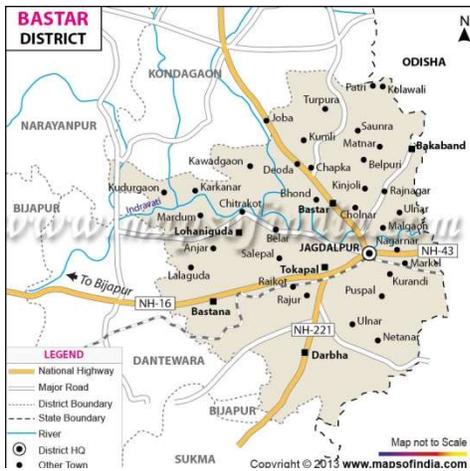


Jana Prerit Abhiyan

People's Plan for a Samarth Bastar

1 District Overview

1.1 District Snapshot



Bastar is an administrative district in state of Chhattisgarh with Jagdalpur as its headquarters. Jagdalpur is located at a distance of 305 kilometres from the capital city Raipur. The district is endowed with beautiful landscape, tourist spots, natural and mineral resources. 62 percent of the total population is tribal. Tribes like Gond, Maria, Muria, Dhruva, Bhatra, Halba etc. constitute the tribal population of the district. Owing to tribal culture, Bastar is also called as the cultural capital of the state. However, be it forest management, arts and handicrafts, kosa silk or herbs and plants of medicinal properties, each such area needs strategic interventions.

A large number of Bastar tribal are still living in deep forests and avoid interaction with outsiders in order to protect their own unique culture. The tribes of Bastar are also known for their colorful festivals and arts and crafts. Bastar Dussehra is the most famous festival of the region.¹

Starting from Orissa, the river Indravati flows through Dantewada and Bijapur before it merges in Godavari near Bhadrakali, which is a symbol of faith and devotion for the people of Bastar. Jagdalpur is a major cultural and handicraft centre. Historical and entertainment related items of Bastar's tribal people have been displayed in the Anthropological Museum at Dharampura. Dancing Cactus Art Center is an outstanding demonstration of the renowned art world of Bastar

¹"Gond Tribal Dance from Chhattisgarh" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fHUMApsi9zk>

Statistical snapshot of the district:

Particulars	Details
Area	4029 km
Division	Bastar
Sub divisions	3
Blocks	7
Villages	595
No. of Panchayats	317
Municipalities	2
Total Population	8,34,375
Scheduled Tribe Population	521000 (62.40%).
Scheduled Caste Population	15000 (1.8%)
Literacy rate	53.15

1.2 Economic Profile of the district

Mono crop and rain fed agriculture, followed by collection of forest produce and handicrafts are the key contributors to the economy of the district. Contribution of tourism sector to district's economy is as minimal as 0.5-2 % despite huge potential. Similarly, contribution of other sectors like industrial, allied sectors of agriculture, medicinal and aromatic plants, etc. are minimal. Rearing of milch cattle is less practiced. District is deprived of skilled work forces despite eleven (11) Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs).

1.3 Livelihood Profile of the district



The pattern of livelihood is fully dependent on the geography. The landforms, soil texture and the climatic features are fully interlinked. 40 percent of livelihood activities are forest based, 30 percent are agriculture based and 15 percent are animal related. Another 15 percent of income comes from wage labor.

1.3.1 Agriculture based livelihood



The main crop of the district is paddy which is grown on 2.39 lakh hectare. Production of Paddy in the district is significantly low. Production of Paddy per hectare is 8.53 quintals which is approx. one third of the national average production of Paddy, which ranges between 3-5.5 tons. Irrigated area constitutes 1.67% of the total sown area while use of fertilizer is 4.6 kg / ha, which is

inadequate to provide adequate nutrients to the crop leading to low production of the paddy in the district.

Maize and pulses are mainly rabi crops. Agricultural practices are traditional. Use of wooden ploughs is overwhelming while the number of iron ploughs is negligible. The same is true for bullock carts. The number of tractors is negligible while bullock carts are all pervasive. The usage of traditional agricultural implements has lowered the production of agriculture. Kharif crops grown here are paddy, urad and maize. Rabi crops include til, als, moong, mustard and gram. Collection and sale of forest produce and other forest-related work supplements meager agricultural incomes.

1.3.2 Forest based livelihood

Forests play an important role in the lives of the people, providing food security and livelihood through the collection of minor forest produce, and employment (as casual labour) in the Forest Department of Chhattisgarh. The forests provide for people's consumption needs - fuel and firewood, medicines, food and drink, implements and housing materials.² Forest produce providing the livelihood to tribal communities include Trees, Tendu Leaf, Lac, Dhup, Year Seed, Tamarind, Amchoor, Tuber, Origin, Drugs etc. Pathar, Gitti, Murum, Flour stone, Sand mining are also the allied elements of the economy.



1.4 Flora and Fauna

The National Park is situated in a transition zone where southern limit of sal forests and northern limit of teak forests overlap (ecotone region) and both sal and teak are seen in their

²"Ganpathy (Maoist)" [https://wikivisually.com/wiki/Ganapathy_\(Maoist\)](https://wikivisually.com/wiki/Ganapathy_(Maoist))

best growth form. Kanger Valley is in fact, one of the last pockets of almost virgin forests still left in the peninsular region.³

The steep lush green panoramic wild view of Kanger valley is unique of its kind. Kanger valley represents best example of moist peninsular valley of sal forests and is one of the densest parks in India. The National Park is known for its high floristic diversity. It has thickets of bamboo, climbers, ground flora and tall trees. Tree branches are dotted with epiphytes. The ground is thickly covered with medicinal plants, herbs, shrubs and tubers.



The valley is representative of old growth moist forests of Bastar. The terrain is hilly and offers spectacular landscape. Floral diversity includes in-situ gene bank of medicinal plants, grasses, climbers, wild sugarcane, canes, ferns, epiphytes, Sal, teak, bamboo and their rich associates.

The National park has 553 floral species out of which 12 species are new to Chhattisgarh, 43 species are reported rare. Faunal diversity includes leopard, wolf, jackal, wild dog, sloth bear, wild boar, barking deer, chital, civet cat, otter, spiders, butterflies, fishes, snakes, tortoise, crocodiles and different kind of birds including Bastar Hill Myna. The Park has rare civet “ Binturong”, giant squirrel and the famous State Bird of Chhattisgarh “Bastar Hill Myna”.

1.5 Topography of the district

Topographically undivided Bastar has 3 agro-climatic zones i.e. the hills, the plateau and the plains. Socio-economically, villages in the plain zones have better exposure to modernity and development, while hills are remote and traditional and plateaus are intermediary in nature. The district is characterized by its vast natural forest area and prominent rivers. Indrāvati is the largest and the most important river having numerous tributaries, the largest being the Pamer Chinta. Indravati river rises from Rampur Thuamul in Orissa and flows through the Bastar division for around 240 miles finally merging into Godavari River in Dantewada district. Owing to its rocky bed the river is not navigable. Interestingly, neither the river nor its tributaries dry up in the hot summer season. District is very rich in its forest resources. The forests can be divided in to four belts, namely, Northern Mixed forests, Central Moist Region comprising of Sal belts, Teak belt zone and the dry region comprising mixed forests.⁴



³Kangar Valley National Park <http://www.kvnp.in/flora-fauna/>

⁴“NTFP- An Important source of livelihood in Bastar District”

<https://www.scribd.com/document/293716622/chattisgarh>

1.6 Tourism and places of attraction



Tourism plays an important role in the development of any region and contributes significantly to the economy of district, state and region. The strategic planning of the sector can impact the socio-economic profile of the region and has immense growth potential. There are numerous examples where the sector is key contributor to the state economy. The floating population of tourist

besides providing sustainable sources of livelihood to almost every section of community can be a potential consumer to things of regional importance, be it food, local handicraft, herbs, or any other.

Bastar is endowed with a wide spectrum of places of tourist attraction. Jagdalpur the district capital has earned its importance as the tourism capital of Chhattisgarh state and known for list of nearby tourist attractions, adventure tourism, Kailash Caves, waterfalls and Kanger Ghati National Park.

1.7 Handicraft (Art and Culture)

Arts and handicrafts of tribal community has always been a center of attraction for tourists and visitors. It varies from community to community and place to place and basically depicts their tradition, values, culture, deities and their affiliation to nature. Bastar art has been recognized around all over the world. The art is being practised and protected from generation to generation by specific section of tribal community of Bastar region. The essence of Bastar art lies in its process of preparation which mainly include use of conventional tools not the modern machines.



Bastar art can be classified into woodwork, bamboo art, soil art, and metal arts. Wood art works are mainly used in wooden material to make Bastar culture, festivals, and creatures of gods, statues of gods and goddesses and decorations. Bamboo art uses bamboo sheets and includes chairs, living room table, baskets, mat and home furnishings. In soil art, the statues of goddesses, decorative utensils, vases, pots, and household furnishings are made. In the metal arts, artefacts of copper and tin mixed metal are made, mainly in which statues of goddesses, idols of worship, idols of tribal culture, and home furnishings are made.

Bastar district specializes in the preparation of items from the Dhokra Handicraft. This process calls for a great deal of precision and skill. The artefacts prepared from Dhokra technique are by using cow dung, paddy husk and red soil in the preparation, beeswax being the most important one. Apart from contouring, wax wires are also used for decoration purpose and for giving a finishing touch to artefacts.