation, and eco-friendly practices, Unexplored Bastar aims to create a positive and lasting impact on the lives of Indigenous communities across India. The emphasis on cultural preservation and community-based development ensures that the benefits of growth are inclusive and equitable, aligning perfectly with Dr Ambedkar's social philosophy.

Total Self-Help Group (SHG)	30+
Total Homestays	25+
Total locations	35+
Total People Directly and Indirectly Involved	3000+
Gender Distribution	70% Male, 30% Female
Number of client hosts in Tirtha campsite for FY 2023-24	1100+
Total Earnings for Other Campsites and People Directly and Indirectly Involved	1Cr+
Earnings	20L+ (including boat services, trekking, homestays, etc.)

B. Initiatives by Unexplored Bastar

i. Role of Unexplored Bastar in further linkages and Marketing, Capacity Building

Unexplored Bastar took the most vital step towards training the individuals to conserve and promote the heritage through them and by them. For this, they organised a 120-hour training program known as Community Tourism Training (सामुदायिक पर्यटन प्रशिक्षण) for individuals, with the support of APS and the District Administration of Bastar, under the Amcho Bastar Tourism initiative. This involved a well-planned module covering personality development, hospitality management, personal finance, sustainable eco-tourism, and a minimalist lifestyle, among other topics. Unexplored Bastar acts as a guiding light for the community, whether it be finding solutions for the enhancement of the management facilities at the campsite or becoming a point of contact with the government authorities whenever required [9].

ii. Startup Incubation

Unexplored Bastar started as a travel startup in 2016 when the startup culture was nascent. When tourism in Chhattisgarh state was at one of its second-rate stages, Unexplored Bastar marked its presence with a great strategy to promote regional tourism [10]. Local communities, advanced technology, proper research, niche markets, and numerous other factors contributed to the practical functionality of the travel startup, based on the social entrepreneurship model. Since then, there has been no turning back. In 2017, Unexplored Bastar, with some of its partner organizations, organized the Bastar Innovision Conference. The idea behind this conference was to bring all the budding Startups to a single platform. Various Startups, focused on diverse fields such as Mahua Laddu, Photography, customised Bastar handicrafts, and many more, are actively engaged in boosting regional economies. Unexplored Bastar plays a crucial role in developing, testing, and marketing its unique products, thereby augmenting its growth potential. To build a strong and inclusive ecosystem for entrepreneurship in Bastar, Unexplored Bastar is providing its expertise in market research for the partnered services. Under the social initiative of Startup Incubation, Unexplored Bastar acts as a catalyst for economic development.

iii. Conservation of Environment, Culture and Heritage

Under the Heritage Conservation Project's initiative, Unexplored Bastar has chosen three archaeological sites in Bastar and Dantewada - Dholkal, Barsoor ruins, and Chitrakote Waterfalls. Under this initiative, Unexplored Bastar will look after the conservation of culture and heritage. Through the support of “Paryatak Mitra,” Unexplored Bastar is actively involved in bringing out the hidden heritage of the Bastar division on India's tourism map. On the eve of World Tourism Day 2019, Unexplored Bastar, along with the local tourism groups (“Paryatak Mitra”) and APS, has kick-started the Tourism,



Environment, Culture Awareness program (TECA) in the Bastar region. They began conducting workshops at schools to raise awareness among young people about eco-tourism and places of interest in Chhattisgarh, sensitising them to environmental issues and educating them about the logic and depth of their cultural practices. Various sessions were conducted in schools in the Bastar and Dantewada districts, where a quiz was organized. Paryatak Mitra helped students understand things in their local language.

iv. Plastic Free Zones

To create plastic-free zones, Unexplored Bastar has adopted eco-friendly practices in its operational activities at campsites, tourist locations, and homestays. Reduction of carbon footprint is the need of the hour. To reduce the carbon footprint at tourist sites, campsites, and homestays, Unexplored Bastar uses leaf bowls to serve food, earthenware to cook, kulhads (Earthen Cups), and water purifiers for permanent use. Now travellers are conscious of the environment, carrying less plastic and less trash at our campsites.

v. Cleaning of Trash by Paryatak Mitra

However, at tourist locations, visitors increase the amount of plastic trash. So, Unexplored Bastar and 'Paryatak Mitra' have installed bamboo dustbins at the locations. Also, the plan to collect plastic trash by weight and make the best out of waste is in progress. Awareness on a mass scale, facilitated through various programs, is also included in the plan.

vi. Boosting farming and securing livelihoods

Apart from eco-tourism, there is a strong focus on improving the livelihood options of Jabarra residents through cultivation. Dharm Singh, assistant project officer, MGNREGA [Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act], Dhamtari, said work under natural resource management planning is ongoing.

vii. Rehabilitation of Jabarra Town

After gaining rights over 5,352 hectares of forest, the tribal village of Jabarra in Dhamtari, Chhattisgarh, has transformed into an eco-tourism destination. In August last year, Jabarra's gram sabha obtained community resource rights for this forest area. The village, known for its hills, lush forests, and the scenic Kajal River, is the first in the state to receive such rights. Jabarra has since successfully developed eco-tourism, emphasizing yoga, healing, and wellness, drawing over 1,200 tourists in the past six months and earning Rs 3 lakh. The village, with a population of approximately 540, has become a popular destination for national and international tourists seeking authentic rural experiences in nature. (Credits: Unexplored Bastar)

Jabarra comprises 17 forest compartments, some of which require reforestation efforts to combat soil erosion. Villagers are actively working on forest regeneration. Inspired by Mendha-Lekha village in Maharashtra, the first in India to secure community forest rights, Jabarra's residents pursued similar rights. The eco-tourism initiative has been successful

since its inception, though the lockdown has temporarily halted new bookings. Profits from tourism are shared, with 10% going to the gram sabha and the remainder allocated to the 20-member group responsible for managing tourist activities. (Credits: Unexplored Bastar) Former Dhamtari Collector Rajat Bansal, who played a key role in the process, stated that securing community forest rights has transformed the perspective of Jabarra's residents. "The villagers are now the owners of forest resources. Responsible eco-tourism, which respects local social and cultural values and festivals, will not be driven by demand alone. There will always be flexibility regarding the number of tourists per season," he explained. Currently, Arya Prerna Samiti, a Jagdalpur-based non-profit that specializes in community tourism across Chhattisgarh, assists the Jabarra gram sabha with bookings. "We have conducted various initiatives, attracting many foreign visitors to Jabarra. We conduct recce to assess potential activities and then train local people in tourism-related tasks," said Mohit Arya, founder of Arya Prerna Samiti, to Gaon Connection. "Jabarra is being developed as a wellness tourism hub," he added. In the past six months, this tribal village has attracted over 1,200 tourists and generated more than Rs 3 lakh by focusing on eco-tourism. While eco-tourism is proliferating, Jabarra remains a remote village bordering Gariyaband, one of the 90 districts in the country affected by Left-wing extremism. Despite constructing new roads to promote eco-tourism, the town still suffers from poor mobile connectivity. Around Rs 20-22 lakh has been allocated for building toilets and homestays for tourists, and an old forest rest house is being renovated. There are also plans to introduce solar-powered irrigation, with solar lights installed in the village. Homestays offer tourists authentic local food on leaf plates, with a ban on plastic use. Besides eco-tourism and MGNREGA projects, Jabarra is part of the Centre's Van Dhan Scheme, which aims to generate livelihoods for vulnerable tribal populations by selling minor forest produce. PRADAN has trained six women's self-help groups (SHGs) in this area, who are instrumental in collecting forest produce, such as tendu leaves. In Chhattisgarh, 18 minor forest produce items are traded, and a tribal family typically earns Rs 1-1.5 lakh annually from this trade. 97 SHGs in the Nagari block, where Jabarra is located, collect non-timber forest products to be stored and sold when prices rise. Ahmad notes that about 10,000 people in the Dhamtari district have received individual forest rights, but Jabarra is the only village with community forest rights. (Credit: Unexplored Bastar)

V. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The study of Unexplored Bastar's impact on the socioeconomic status of tribal communities reveals a multifaceted approach to sustainable development through social entrepreneurship. The travel startup's model effectively integrates tourism



with community development, creating a symbiotic relationship between the industry and the indigenous population. Unexplored Bastar's initiatives in training and employing local tribal youth in the tourism and hospitality sectors have directly addressed the issue of unemployment and skill deficiencies in the region. By training and employing local tribal youth in the tourism and hospitality sectors, Unexplored Bastar has addressed unemployment and skill deficiencies in the region. Approximately 240 individuals have been equipped with relevant skills, leading to stable income sources and improved economic conditions for these communities. This strategy provides immediate employment and builds a sustainable skill base for future generations. Promoting Bastar's rich tribal culture and heritage through tourism has fostered a sense of pride and ownership among the local communities. By involving tribal members as guides and hosts, Unexplored Bastar ensures that cultural narratives and traditional knowledge are preserved and disseminated authentically. This cultural exchange benefits visitors and the host communities, contributing to a broader understanding and appreciation of tribal heritage. Also, forming Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in various locations has been a significant outcome of Unexplored Bastar's community-based approach. These SHGs empower community members to collectively manage resources, implement grassroots innovations, and engage in decision-making processes. This organizational structure enhances social cohesion and self-reliance, reducing dependency on external aid and fostering a collaborative spirit among tribal members.

Unexplored Bastar illustrates a promising model of how social entrepreneurship can drive socioeconomic development in tribal regions. By focusing on sustainable tourism, skill development, and community organisation, the startup has had a profoundly positive impact on the lives of many tribal youth in Bastar. The success of this model depends on its ability to adapt to future challenges and capitalise on opportunities for growth and expansion. As such, Unexplored Bastar serves as a valuable blueprint for similar initiatives that aim to uplift marginalised communities through innovative and sustainable approaches. Future research should continue to monitor and evaluate the long-term impacts of such models, providing insights that can inform policy and practice in tribal development and sustainable tourism.

DECLARATION STATEMENT

After aggregating input from all authors, I must verify the accuracy of the following information as the article's author.

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- **Data Access Statement and Material Availability:** The adequate resources of this article are publicly accessible.
- **Author's Contributions:** The authorship of this article is contributed equally to all participating individuals.

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