



THE FOREST STATE READS ITSELF

Chhattisgarh

A state-level summary of the Community-Led Landscape Character Assessment pilot — where twenty-five villages across five districts read the health of their own landscape across eight life-elements, and turned memory into a plan.

25

VILLAGES

5

DISTRICTS

8

LIFE ELEMENTS

6.2

THE SIGNATURE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

What twenty-five villages found, in brief

Between April and May 2026, twenty-five villages across five Chhattisgarh districts — Bastar, Dantewada, Kondagaon, Kanker and Rajnandgaon — took part in the Community-Led Landscape Assessment (LCAT), a two-day, facilitated exercise in which communities read the health of their own landscape across eight life-elements: landform, water, agriculture, wildlife, infrastructure, culture, the senses, and governance. This report gathers what they found and what they are asking for.

Chhattisgarh is a forest state whose economy runs on its landscape more directly than most — nearly half its land is under forest, and its tribal communities depend on tendu, mahua, honey and lac for a real share of their income. The state ranks low on the national Climate Vulnerability Index, but that ranking measures acute hydro-met disaster risk; it misses the slower, chronic pressure this pilot documents on water, forest and soil. Poverty, forest cover and climate exposure overlap on almost the same map.

THE HEADLINE FINDING

Six of the eight life-elements are declining across nearly all twenty-five villages — hydrology, land cover and agriculture, wildlife, culture and the senses, and (in most places) landform. Only two are improving: physical infrastructure and community governance. Groundwater is the sharpest signal, driven by a shift from mixed rainfed farming to borewell-fed paddy, encouraged by MSP and PDS rice — recalled well depths in several villages have fallen from a few feet to several hundred.

The decline is not only measured in numbers — it is described in smell, taste, sound and touch. Communities in different districts, unprompted, used almost identical words for a fragrance that used to rise from the soil after the first monsoon rain and no longer does. That kind of independent, convergent testimony is itself a form of evidence, and it points to the same underlying cause the water and forest data show: an ecological system under real strain.

Set against this, the improvements matter. Roads, housing, electrification and solar lighting have genuinely reached these villages, and self-help groups, Gram Sabhas and Forest Rights Committees give them real institutional strength to act — provided that strength is pointed at the right problem. The villages' own priorities are consistent: water and watershed work comes first almost everywhere, followed by forest protection, soil health, crop diversification away from paddy monoculture, and support to process and sell forest produce locally rather than at the farm gate. The pilot's central implication is straightforward: these life-elements do not decline separately, and they cannot be repaired separately either. A pond, a grove and a Gram Sabha resolution are parts of one system, not three unrelated line items — which is the case this report makes, district by district, for planning that reads the village whole.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This reading belongs to those who did it

This report is, first and foremost, a record of what twenty-five villages chose to say about their own landscape. It exists only because of the people who gave their time, their memory and their trust to the two days of each assessment — and the people who carried the exercise from village to village across five districts.

TO THE PARTICIPATING COMMUNITIES

Our deepest thanks to the women, men, youth and elders of the twenty-five villages of Bastar, Dantewada, Kondagaon, Kanker and Rajnandgaon who sat through the circle, walked the transects, argued the trendlines and pressed an inked palm to the wall of commitment. The knowledge, observations and priorities in this report are theirs; we have tried only to carry them faithfully onto the page.

TO THE GROUND STAFF & FIELD TEAMS

Thank you to the ground staff and field teams who facilitated each two-day assessment — who built the trust that readiness requires, guided the eight groups across the landscape, and translated between Hindi, Chhattisgarhi, Halbi and Bhatari so that every voice in the room could be recorded in its own words.

TO THE BILLION NEXT TEAM

With thanks to the Billion Next team for their partnership and support in bringing this pilot to completion.

"This is the first time we have looked at our village, and all that has changed in it, together — as one community."

A SELF-HELP-GROUP MEMBER · LCAT FIELD CONVERSATIONS

Finally, we thank the Rainmatter Foundation for its generous financial support and flexible learning approach. When donors act as learning partners, the output is significantly enriched.

This report is offered in gratitude to everyone named and unnamed above — with the hope that it returns something useful to the villages whose testimony fills its pages, in the spirit of Transform Rural India Foundation's work with rural communities.

03

The Village

An introduction to the Community-Led Landscape Assessment—its framework, the eight life-elements, and the method, for the general reader.

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ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT · IN PLAIN LANGUAGE

The Community-Led Landscape Assessment (**LCAT**) is a facilitated, two-day exercise in which the people of a village assess the health of their own landscape across eight dimensions — from water and soil to culture and governance — and turn that shared reading into a practical, prioritised plan.

Developed by Transform Rural India, it is adapted from Natural England's Landscape Character Assessment framework and re-rooted in the rural Indian context. This section introduces the framework in three movements: why such an assessment is needed, what it reads and how it thinks, and how the exercise unfolds on the ground. No prior familiarity with climate science is assumed.

THE THREE MOVEMENTS

- 1 Why an assessment is needed — the crisis of place
- 2 What it reads & how it thinks — eight life-elements
- 3 How it unfolds — two days on the ground

CHAPTER 1

When a Landscape Stops Making Sense

Climate change, the people–place bond, and why village plans keep missing both.

An elderly farmer, asked what had changed in his village over the years, did not begin with temperature of watching your home landscape change around you while you still stand within it — a homesickness felt without ever leaving home. Nostalgia mourns a place you have left behind; solastalgia mourns a place that has left you.

For a long time, climate work in rural India has treated such testimony as soft data — the poetry quoted before the "real" numbers begin. This document takes the opposite view. Carefully documented, solastalgia is among the most rigorous datasets a warming country can build, precisely because it records what satellites cannot: the disappearance of a fragrance, the absence of a once-dependable cool wind, the silence where a bird's call used to be.

"Ten years ago, when the rain fell, the soil would give off that earthy fragrance after the first shower. Now even that is gone."

AN ELDERLY FARMER · LCAT FIELD CONVERSATIONS

To understand why a lost fragrance matters, we take the bond between people and place seriously. The human geographer **Yi-Fu Tuan** called this attachment *topophilia* — and in rural India, it is not sentiment but infrastructure. A farmer's sowing calendar, a pastoralist's grazing route, a household's instinct for when to plant — all are tuned to the rhythms of one particular landscape. Climate change, at its most intimate, is the breaking of that fluency. Three thinkers converge on one lesson.

TUAN · 1974

Topophilia

Why place holds people. The affective tie between human beings and their physical environment.

ALBRECHT · 2005

Solastalgia

What it feels like when place lets go. The grief of a home that changes while you still stand in it.

LEWIN · 1936–51

Field theory · $B = f(P, E)$

Why no planworks without the place. Behaviour is a function of the person *and* their environment together.

Figure 1 — Three thinkers, one lesson: the people–place bond is where climate planning must begin.

THE WEATHER THAT BROKE ITS WORD

This is fast becoming a national condition

Where the southwest monsoon weakens, the decline concentrates in June and July — the precise weeks when kharif crops must be sown — even as many places see more days of heavy, compressed downpour. The water is arriving in the wrong shape: too little when the seed needs it, too much all at once when it does not.

$\approx 3/4$ Indian districts prone to severe floods, droughts & cyclones	$>80\%$ of Indians live in districts highly vulnerable to climate extremes	$>40\%$ of districts now swap between flood and drought	$>50\%$ of India's net sown area is rainfed—the monsoon is destiny
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Source: CEEW (2020, 2021, 2023). Proportions approximate.

THREE GAPS BETWEEN CLIMATE PLANNING & THE VILLAGE

Between the science of climate change and the lived reality of a village stand three stubborn gaps — which is why the connection has never made itself.

01 · The Normative Gap No rule asks a village plan to look at climate. The VPRP and GPDP formats contain no requirement for a structured reading of the landscape or its vulnerability.	02 · Distant Science Robust analysis needs decades of local data that is largely absent below the district. Risk maps stop at the boundary; the process marginalises the very people affected.	03 · Thin Services Extension advice, warnings, credit and insurance thin toward the last mile — and the infrastructure meant to absorb shocks fails in the same weather.
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Figure 2 — The three gaps that leave village planning climate-blind.

THE DOUBLE DISCONNECTION

On one side, **people are severed from the places that hold their knowledge** — the farmer who can no longer read his sky. On the other, **planning has disconnected from that lived reality**, organising itself around schemes rather than the living landscape they are meant to serve. The two feed each other — and healing them is the central problem this framework exists to address.

CHAPTER 2

The Eight Life-Elements

Reading the village as one system.

The exercise often begins not with a form but with a circle. The facilitator draws a large circle and says: *this is your village — the whole*. Around it she writes eight words — the village's eight life-elements, the parts that make up the whole — and offers an image that does more work than any definition: the eight elements are like the parts of a body. Each one matters for the health of the whole, and none can be hurt without the others feeling it.

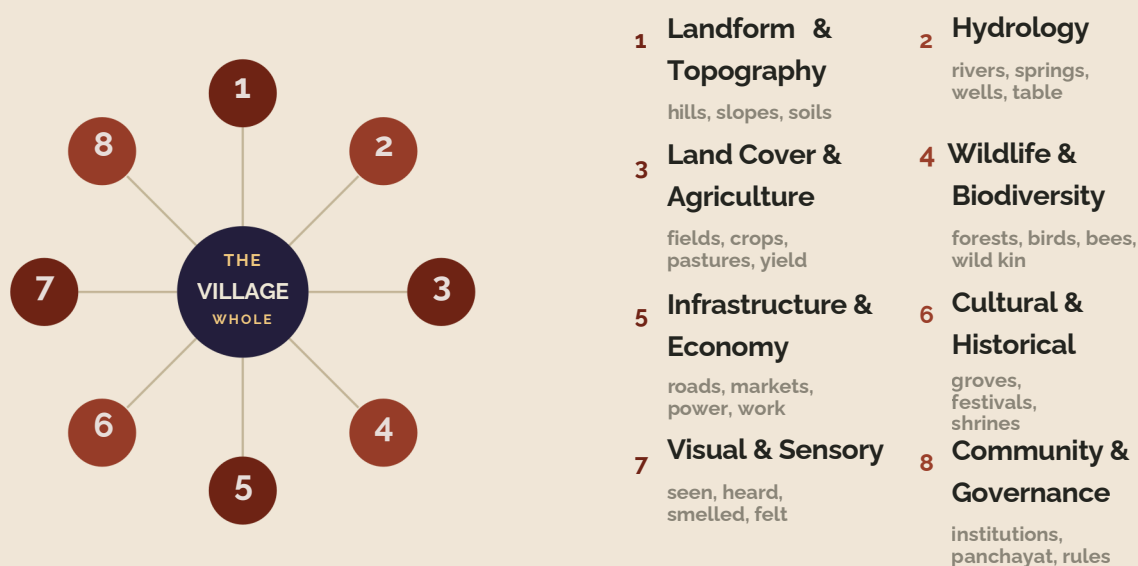


Figure 3 — The eight life-elements: the village read as one living body. Read together, they describe a single working system — to read any one in isolation is to misread it.

This insistence on the whole is forced by the nature of climate stress itself. An erratic monsoon, intensifying heat and a multi-hazard exposure that swings a district between flood and drought do not respect the tidy boundaries between water, soil, forest, crop and culture. Climate change travels along the connections — so reading the village as one system is simply reading it the way the climate already acts on it.

Consider the sacred grove whose canopy quietly cools the three fields beside it. On a conventional inventory it appears, if at all, as a heritage line item. But trace the cascade — a single quiet failure propagates across five of the eight life-elements at once.



Figure 4 — The grove cascade: how one loss travels across the life-elements. The chain runs the other way too — and faster under climate stress.

THREE COMMITMENTS, NOT SLOGANS

Ground-up

It begins with memory, not a form — the lived knowledge of people who walk the land daily.

What has changed in the last five, ten, twenty years?

Narrative

Testimony is treated as evidence. Each element gets a trendline — past, present, future.

We are not writing a summary; we are building evidence.

Community-led

An assessment led by the village, not done to it. A plan handed down is ignored; a reading produced together is owned and defended.

CHAPTER 3

The Method: Two Days

How a village learns to see itself — and then to decide.

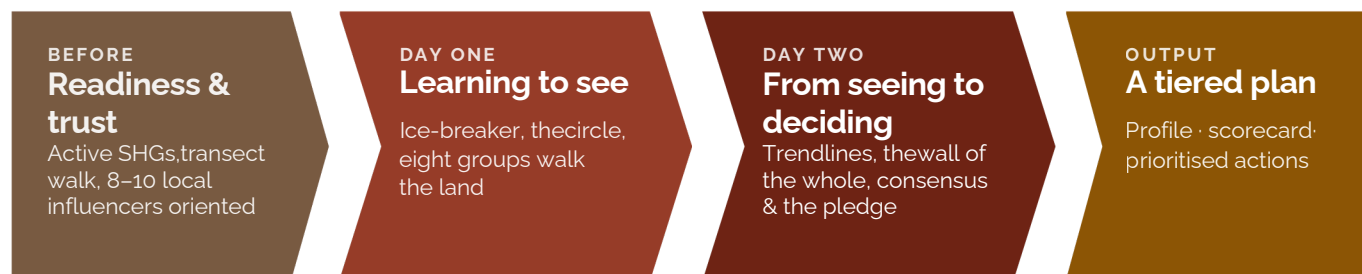


Figure 5 — The assessment at a glance: from readiness to plan.

Day one opens with an ice-breaker that is quietly radical: every person shares their name and one environmental change they have noticed in the last five years. Before any framework is introduced, every voice has already contributed a data point. Then comes the circle on chart paper — the village as the whole, the eight elements as its parts — and eight mixed groups (elders, women, youth, the landless) walk the land, each documenting at least three observed effects.

Something remarkable happens when a village looks at itself through deliberately different eyes. The LCAT's crucial move is to treat the friction between these vantage points as evidence in its own right — not a disagreement to be smoothed away.

DIFFERENT EYES, DIFFERENT FUTURES

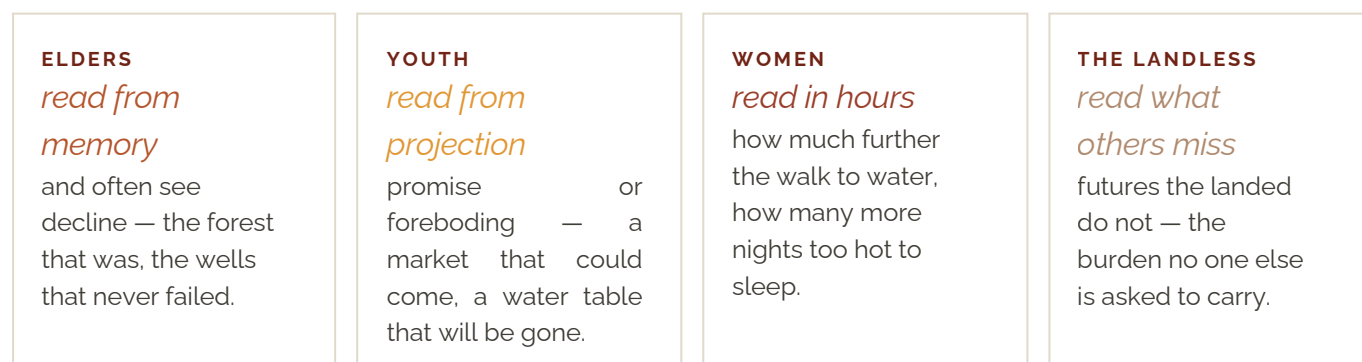


Figure 6 — Four vantage points, one shared picture — disagreement treated as evidence.

A final act of sorting turns a wish-list into a plan: every priority is placed in one of three tiers by *who must act*. This protects the community's own agency while making its demands on the state precise, sequenced and accountable.

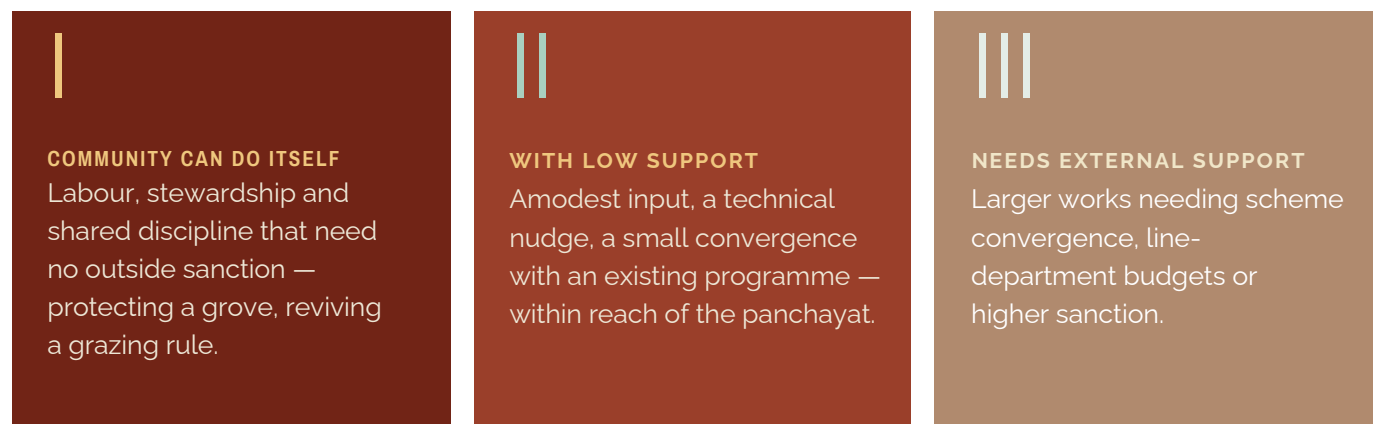


Figure 7 — Three tiers of action: agency first, precise demands after.

CONCLUSION

A Climate Lens for the Planning Cycle

How a village's reading of itself becomes the way it is administered.

The LCAT does not run parallel to government planning; it brings a climate lens into it. By the end of the two days the village holds three concrete things — and each feeds directly into the existing planning cycle, reversing the direction of fit so the schemes bend around the village's reading, rather than the village around the schemes.

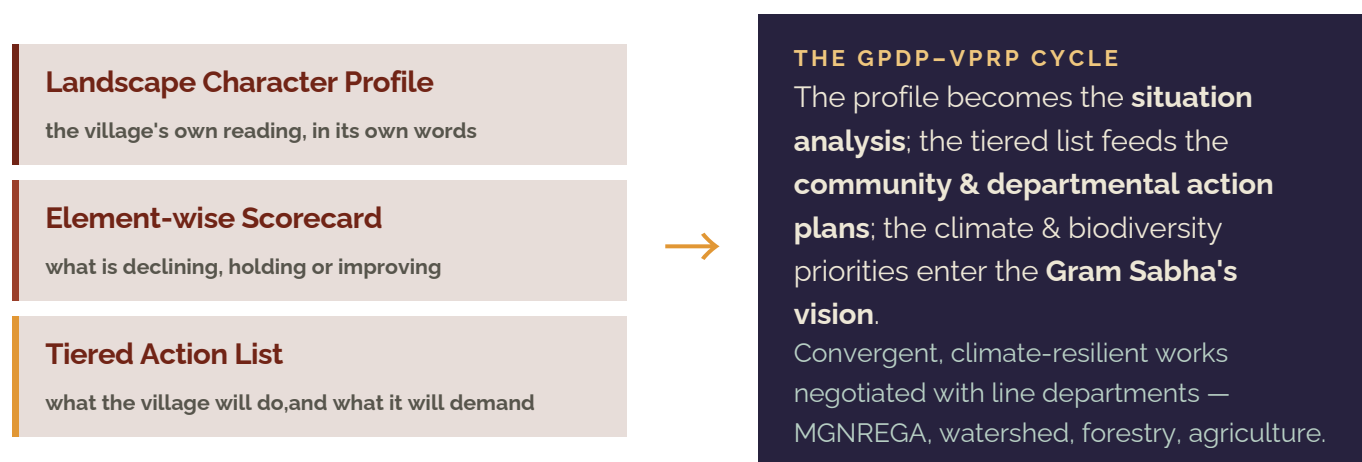


Figure 8 — From assessment to administration: LCAT outputs entering the GDP-VRP cycle.

"This is the first time we have looked at our village, and all that has changed in it, together — as one community."

A SELF-HELP-GROUP MEMBER · LCAT FIELD CONVERSATIONS

What the tool ultimately does is heal the double disconnection: by treating memory and grief as legitimate data, it reconnects people to the places that hold their knowledge; by reading the village as one living system and carrying that into the administrative machinery, it reconnects planning to lived reality. The grief becomes a map; the map becomes a plan.

04

Chhattisgarh — Where the *Forest Remembers*

A state introduction to climate variability, vulnerability, and the case for a Community-Led Landscape Assessment — in a state where the economy does not merely sit on the land. It *is* the land.

4.1 · THE HISTORICAL RECORD, SHIFTING

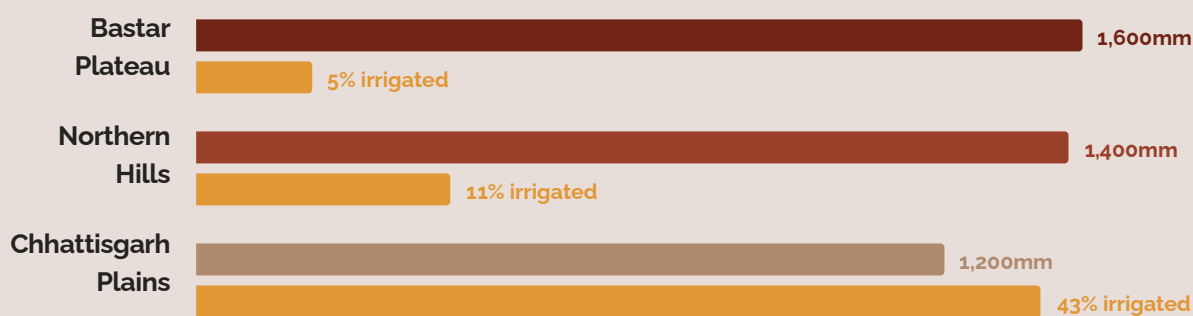
Three storeys, stacked

Chhattisgarh is a forest state in a way few Indian states still are — its recorded forest area is around **44 per cent**, among the highest shares in the country, and the people of its wooded north and south depend on tendu leaf and mahua, honey and lac, more directly than almost any community in India. Its planners read the territory as three great agro-climatic zones, stacked like storeys — and the numbers hold the state's central paradox.

ZONE	FARMLAND	RAINFALL	IRRIGATED
Northern Hills 5 districts · lateritic soils	≈8.3 lakh ha	≈1,400 mm	≈11%
Chhattisgarh Plains 15 districts · the 'rice bowl'	≈33.0 lakh ha	≈1,200 mm	≈43%
Bastar Plateau 7 districts · wettest, least buffered	≈6.4 lakh ha	≈ 1,600mm	≈ 5%

RAIN-RICH, BUFFER-POOR

The wettest zone holds the least protection — its farming lives or dies by the sky's mood in any given fortnight.

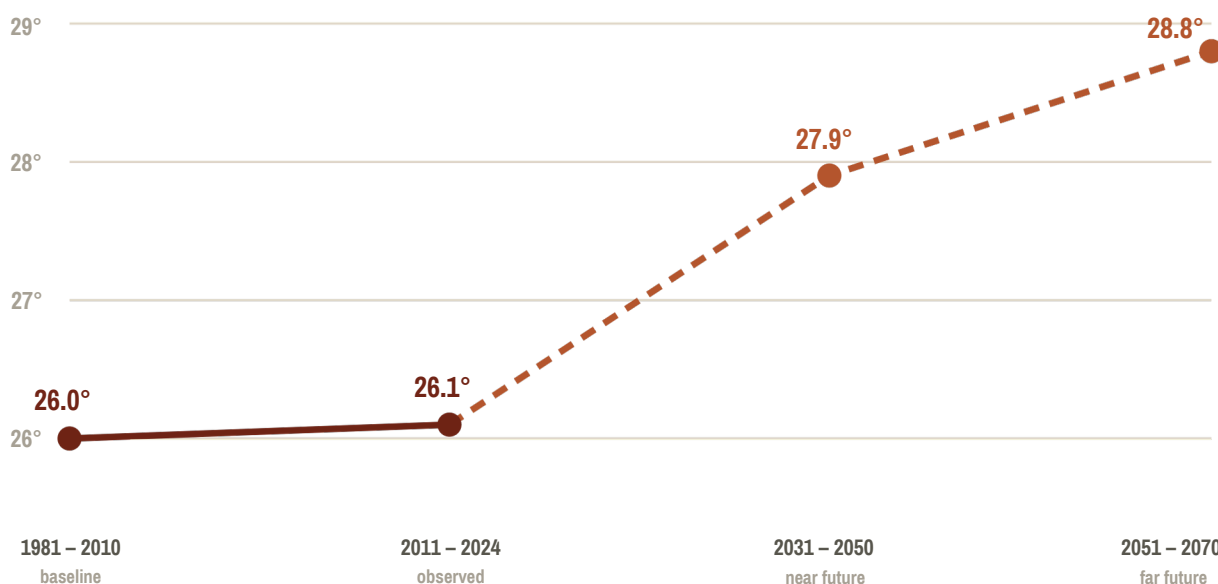


■ Annual rainfall (of 1,600mm max) ■ Net area irrigated (of 43% max)

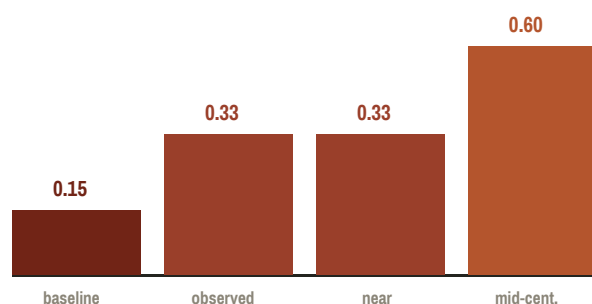
4.2 · THE HISTORICAL RECORD, SHIFTING

A four-fold quickening of the heat

CRAVIS — CEEW's AI-powered climate intelligence platform, built on more than forty years of data — shows the state's average temperature holding almost flat across the baseline, then climbing steeply under the high-emissions pathway. The pace is the alarming part: warming accelerates from $+0.15^{\circ}\text{C}$ per decade in the baseline to a projected $+0.60^{\circ}\text{C}$ per decade by mid-century.

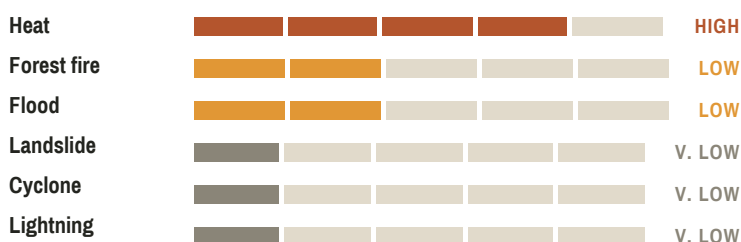


Annual mean temperature, $^{\circ}\text{C}$. Solid = baseline & observed; dashed = projected under RCP 8.5. Source: CRAVIS / CEEW state dashboard — unweighted district averages.

WARMING RATE, $^{\circ}\text{C}$ / DECADE

EXTREME-EVENTS RISK PROFILE

Heat is the headline hazard — and that forest fire appears at all is the signature of a forest state.



Scale: very low → very high. CRAVIS / CEEW.

The signature risk here is a **changing forest ecology**: the non-timber produce on which forest households rest — tendu, mahua, honey, lac — is increasingly threatened by more frequent fires, worsening pest and disease attack, and reduced regeneration. When the climate destabilises the forest and the field here, it destabilises an entire way of making a living.

4.3 · THE MISSING CLIMATE LENS

If the forest keeps the accounts, why doesn't planning read them?

Two ruptures, working quietly together, explain why so much well-intentioned effort misses its mark. Here, as elsewhere, we call them the double disconnection — but in Chhattisgarh each takes a distinctly forested shape..

DISCONNECTION ONE

People from place

Elders can date the changes precisely — the year the mahua flowered early, the summer the stream that never failed finally failed. Here the landscape is not backdrop but livelihood, so *solastalgia* carries a profession, an inheritance and a food supply all at once.

DISCONNECTION TWO

Planning from place

Village plans are assembled without any structured reading of landform, water, forest or exposure. The grove, the gathering route, the seasonal calendar of a particular tree — the assets that matter most are precisely what conventional planning cannot see.

THE REPAIR — A RE-INTEGRATION

Four strands that, in a healthy forest village, were never separate to begin with.

People

the longest, finest-grained climate record there is

Institutions

the legitimacy and mandate to act — panchayat, SHGs, FRCs

Ecology

the stage — sal and mahua stands, tanks, the soil beneath the paddy

Culture

the connective tissue — the grove that protects a spring, the festival keyed to a flowering

Figure — Braiding People, Institutions, Ecology and Culture back into one act of seeing. That is the missing climate lens.



A community mapping session

4.4 · SYSTEMIC HURDLES

Three hurdles, each with a forested shape

Why has this lens not simply been supplied from above? Because three systemic hurdles stand in the way — and each hurdle compounds the others, leaving adaptation always slightly out of focus in a state where focus is precisely what the landscape demands.

01 A normative gap in how adaptation is imagined

Policy still treats the farm as the unit of climate concern; a state where the forest is half the economy sits awkwardly in that frame. An independent review found the state's climate plan did not adequately reflect the forest risks and human vulnerabilities its people face. Heat preparedness, meanwhile, remains largely urban and advisory.

02 Rigid science on a dynamic local context

An inventory can count trees with satellite precision and still miss that the mahua's flowering has shifted by a fortnight — the fact on which a season's income turns. When science arrives without the people, it can measure the forest and still misread the forest economy. The problem is not science; it is science that has forgotten to ask.

03 The most exposed have the least cushion

Earlier assessments describe close to half the population below the poverty line — roughly double the national average — concentrated in the forested tribal belts. A bad fire year or a failed regeneration is not a statistic but a direct hit to income, nutrition and security. Women, who do much of the collection, carry the heaviest share.

Plans that cannot see the forest miss the economy; rigid science misses the forest's fine grain; thin services cannot buffer the households living closest to both. A national assessment finds **more than half of Chhattisgarh's districts** in the high category for climate hazard to their healthcare systems.

4.5 · TRIANGULATING VULNERABILITY

The headline index says one thing. Everything else says another.

How vulnerable is Chhattisgarh —really? The honest answer begins with a puzzle sharper than in any neighbouring state. Reading four independent frameworks together is the only way to resolve it.

A · CLIMATE VULNERABILITY INDEX

0.087 ranks 26 of 35 states and UTs

Among the lowest in the country—the CVI is built for acute hydro-met disasters. But Chhattisgarh's burden is chronic and ecological. **Low on the index, highly exposed on the ground** is not a paradox; it is a measurement gap.

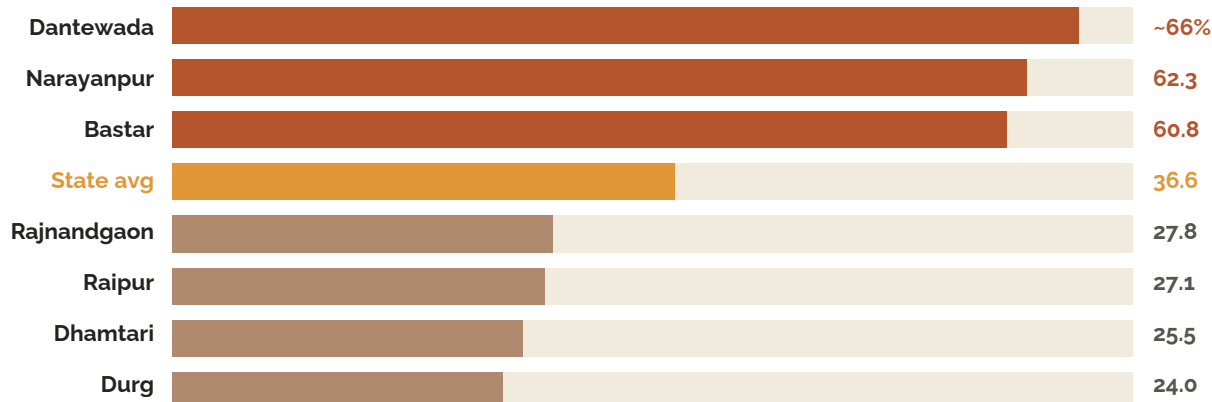
B · THE IPCC DEFINITION

Vulnerability is a property not of the weather but of the society beneath it.

Chhattisgarh's sensitivity is structural: its economy is weighted toward agriculture, forestry and livestock — the sectors most exposed — and its paddy is largely rain-dependent. The pathway from a warming trend to an empty plate is unusually short.

C · MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY — % POOR, BY DISTRICT

The poverty map, the forest map and the tribal map are very nearly the same map.



■ Forested / tribal belts ■ Plains districts ■ State average

Global MPI 2015-16 (OPHI, 2020). Dantewada two of every three residents poor.

D · WHO LIVES IN THESE LANDSCAPES

76.8%

rural — of a 2011 population of ≈2.55 crore

30.6%

Scheduled Tribes — Gond, Baiga, Halba, Muria & others

≈44%

recorded forest area—among the highest in India

THE PUZZLE RESOLVES

The instrument that ranks Chhattisgarh reassuringly low is the instrument least able to see what threatens it. The instruments that look at hazard, sensitivity, poverty and people all point to the same forested belts.

Mahua collections that thin year on year; fire seasons that reach further into the sal; paddy transplanted late and harvested light in the rain-fed tracts. **Vulnerability in Chhattisgarh is not a score. It is an address — and the address is written in the forest.**

4.6 · CONCLUSION

The need for landscape assessment

Every strand of the diagnosis calls for the same missing instrument: a way for a village to read its own landscape as one interdependent, living system — and to turn that reading into a shared, locally owned baseline that feeds directly into the plans the village already makes every year.

This is what the Community-Led Landscape Assessment offers — and Chhattisgarh is where it has been proven at greatest depth, piloted across **twenty-five villages**. It does not arrive with answers; it arrives with questions, and it begins where the double disconnection began — with memory. The chapters that follow tell the story of what those villages, reading themselves whole, discovered about the state of their own vital signs.

05

Chhattisgarh
— *the State*
Summary

"Ten years ago, when the rain fell, a sondhi-sondhi khushbu — an earthy fragrance — would rise from the soil. Now, that fragrance is gone."

ELDER · BARCHGONDI, KANKER

5.1 · THE VILLAGES SPEAK FIRST

Named for what they are losing

In Chhattisgarh the villages carry their ecology in their very names — and the names have started to outlive what they describe. Between April and May 2026, twenty-five villages across five districts sat down in groups of women, men, youth and elders and read their own landscape through the eight life- elements. A remarkable number of them are, quite literally, named after what they are losing.

Vanusari FROM VAN , THE FOREST 170 of 180 farming households still live partly from the forest's basket.	Borgaon HALBI · VILLAGE OF BER TREES The groves that named it have thinned.
Bargaon FOR ITS BANYANS "It was the abundance of banyan trees that gave this village its name" — so many now gone.	Pharsigaon THE PHARSI WOOD-TOOL Named for the tool that defined its bond with the forest.
Sonesarar THE GOLD POND A pot of gold ornaments unearthed when the community dug its sarar.	Chinchdongari BHIMA'S FOOTPRINTS Carries the footprints of the tribal deity on its forested hill.

Twenty-five villages — and a remarkable number named after what they are losing. In Kohkapal (Bastar), ninety people took part, facilitated in both Hindi and Bhatri.

THE PREDICAMENT, IN ONE SENTENCE

"The village has grown rich in cash but poor in life-support."

— Bardevari, Kanker

THE BRIGHTEST COUNTER-EXAMPLE

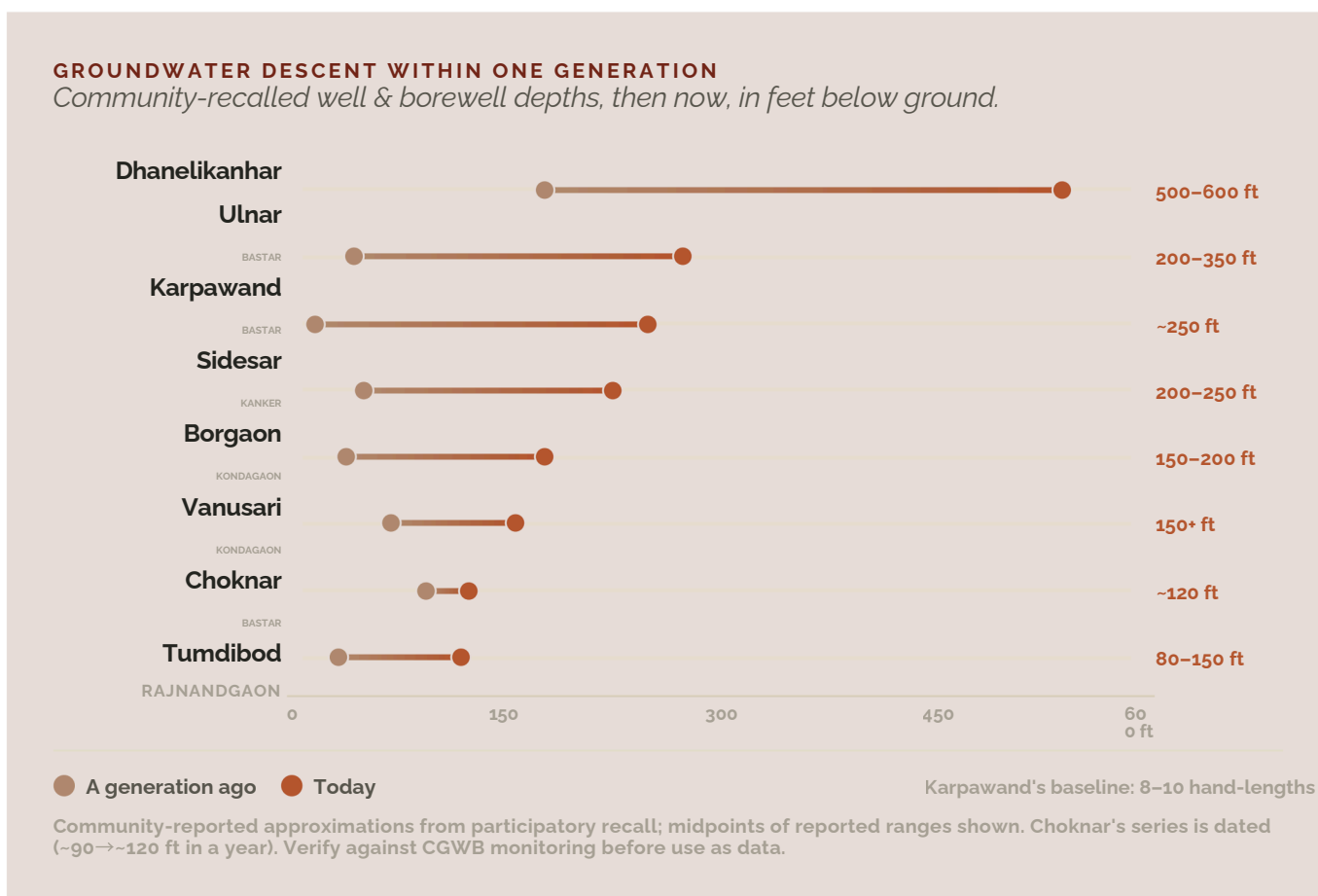
Hidpal (Dantewada), a 100% tribal village, reports **no chemical fertiliser use at all** — its farming runs on bio-inputs, its year still turning on the Diyari festival after the paddy harvest.

5.2 · THE LANDSCAPE & THE CLIMATE

A water table you can watch falling

Four of the five districts lie in the state's southern tribal belt on and around the Bastar plateau; the fifth Rajnandgaon, lies in the plains rice bowl. Across all of them the communities are unusually explicit about why the water is falling: paddy. MSP plus PDS rice have made monoculture the rational household choice — trading the plateau's older mixed, rainfed system for a cash crop that pays at the mandi and charges at the borewell.,

Bastar Forest-and-paddy plateau; dabris & sacred groves	Dantewada The Indravati's country; the chemical-free outlier Hidpal	Kondagaon Sandy plateau; the densest sacred-grove landscape	Kanker The transition belt; furthest down the MSP-paddy arc	Rajnandgaon Plains rice bowl; most market-linked, most drawn-down
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5.3 · TRENDS ACROSS THE EIGHT LIFE-ELEMENTS

Six down, two up — in its cleanest form yet

Across the twenty-one villages whose trend tables could be tabulated directly, the pattern is nearly unanimous. Six life-elements decline; two — the built economy, and the institutions of governance — improve. The state's forest-village signature is that culture declines as practice while surviving as institution.

▼	1 · Landform & Topography Terrain actively re-engineered — hills cut and levelled, uneven land no longer holding its water.	DECLINING · MIXED IN A FEW
▼	2 · Hydrology The borewell race atop a rainfed civilisation — the recharge forest thinning as extraction accelerates.	DECLINED IN ALL 25
▼	3 · Land Cover & Agriculture Mixed rainfed systems, millets and the NTFP calendar narrowing to irrigated monocrop paddy.	DECLINING IN NEARLY ALL
▼	4 · Wildlife & Biodiversity Hunting, encroachment, chemical runoff — the vultures gone from Barchegondi, the small fish and crabs erased.	DECLINED IN ALL 25 · THE RED LINE
▲	5 · Infrastructure & Economy CC roads, pucca housing, electrification, haats, solar lights — real gains, with input debt and migration riding along.	IMPROVED IN ~20 OF 21
▼	6 · Cultural & Historical Godna and Mohari fading — yet the sacred groves, the Gayta-Pujari institutions and festival calendars endure.	DECLINING · ANCHORS HOLD
▼	7 · Visual & Sensory The pilot's most haunting finding: the <i>sondhi-sondhi khushbu</i> gone; a landscape losing its smell is one whose soil biology is dying.	DECLINING IN ALL TABULATED
▲	8 · Community & Governance 35 SHGs in Chipawand, PESA Gram Sabhas, Forest Rights Committees — the forest state has the governance tools.	IMPROVED IN ALL · STRONGEST BASE

THE CASCADE, IN THE VILLAGES' OWN WORDS

Daspur's insight is the state's whole thesis in one line — the institutions run on the resource itself: *"When there was forest, the committee existed; now that the forest is gone, the committee is no longer active. If we protect the trees and plants, our committee will come back to life."*

5.4 · THE CORE DEMANDS

What communities are asking for

The Climate-Integrated GPDP plans convert each village's findings into a three-tier structure with explicit timeframes. Read across the plans, the demands converge hard — water first, almost always.

THE TEN MOST COMMON DEMANDS

- 1 Water resource development**
Ponds, dabris, recharge, ridge-to-valley watershed
- 2 Forest protection & plantation**
Community rules, degraded-patch planting, sacred-grove defence
- 3 Soil health & organic farming**
Gobar, vermicompost, reduced urea-DAP
- 4 Crop diversification & millet revival**
Kodo, kutki, ragi — the counterweight to the paddy pull
- 5 NTFP management & value addition**
Mahua, tendu, imli, chironji, honey — graded & processed locally
- 6 Borewell discipline & water budgeting**
Community rules where 2–3 machines crowd a field
- 7 Livestock & integrated farming**
Rebuild the herd, the gohar cycle, the mixed farm
- 8 Fisheries in restored waters**
Income timed to arrive with the restoration
- 9 SHG-led green livelihoods & youth retention**
The Bihan network turned toward NRM enterprise
- 10 Waste management & river protection**
End dumping in streams and ponds; protect river banks

SIGNALS WORTH PROBING — THE TEN MOST UNIQUE

Defend the chemical-free village — HIDPAL

Certify and supply the pilot's only chemical-free village — cheaper than reversing everyone else's transition.

A drinking-water emergency — CHOKNAR

A community filtering river water to drink, the table down ~30 ft in a year — intervention now, not planned.

"Our water reaches other places" — DASPUR

Water exported while the village runs short — an allocation question no recharge pit can answer alone.

Bring back the vultures — BARCHEGONDI

Carrion ecology, carcass practice and pesticide load bundled in one indicator species.

Revive the committee by reviving the forest

— DASPUR

Institutional restoration framed as ecological restoration — the community's own theory of change.

Sacred groves as formal plan assets — KONDAGAON

Fifteen *devgudi* across two villages — protection by Gram Sabha resolution, the cheapest instrument the state owns.

Borewell equity — CHA TOLAGAON

"Those without a borewell cannot raise the paddy crop" — the water crisis as a class line inside the village.

Engineer the uneven land — CHINCHDONGARI

Water that "flows away by cutting through fields, roads and ponds" — contour engineering, not just storage.

Document godna & Mohari — CHINDNAAR

Tattoo art and traditional music — cultural archiving as part of a climate plan.

Fix the tap that exists — BORGAON

A present-but-dead JJM connection — the maintenance gap given a household face.

5.5 · THE FINANCIAL NARRATIVE

The forest has its own money and its own law

Along side the usual rural-development channels sit TRIFED and Van Dhan for forest produce, CAMPA for restoration, the Forest Rights Act's community claims, and PESA's Gram Sabha powers — a toolkit purpose-built for exactly this landscape. The gap is not the absence of instruments; it is that they have rarely been pointed by the villages' own diagnosis.

CHANNEL	WHAT IT FUNDS	THE CATCH Builds faster
MGNREGA	The universal engine — ponds, dabris, watershed, plantation, recharge	than it maintains; desilting cycles under-planned
TRIFED / Van Dhan / MFP-MSP	The NTFP economy's backbone — mahua, tendu, imli, chironji, honey	Without local drying-grading, the price stays at the farm gate
CAMPA / Green India Mission	Plantation and degraded-forest restoration at scale	Seldom arrives with the community-protection mandate that makes plantations survive
FRA / CFR & PESA	Not money but authority — Gram Sabha powers over minor forest produce, planning, local resources	The pilot's most under-used lever — not yet asked to govern aquifers and groves
Bihan / DAY-NRLM	The 20–35-SHG village bases — vermicompost, leaf plates, NTFP processing, fisheries	Finances enterprise readily; restoration only where a plan connects the two
Millet Mission / PMFME · PM-KUSUM	Millet revival & processing; solar irrigation and drying	Millet competes headline-to-headline with paddy MSP; solar without budgeting subsidises deeper extraction

WHERE IT FALLS SHORT — THE FOUR GAPS

1 · The two price signals

Paddy MSP finances the monoculture that the Millet Mission, watershed and soil programmes then pay to undo. The state's two price signals point in opposite directions.

2 · The farm-gate leak

The forest basket's value is captured at first sale. The answer is the same everywhere: local drying, grading, processing and SHG aggregation.

3 · Authority without assignment

PESA and CFR give these Gram Sabhas powers most villages can only wish for — yet no borewell, grove or grazing rule runs on them. The cheapest "financing" is a resolution.

4 · Maintenance, again

Borgaon's dead JJM tap, silted dabris, unfenced plantations: capital without upkeep — worsened by terrain that makes unmaintained structures fail faster.

5.6 · GREEN STORIES & GREEN VALUE CHAINS

The commons as a second economy

NATURE-BASED

The village that never took the chemical road

Hidpal — the pilot's living control plot

The scent after rain

Barchegondi & Margaon — petrichor as monitor

The groves that held

Chipawand & Chhote Banjoda — 15 devgudi

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Sun-dried forest gold

Solar drying — the most-cited DRE intervention

Sunlight on the dabri

Solar irrigation paired with water budgeting

Briquettes from the biomass

Pharsigaon — residue to fuel, a youth enterprise

CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Sal leaves against plastic

The dona-pattal economy, scaled

Lac on the host trees

Pays households to keep trees standing

The gobar economy, plateau edition

Vermicompost on the rebuilt livestock base

GREEN VALUE CHAINS MOST COMMON ACROSS THE TWENTY-FIVE VILLAGES

Vermicompost & bio-inputs

NTFP value addition · mahua, tendu, imli, chironji, honey

Sal-leaf plates

Millet cultivation & processing

Fisheries in ponds & dabris

Poultry, goatery & piggery

Solar drying

Plantation, bamboo & nursery

MOST UNIQUE

Lac cultivation

Biomass briquettes

Bamboo handicrafts & nursery

Mushroom cultivation

Mahua value addition

Heritage-and-haat linkage · Chindnaar 0-km market

5.7 · WHAT THE SENSES KNOW

The cheapest monitoring instrument the state owns

Of the three pilot states, Chhattisgarh's communities gave the most precise sensory testimony — precise enough that the senses can serve as the state's monitoring system. No laboratory is needed to know whether the sondhi-sondhi khushbu rose after the first rain, whether a vulture circled this season, whether the well water is sweet again.

SENSE	WHAT HAS CHANGED	WHERE
Smell	The pilot's most haunting finding — the earthy fragrance after rain, gone, in nearly identical words two districts apart; and the orchard's perfume lost, fruit no longer identifiable "by smell from a distance."	Barchegondi · Margaon · Sonesarar
Taste	Sweet water turned metallic — wells that held sweet water year-round all dried, and the borewells that replaced them deliver water that "tastes of iron." At the extreme, river water filtered to drink.	Bardevari · Choknar
Sight	The named trees gone from the villages named after them — Bargaon's banyans, Borgaon's ber groves; hills cut and levelled; four never-drying ponds reduced to one; the vulture's circle absent from the sky.	Bargaon · Borgaon · Binjam · Sidesar · Barchegondi
Sound	The Mohari — the music of celebration — fading; festivals audibly shorter (Sakarteen, once fifteen days); the older soundscape of stream and forest giving way to pump and tractor.	Chindnaar · Bade Panera · plateau-wide
Touch & body	Earth that oxen kept "crumbly and soft" now "hard like a brick," the earthworms gone; kutcha houses remembered as cooler than the concrete that replaced them; and godna — the tattooing that inscribed identity on the body — fading with the generation that wears it.	Daspur · Dhanlikanhar · Ulnar · Sonesarar · Chindnaar

Several of these map one-to-one onto restoration actions — the petrichor onto the organic transition, the vulture onto pesticide reduction and carcass practice, sweet water onto recharge and borewell discipline. A short, village-chosen list of sensory indicators, reviewed annually in the Gram Sabha, would let each community **smell, taste and hear its plan working** — or demand to know why it is not.

5.8 · A TIERED ACTION PLAN

The state's top five demands, sequenced

Assembled from the twenty-five village plans and organised by what each action needs to begin— with the CG plans' own timeframes. The first column is free.

DEMAND	TIER A · NOW community alone · 0–6 mo	TIER B · THIS CYCLE a little support · 6–18mo	TIER C · BY CONVERGENCE External support and convergence · 1–3yr
1 · Water & the borewell question	Shramdaan desilting of ponds & dabris; protect streams and pond edges; Gram Sabha / PESA resolutions on borewell spacing & irrigation discipline; household soak pits	Dabri deepening & recharge (MGNREGA + GP funds); contour and drainage-line works for the uneven plateau (Chinchdongari); repair the dead JJM points (Borgaon); community water committees	Ridge-to-valley watershed (PMKSY, MGNREGA); pond-network rejuvenation with fisheries (Amrit Sarovar); emergency drinking water where rivers are filtered (Choknar); solar community irrigation for borewell-less households (PM- KUSUM)
2 · Forest & the NTFP economy	Community protection rules and watch for surviving forest and the sacred groves (the devgudi network first); no-hunting norms; monsoon plantation with local seed; document elders' species knowledge	Village nurseries; fenced plantation blocks; NTFP collection centres with solar drying and grading via SHGs; lac and mushroom trials on willing plots	Restoration at scale (Campa, Green India Mission); CFR claims completed and community forest management financed (FRA); Van Dhan NTFP aggregation (TRIFED / MFP-MSP); the vulture-return and wildlife-recovery agenda (Forest Dept)
3 · Soil, organic & the millet counter weight	Revive gobar and compost on willing plots; defend Hidpal-style chemical-free practice where it survives; community seed banks for kodo- kutki-ragi and indigenous paddy; end residue burning by norm	Vermicompost and bio-input units (Bihan / NRLM); soil testing; millet demonstration plots and SHG processing trials; side-by-side chemical-vs-organic demo fields	Natural-farming clusters with transition support (PKVY / NMNF); millet value chains with procurement, milling and market linkage (Millet Mission, PMFME / ODOP); diversification incentives that answer the paddy-MSP pull
4 · Livestock & integrated farming	Stall-feeding and grazing norms; return dung to fields; herd-care rotas; fodder on bunds	Backyard poultry, goateries and piggery via SHG aggregation; veterinary camps; fodder development (MGNREGA)	Dairy and small-stock value chains at scale (state livestock missions, NABARD-type linkage); biogas where herd size supports it; fisheries stocking in restored waters (Fisheries Dept)
5 · SHG green livelihoods & youth retention	Direct the 20–35-SHG village bases toward NRM roles; youth plantation, water-monitoring and wildlife-watch corps; cultural documentation (godna, Mohari, festival calendars)	Sal-leaf plate, NTFP-processing, nursery and solar-drying enterprises (Bihan, PMFME); collective marketing through the haats (Chindnaar's 0-km market as hub)	Youth green skilling at scale (DDU-GKY); e-rickshaw and biomass-briquette enterprises (MSME / MNRE routes); LCAT findings institutionalised in every GPDP–VPRP cycle through the PESA Gram Sabha

THE THROUGH-LINE

These are villages whose names remember forests, whose faith already protects groves, whose law already vests authority in the Gram Sabha — and whose own elders have supplied both the diagnosis and the theory of change.

The LCAT's contribution is not to convince anyone. It is to hand the village its own testimony, organised into a plan with dates on it — so that one monsoon soon, somewhere between Bastar and Rajnandgaon, an elder steps out after the first rain and smells the *sondhi-sondhi khushbu* rising from the soil again.

5.9 A cross-village analysis for Chhattisgarh

Gender and the Changing Landscape

Across twenty-five villages in Bastar, Dantewada, Kondagaon, Kanker and Rajnandgaon, the gender evidence carries a particular texture: this is a forest-dependent landscape, and women stand at the exact point where the forest's decline is felt and where its recovery must begin. They walk further for fuelwood each year, and in doing so exert pressure on the very resource that shelters them — a circuit the communities identified themselves. The Gender at Work framework helps hold this complexity without flattening it, sorting change across the individual-systemic and informal-formal axes so that a fuelwood walk, a borewell's ownership, an elder's authority in the chaupal, and a Didi's unpaid honorarium can be seen as related rather than separate problems. Chhattisgarh occupies this frame differently from the other states: its women's institutions have already crossed into formal office. The figure below locates the LCAT findings, in the communities' own voices, within each arena.

Chhattisgarh

Where the LCAT gender findings sit across the four arenas of change: the fuelwood circuit, the borewell divide, the Siyan line, and a Didi economy ready for authority.

Gender at Work framework (Rao & Kelleher) — change mapped across the Individual-Systemic and Informal-Formal axes. Corner quotes are verbatim community voices from the village LCAT reports.



About this figure. Quadrant statements synthesise the state gender narrative derived from the village Landscape Character Assessment reports; corner quotations are verbatim (English translations as given in the reports), attributed to the speaker or group context recorded there. Figures are as stated in the reports: several are community-reported approximations requiring primary-source verification before publication.

Taken together, the quadrants show a state that has moved further than most and still has the hardest part ahead. The achievements are concrete and formal: more than 500 self-help groups, the Bihan mobilisation that communities themselves name as the turning point, women serving as Sarpanch in several villages, PESA committees with women in office, and a Didi economy already delivering sanitation, compost and forest-produce enterprise. Yet the informal structures have proved more stubborn than the formal ones. Women hold seats and still describe the discomfort of speaking before the Siyan; they are present in meetings but, as Cha Tolagaon puts it, not yet equal in final decisions — and where honoraria go unpaid, the systems they run simply stall. The climate stakes make this incompleteness costly. Rainfall is growing less reliable across these districts, forest cover is thinning, and groundwater is falling under borewells that only some households can afford — so scarcity is not merely arriving, it is arriving unequally. The adaptations that would work here are precisely the ones women already lead: clean cooking that eases the fuelwood burden while relieving the forest, plantations on commons, restored ponds governed by community water rules, and value chains that make a standing forest worth more than a felled one. Chhattisgarh's task is no longer to build women's institutions. It is to fund them reliably and give them decision-making authority equal to the stewardship they are already performing.

06

The Districts, *One by One*

Five districts, each read whole—as a snapshot, a spider of the eight life-elements, the key findings, the demands, and the tiered first moves. Three designed pages each.

01 Bastar

02 Dantewada

03 Kondagaon

04 Kanker

05 Rajnandgaon

DISTRICT 01

Bastar

Five villages · Karpawand · Choknar · Pharsigaon · Ulnar · Kohkapal

5

VILLAGES (BAKAWAND & MORE)

250 ft

FROM ARM'S REACH · KAPAWAND

-30 ft

IN ONE YEAR · CHOKNAR

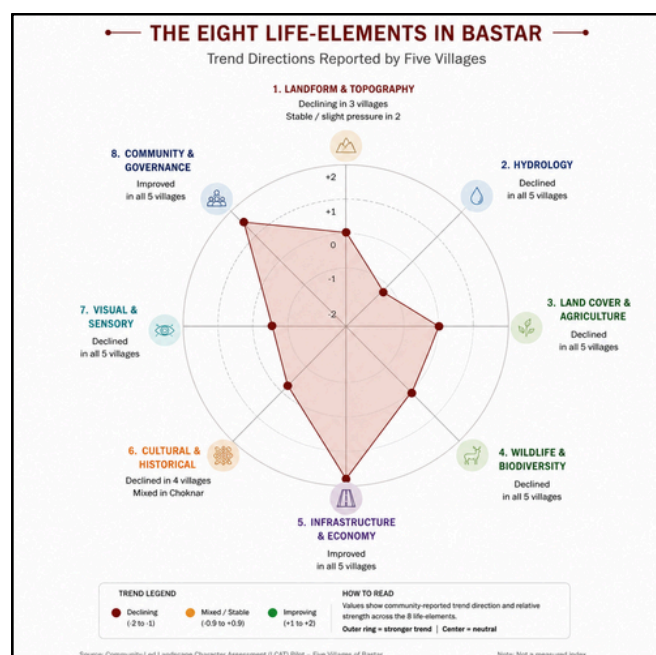
90

VOICES, 2 LANGUAGES · KOHKAPAL

THE LANDSCAPE & THE CLIMATE SIGNALS

Bastar is where the pilot measures water in hand-lengths. These are forest villages first — sal and mixed forest on sandy and red soils, rainfed paddy and a living NTFP economy. The counter-current runs strong: in Karpawand, women hold the Sarpanch and Panch positions and lead the PESA Gram Sabha.

SIGNAL & WHAT COMMUNITIES REPORT	VILLAGE
A dated decline: ~90→~115→~120 ft in a year; 2–3 borewells per field; the river dried, drinking water sometimes filtered	Choknar
A generation's fall: 8–10 hand-lengths→ ~250 ft	Karpawand
Streams shrinking: ~25–50 ft → ~200–350 ft	Ulnar
The food web thinning: chemical fertilisers eliminating the small fish and crabs of the fields	Choknar



BASTAR — THE DISTINCTIVE INSIGHT

Bastar supplies the pilot's most vivid units of change — the hand-length, the filtered river cup, the thirty-feet-in-a-year note. Communities that measure this precisely are ready to monitor their own restoration.

KEY FINDINGS

- ▶ Hydrology declined in all five villages — the borewell race atop a rainfed system, the recharge forest thinning as extraction accelerates.
- ▶ Wildlife declined in all five; Choknar's paddy-field fish and crabs poisoned out — a food source and a food web erased together.
- ▶ Infrastructure and governance both improved — women-led PESA leadership in Karpawand, ninety participants in Kohkapal.
- ▶ Culture thinning while the anchors hold — sacred groves, the Gayta-Pujari institutions, the Bhatri and Halbi languages themselves.
- ▶ Ulnar remembers its old landscape as one integrated forest–water–agriculture–livestock system, and asks for it back as a system.



WHAT THE COMMUNITIES ARE ASKING FOR

Common across the five — water management and watershed conservation first — pond and dabri restoration, ridge-to-valley treatment, recharge and river protection; forest protection with NTFP formalised; soil health against the chemical turn; millet revival; livestock revival; and SHG-led enterprise including fisheries (Karpawand plans fisheries in 10 ponds).

UNIQUE & WORTH PROBING

A drinking-water emergency — CHOKNAR

filtering river water to drink, ~30ft down in a year — the case for immediate, not planned, intervention

Borewell discipline where the race is visible

CHOKNAR & KARPAWAND

2–3 machines per field; PESA resolutions as the first instrument

The integrated-system restoration frame — ULNAR

restore the forest–water–farm–livestock system, not by sector

Bhatri-language planning — KOHKAPAL

a 90-participant, two-language assessment — the GPDP process in the community's own tongue

GREEN STORIES

“A Water Table You Can Watch Falling”

NbS / monitoring · Choknar

“From Hand-Lengths to 250 Feet”

NbS / governance · Karpawand

“Named for the Axe, Planning for the Forest”

NbS · Pharsigaon

“Ninety Voices in Two Languages”

governance · Kohkapal

“The House That Kept Its Cool”

heritage · Ulnar

MONEY & THE GAPS

Indicative routes: MGNREGA (ponds, dabris, watershed, plantation); TRIFED/Van Dhan (mahua-tamarind-chironji); CAMPA & Green India Mission (restoration); FRA/CFR + PESA (authority); Bihan (SHG enterprise); PMKSY (ridge-to-valley); JJM + district administration (Choknar emergency); Millet Mission/PMFME; PM-KUSUM (solar, with budgeting).

Emergency finance — nothing in the standard menu moves at the speed of a community filtering river water.

The price counter-current — paddy support financing the extraction that watershed money then treats.

Authority without assignment — PESA Gram Sabhas able to make borewell and grove rules no scheme yet asks of them.

GREEN VALUE CHAINS

Vermicompost	Millets	NTFP value addition	Sal-leaf plates	Fisheries	Poultry & goatery	Solar drying
Lac cultivation	Mushroom	Bamboo nursery & craft	Biomass briquettes	E-rickshaw enterprise		

THE SENSES' RECORD

Bastar's ledger is written in water and wood: river water once clean enough to drink, now filtered through cloth (Choknar); water once reached at arm's length, now behind 250 ft of casing; the kutchra house's remembered coolness against concrete heat (Ulnar); the small fish and crabs gone from the paddy field. Its indicators: an unfiltered river cup, a crab in the field, a dabri holding into summer, a borewell log that stops getting deeper.

TIERED FIRST MOVES FOR BASTAR

PRIORITY	A · community alone	B · a little support	C · convergence
Water & the borewell race	Shramdaan desilting of ponds & dabris; protect river banks & pond edges; PESA borewell-spacing resolutions; soak pits	Dabri deepening & recharge (MGNREGA + GP funds); water committees keeping the Choknar-style dated log	Ridge-to-valley watershed (PMKSY, MGNREGA); emergency safe drinking water for Choknar (JJM, district); pond revival with fisheries — Karpawand's 10 ponds
Forest & NTFP	Protection rules & watch; no-hunting norms; monsoon plantation with local seed; protect the sacred groves by resolution	NTFP collection with solar drying & grading (SHGs); nurseries; lac & mushroom trials	Restoration at scale (CAMPA, GIM); CFR claims & community management (FRA); Van Dhan aggregation (TRIFED/MFP)
Soil & the millet counterweight	Revive gobar & compost; seed banks (kodo, kutki, indigenous paddy); end residue burning by norm	Vermicompost units (Bihan); soil testing; millet demo plots & SHG processing	Millet value chains with procurement & milling (Millet Mission, PMFME); natural-farming transition support
Livelihoods & institutions	Direct SHG/VO meetings to NRM; youth water-monitoring & wildlife-watch corps; run planning in Bhatri & Halbi	Sal-leaf plate, tamarind-pickle, poultry-goatery enterprises (Bihan, PMFME); collective marketing through the haats	Youth green skilling (DDU-GKY); e-rickshaw & briquette enterprises (MSME/MNRE); LCAT in every GPDP-VPRP cycle via PESA

DISTRICT 02

Dantewada

Five villages · Binjam · Ghotpal · Hidpal · Chindnaar · Bade Panera

5

VILLAGES · GEEDAM
BLOCK

0%

CHEMICAL FERTILISER ·
HIDPAL

0 km

HAAT MARKET ·
CHINDNAAR

25

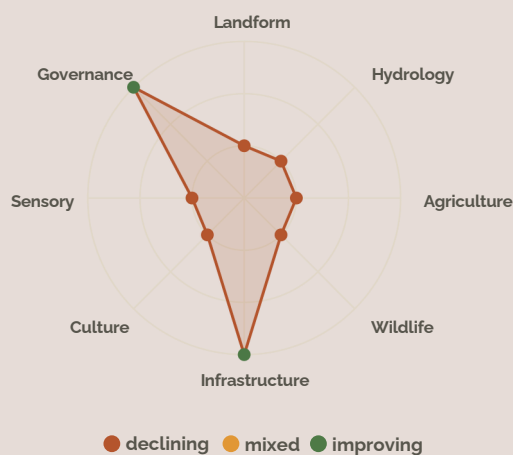
SHGS · KAWANI
SANGATHAN

THE LANDSCAPE & THE CLIMATE SIGNALS

Dantewada holds the pilot's most precious outlier and its clearest cautionary tale within a few kilometres. Hidpal reports no chemical fertiliser use at all; Binjam shows how fast a landscape can be re-engineered, its hills cut and levelled into farmland.

SIGNAL & WHAT COMMUNITIES REPORT	VILLAGE
Terrain re-engineered: hills cut and levelled into farmland as agriculture expands	Binjam
One well to the borewell age: a single well twenty years ago; borewells within the decade; levels now declining	Hidpal & Bade Panera
Delivery without function: piped water present but unreliable — 'fix piped water' the most urgent domain	Chindnaar
Festivals shortening: Sakarteen, once up to fifteen days, much reduced	Bade Panera

THE EIGHT LIFE-ELEMENTS



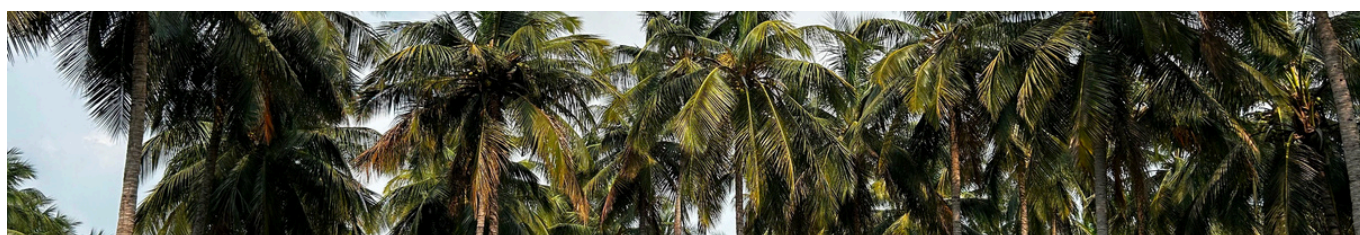
Ordinal encoding of the reported trend direction per element (inner→outer: declining · mixed/stable · improving). Not a measured index.

DANTEWADA — THE DISTINCTIVE INSIGHT

The district contains both the pilot's cautionary tale (Binjam's levelled hills) and its proof of concept (Hidpal's chemical-free farming) within a few kilometres. Every transition plan in the state should route through this comparison.

KEY FINDINGS

- ▶ All five villages return the six-down/two-up — Ghotpal's cultural and visual rows 'declined (mixed),' the grove and the elders holding what the trend erodes.
- ▶ Hidpal: 100% tribal, no chemical fertiliser, bio-input farming, the Diyari calendar intact — the pilot's living control plot.
- ▶ Binjam: the pilot's most literal landscape re-engineering; mango plantations now central to a fruit-agroforestry plan on the levelled land.
- ▶ Chindnaar: the haat at zero kilometres, a bridge over the Indravati, 50 solar street lights, five schools — its losses cultural and precise (godna, Mohari).
- ▶ Governance improved throughout — 25 SHGs and the Kawani Mahila Gram Sangathan; women's confidence rising in the assessment rooms.



WHAT THE COMMUNITIES ARE ASKING FOR

Common across the five — integrated NRM with forest regeneration and watershed/pond restoration; soil and water conservation on the levelled land; millet processing (Dantewada positioned as a kodo-kutki-ragi hub); NTFP value addition (mahua drying, tendu, tamarind); livestock, fisheries and vermicompost; solar energy; and youth employment to hold the young.

UNIQUE & WORTH PROBING

Defend the chemical-free village — HIDPAL

certify, reward and supply Hidpal's status before the chemicals arrive

Fix the piped water — CHINDNAAR

the maintenance gap given first rank by the community itself

Fruit agroforestry on levelled hills — BINJAM

mango and fruit systems as ecological repayment on re-engineered terrain

Flood management on the Indravati — BADE PANERA

the water demand runs both ways—scarcity in the wells, excess at the river

GREEN STORIES

“The Village That Never Took the Chemical Road”

NbS · Hidpal

“Fruit Trees on the Levelled Hills”

NbS · Binjam

“A Market at Zero Kilometres”

value chain · Chindnaar

“Ink and Reed”

culture · Chindnaar

“The Grove Where Forest and Faith Meet”

governance · Ghotpal

MONEY & THE GAPS

MGNREGA (ponds, watershed, works on levelled land); JJM (Chindnaar repair); Millet Mission/PMFME (district-hub processing); TRIFED/Van Dhan (mahua, tendu, tamarind); CAMPA & GIM (regeneration); Bihan (SHG stack); PM-KUSUM/MNRE (solar); NHM (health); horticulture routes (Binjam's agroforestry); PESA + FRA/CFR as authority.

No reward for restraint — Hidpal's chemical-free farming earns nothing extra today.

Maintenance has no line — the piped system's repair is the first-ranked demand because no scheme owns it.

Flood & drought in different offices — while Bade Panera experiences both on one river.

GREEN VALUE CHAINS

NTFP value addition

Millet processing

Vermicompost

Sal- & siali-leaf plates

Fisheries

Goat, poultry, piggyery

Solar drying

Mango/fruit agroforestry

Honey & lac

Bamboo furniture

Paddy-straw briquettes

Mushroom

THE SENSES' RECORD

Measured in contour and calendar: hills that stood in living memory now levelled (Binjam); Mohari fading from weddings while the Diyari drums still keep time in Hidpal; a festival that once filled fifteen days now shorter (Bade Panera); godna's ink thinning with its generation; a piped tap that gives nothing on the days it fails (Chindnaar). Indicators: a tap that runs daily, a Sakarteen past a week again, a new godna inked by choice, Hidpal still chemical-free at the next assessment.

TIERED FIRST MOVES FOR DANTEWADA

PRIORITY	A · community alone	B · a little support	C · External support and convergence
Water — both kinds	Shramdaan pond desilting; protect Indravati banks; PESA borewell discipline; log the piped-water failures	Pond deepening & recharge (MGNREGA); flood-line bunding (Bade Panera); water committees	Repair the piped system (JJM — Chindnaar first); watershed & pond restoration (PMKSY); flood works (Jal Shakti)
Soil, levelled land & the chemical-free asset	Defend Hidpal's practice by norm; gobar revival; seed banks; soil-conservation bunding on levelled plots	Vermicompost units (Bihan); millet demo plots; fruit-sapling planting with survival care	Millet-hub processing (Millet Mission, PMFME); certification for chemical-free produce; fruit agroforestry (horticulture)
Forest & NTFP	Protection rules; grove protection by resolution (the Ghotpal template); no-hunting norms; plantation	NTFP collection with solar drying — mahua, tendu, tamarind (SHGs); nurseries; honey & lac	Regeneration at scale (CAMPa, GIM); CFR claims (FRA); Van Dhan aggregation (TRIFED)
Culture, youth & institutions	Document godna & Mohari; keep Diyari & Sakarteen collective; direct SHGs to NRM	SHG enterprise on the 0-km haat (Bihan, PMFME); youth-skilling groundwork	Youth employment (DDU-GKY); healthcare (NHM); solar expansion (MNRE, PM-KUSUM); LCAT in every GPDP-VPRP cycle

Findings from the five Dantewada (Geedam block) LCAT reports and the CG GPDP Action Plan. Figures community-reported; verify against records. Hidpal's chemical-free status is self-reported — warrants field verification before certification claims. Scheme mappings indicative.

DISTRICT 03

Kondagaon

Five villages · Chipawand · Chhote Banjoda · Vanusari · Chinchdongari · Borgaon

15

SACRED GROVES (7 + 8)

35

SHGS · CHIPAWAND
(LARGEST)

170/180

FOREST HOUSEHOLDS ·
VANUSARI

261 ha

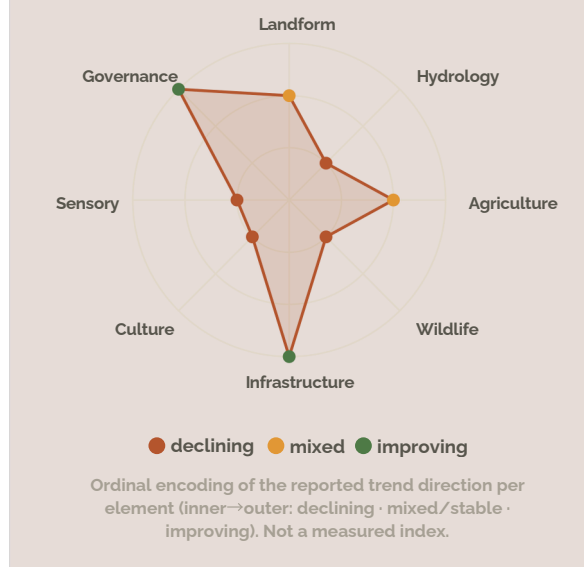
FOREST · VANUSARI

THE LANDSCAPE & THE CLIMATE SIGNALS

Kondagaon is where the pilot's names carry the most memory, and its groves carry the most hope. Fifteen sacred groves between two villages form a conservation network older than any scheme — held by faith through everything else's decline.

SIGNAL & WHAT COMMUNITIES REPORT	VILLAGE
Groundwater falling: ~50–80 ft → beyond ~150 ft	Vanusari
Ponds drying after monsoon: ~30–35 ft → ~150–200 ft; a non-functional JJM tap	Borgaon
Water that will not stay: on uneven land, arriving water cuts channels through fields, roads and ponds	Chinchdongari
Wildlife under twin pressures: wild boar and deer 'reduced drastically' — hunting and encroachment together	Vanusari

THE EIGHT LIFE-ELEMENTS



KONDAGAON — THE DISTINCTIVE INSIGHT

The sacred grove is the district's own proof that community protection works — fifteen patches of forest held intact by resolution of faith alone. The plans' proposal to extend that logic by Gram Sabha resolution is not an import; it is a scaling-up of something the district already does.

KEY FINDINGS

- ▶ The softest edges in the pilot — two villages' landform and land-cover read mixed rather than declined; the cultural row is where decline and endurance sit closest.
- ▶ Vanusari lives its name: ~170 of 180 households on the forest economy, the March–April mahua 'second only to rice.'
- ▶ Chipawand: materially better off yet 'ecologically and culturally thinner' — cement lanes, hardened soil, 'a culture the children no longer carry.'
- ▶ Borgaon: the ber groves that named it thinned; a present-but-dead JJM tap sending women and girls to the public stand.
- ▶ Governance improved — 35 SHGs in Chipawand (the pilot's largest base), VO and CLF throughout, the Gayta- Pujari institutions inside the room.

WHAT THE COMMUNITIES ARE ASKING FOR

Common across the five — water resource management first (Vanusari ranked it #1) with pond and dabri restoration; soil health against the hardening; millet revival; forest and FRA stewardship with the groves formalised; NTFP value addition as the signature economic demand; solar energy; and institutional strengthening on the SHG-VO-CLF and Gayta-Pujari base.

UNIQUE & WORTH PROBING

Teach the water to stay — CHINCHDONGARI

contour and drainage-line engineering for uneven land
— bunds and gully plugs, not just storage

Fix the tap that exists — BORGAON

adead JJM connection with a named gendered cost
— maintenance as a first-order demand

The mahua economy formalised — VANUSARI

oilprocessing, tamarind chappati, medicinal oils (Karanj, Tora, Kusum) — the forest kitchen as enterprise

Fifteen groves as a protected network — CHIPAWAND & CHHOTE BANJODA

Gram Sabha resolutions extending the devgudi logic to the working forest

GREEN STORIES

“Second Only to Rice”

NbS / value chain · Vanusari

“The Groves That Held”

NbS / governance · Chipawand & Chhote Banjoda

“Teach the Water to Stay”

NbS · Chinchdongari

“The Village of Ber Trees, Replanting”

NbS · Borgaon

“Tamarind Chappati & Mahua Laddu”

value chain · district-wide

MONEY & THE GAPS

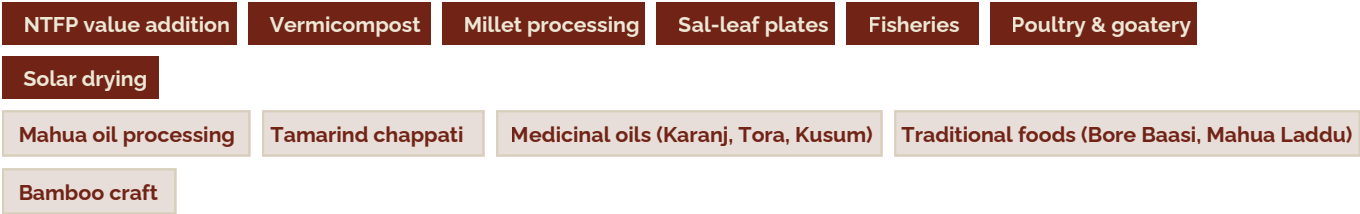
MGNREGA (farm ponds, contour & drainage works, plantation); JJM (Borgaon repair); TRIFED/Van Dhan + PMFME/ODOP (mahua-tendu-tamarind, oils, traditional foods); Millet Mission (kodo); CAMPA & GIM (plantation beyond the groves); FRA/CFR + PESA (authority for grove protection); Bihan (SHG stack); PM-KUSUM (solar, with budgeting).

The farm-gate leak — the district’s second economy priced at the point of first sale.

Engineering for unevenness — watershed money rarely follows Chinchdongari’s channel-by-channel logic.

Maintenance without an owner — the Borgaon tap as the emblem.

GREEN VALUE CHAINS



THE SENSES’ RECORD

Runs through the kitchen and the grove: mahua and tamarind as taste, income and calendar at once; the ber groves gone from Borgaon’s lanes; fifteen sacred groves greener than everything around them; sandy soil hardened under the chemical turn; women carrying water past a dead tap; a culture the children ‘no longer carry.’ Indicators: a tap that runs, water that stays on the slope after rain, a ber sapling on Borgaon’s lane, mahua sold processed not raw, a child who can name the grove’s deity and its trees.

TIERED FIRST MOVES FOR KONDAGAON

PRIORITY	A · community alone	B · a little support	C · External support and convergence ·
Water & the uneven land	Shramdaan desilting; map the channel-cutting lines after first rain (the Chinchdongari method); PESA borewell discipline; log JJM failures	Contour bunds, gully plugs, staggered structures (MGNREGA); farm-pond scaling; recharge pits	Repair JJM (Jal Shakti — Borgaon first); watershed at scale (PMKSY); pond- network revival with fisheries
Forest, groves & NTFP	Gram Sabha resolutions extending the fifteen-grove logic; no-hunting norms; plantation; document jadi-buti knowledge	NTPF collection with solar drying (SHGs); nurseries — ber & natives for Borgaon; bamboo trials	CFR claims & community management (FRA); plantation at scale (CAMPA, GIM); Van Dhan aggregation (TRIFED)
Soil & the millet cw	Revive gobar & compost; seed banks (kodo, indigenous); end residue burning by norm	Vermicompost units (Bihan); soil testing; kodo demo plots & SHG processing	Millet value chains with milling (Millet Mission, PMFME); natural-farming transition support
Livelihoods & institutions	Direct the 35-SHG and VO-CLF platforms to NRM; document women’s water burden (Borgaon); keep Gayta-Pujari in the room	Mahua-oil, tamarind, traditional-foods pilots (Bihan, PMFME); leaf-plate & bamboo units	Processed-NTFP at scale — oils, tamarind, medicinal extraction (PMFME, TRIFED); solar dryers (PM-KUSUM); youth skilling (DDU-GKY)

Findings from the five Kondagaon LCAT reports (Chhote Banjoda assessed 14 Apr 2026, 24 participants) and the CG GDPD Action Plan. Figures community-reported; verify against CGWB. The traditional-foods/bamboo and goatery lines could not be attributed to a specific village from the extracts used — presented at district level; verify before village- level citation. Scheme mappings indicative.

DISTRICT 04

Kanker

Five villages · Daspur · Barchegondi · Dhanelikhanhar · Bardevari · Sidesar

500–600 ft

DEEPEST BORES IN
PILOT · DHANELIKANHAR

698 ha

FOREST · BARCHEGONDI

120

FOREST PATTAS ·
BARCHEGONDI

4→1

NEVER-DRYING PONDS ·
SIDESAR

THE LANDSCAPE & THE CLIMATE SIGNALS

Kanker is where the pilot's cascade runs furthest — and where the communities describe it with the greatest precision. It supplied the pilot's two most quotable lines: 'rich in cash but poor in life-support' (Bardevari), and Daspur's theory of institutions.

SIGNAL & WHAT COMMUNITIES REPORT	VILLAGE
The deepest bores in the pilot: ~150–200 ft ~500–600 ft, attributed to expanding paddy	Dhanelikhanhar
A five-fold descent: ~45 ft → ~200–250 ft, some borewells 300–330 ft	Sidesar
Sweet water lost: year-round sweet wells all dried; borewell water 'tastes of iron'	Bardevari
The scent after rain: the sondhi- sondhi khushbu — petrichor — reported gone	Barchegondi

THE EIGHT LIFE-ELEMENTS



Ordinal encoding of the reported trend direction per element (inner→outer: declining · mixed/stable · improving). Not a measured index.

KANKER — THE DISTINCTIVE INSIGHT

The district states the pilot's two master theses in community words — rich in cash, poor in life-support (the economics), and protect the trees and the committee comes back to life (the institutions). Everything the LCAT argues, Kanker's villages said first.

KEY FINDINGS

- ▶ The cleanest six-down/two-up in the CG pilot, and the furthest advanced — six kilometres from town, furthest down the MSP-paddy-borewell arc.
- ▶ Bardevari: sweet wells gone, iron-tasting borewells — 'the village has grown rich in cash but poor in life-support.'
- ▶ Daspur: soil 'hard like a brick,' the earthworms gone; the forest committee dormant with the forest — and the allocation question, 'our water reaches other places.'
- ▶ Barchegondi: Van-char Kinare, 86% ST, 698 ha forest, 120 Forest Pattas, a rare PESA Justice & Peace Committee — the vanished petrichor and the vultures' demanded return.
- ▶ Dhanelianhar names its own 'critical tipping point' — the deepest bores in the three-state pilot.

WHAT THE COMMUNITIES ARE ASKING FOR

Common across the five — water back first — pond revival (Sidesar's four), recharge, watershed and borewell discipline against the 500-foot spiral; soil regeneration with the earthworm's return as the test; millet revival; forest protection on the Barchegondi base; livestock revival for the oxen-and-gobar cycle; and SHG-led green enterprise.

UNIQUE & WORTH PROBING

Bring back the vultures — BARCHEGONDI

pesticide load, carcass practice and forest health bundled in one indicator species

Water justice, not just works — DASPUR

water that reaches other places while the village runs short — an allocation question for the district table

Revive the committee by reviving the forest — DASHPUR

institutional restoration framed as ecological restoration — the community's own theory of change

The iron-taste protocol — BARDEVARI

a sensory observation converted into a testable demand — water-quality testing wherever taste has changed

GREEN STORIES

“Bring Back the Vultures”

NbS · Barchegondi

“If We Protect the Trees, Our Committee Comes Back to Life”

governance · Daspur

“Sweet Water, Iron Water”

NbS / monitoring · Bardevari

“Four Ponds, One Left”

NbS · Sidesar

“The Tipping Point Village”

NbS / governance · Dhanelikhanhar

MONEY & THE GAPS

MGNREGA (pond revival, recharge, watershed); PMKSY-Watershed (treatment at scale); Millet Mission/PMFME (diversification); Bihan (SHG stack); CAMPA & GIM (plantation) with FRA/CFR + PESA on Barchegondi's base; JJM + water-quality testing (the iron-taste protocol); PM-KUSUM (solar, with budgeting); livestock-mission routes (the oxen-and-gobar revival); NHM where health follow-up is raised.

The two price signals at their sharpest — paddy support financing the extraction its watershed and millet money then treats — in the most market-linked district.

Allocation with no forum — Daspur's exported-water grievance has no scheme box, only a district table.

Indicator-species finance — nothing pays for the carcass-management and pesticide-reduction package a vulture's return requires.

GREEN VALUE CHAINS

Vermicompost & bio-inputs

Millet processing

Livestock, poultry, goatery

Fisheries

NTFP on the forest edge

Solar drying & irrigation

Vulture-recovery package

Water-quality testing services

Temple-anchored enterprise (Sidesar)

THE SENSES' RECORD

The pilot's most complete ledger — one register per sense, each already an indicator. Smell: the scent after rain, gone (Barchegondi). Taste: sweet well water traded for iron (Bardevari). Sight: the vulture's circle absent; four ponds reduced to one (Sidesar). Touch: soil the oxen kept 'crumbly and soft,' now 'hard like a brick' (Daspur, Dhanelikhanhar). And the body politic: a forest committee dormant with its forest. Scoreboard: petrichor after first rain, a vulture overhead, sweet water in one revived well, a second pond holding through summer — and a committee back in session.

TIERED FIRST MOVES FOR KANKER

PRIORITY	A · community alone	B · a little support	C · External support and convergence ·
Water & the 500-foot question	Shramdaan desilting of surviving ponds; protect the Mahanadi bank (Sidesar); PESA borewell discipline; village water logs (Choknar model)	Pond revival toward Sidesar's four (MGNREGA); recharge; water-quality testing where taste changed (Bardevari)	Watershed at scale (PMKSY); the Daspur allocation question tabled at district level (Jal Shakti); safe drinking water (JJM)
Soil, oxen & the millet cw	Revive gobar & compost; end residueburning; seed banks (kodo, kutki, indigenous); adopt earthworm & petrichor as indicators	Vermicompost units (Bihan); soil testing; millet demo plots; livestock groundwork — fodder, vet camps	Millet value chains (Millet Mission, PMFME); natural-farming support; livestock missions for the draught-and- dairy base
Forest & the vulture	Protection rules on Barchegondi's base; no-hunting norms; carcass-management & pesticide-reduction norms; grove protection by resolution	Plantation with fencing; NTFP collection & solar drying on the forest edge; nurseries	Restoration at scale (CAMPA, GIM); CFR claims (FRA); a financed vulture-recovery package with the Forest Dept
Institutions & livelihoods	Revive Daspur's forest committee around the first plantation; seat water & forest rules in Barchegondi's PESA Justice & Peace Committee; SHGs to NRM	SHG green enterprise — vermicompost, poultry-goatery, processing (Bihan, PMFME); youth skilling	Youth green skilling (DDU-GKY); solar irrigation with budgeting (PM-KUSUM); LCAT in every GPDP-VPRP cycle

Findings from the five Kanker LCAT reports and the CG GPDP Action Plan. Populations: Barchegondi 559 (86% ST, 698 ha, 120 pattas); Bardevari 2,246; Dhanelikhanhar 1,687; Sidesar 1,132; Daspur 1,935. Recalled depths are community approximations — verify against CGWB. The Sidesar temple-enterprise is flagged as worth probing, not a commitment. Scheme mappings indicative.

DISTRICT 05

Rajnandgaon

Five villages · Tumdibod · Sonesarar · Cha Tolagaon · Bargaon · Margaon

25 → 150 ft

THE PLAINS' DESCENT ·
TUMDIBOD

the only

'DECLINING—WITH
REVERSAL' · SONESARAR

23

SHGS · SONESARAR

1–2 km

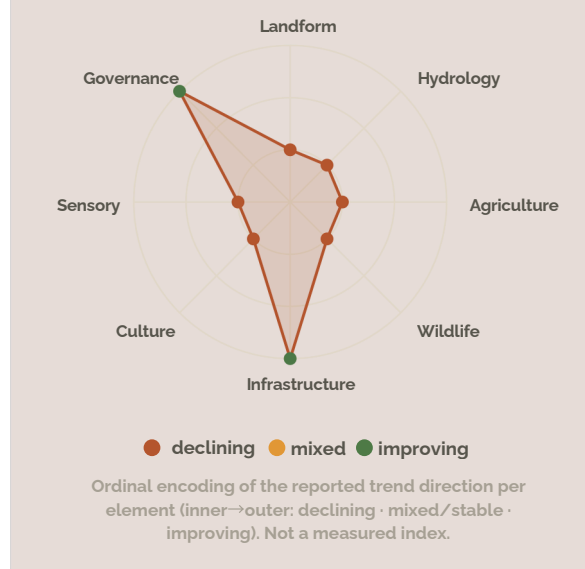
TO MARKET · TUMDIBOD

THE LANDSCAPE & THE CLIMATE SIGNALS

Rajnandgaon is the pilot's look at where the road leads. These plains villages — the rice bowl — are the most market-linked, least tribal and most drawn-down in the state's west. What the plateau is entering, the plains have lived: their testimony reads like a message sent back up the road.

SIGNAL & WHAT COMMUNITIES REPORT	VILLAGE
The plains' descent: ~25–30 ft → ~80–150 ft	Tumdibod
The community's own forecast: 'a possibility of water famine... the village will become like a desert'	Tumdibod
The borewell class line: paddy possible only for households with a borewell	Cha Tolagaon
The scent after rain: the sondhi-sondhi khushbu gone — the same finding as Barchegondi, independently	Margaon

THE EIGHT LIFE-ELEMENTS



RAJNANDGAON — THE DISTINCTIVE INSIGHT

The plains are the plateau's postcard from the future — the same cascade, further along — and they contain the pilot's only marked reversal. If Sonesarar's turn can be understood and financed, the district's warning becomes the district's demonstration.

KEY FINDINGS

- ▶ The six-down/two-up with two tell-tale variations — Cha Tolagaon's land-cover reads 'Mixed/Stress,' Sonesarar's rows carry the pilot's only 'reversal' and 'digital shift.'
- ▶ Tumdibod: ~90% OBC/General, the market 1–2 km away; elders complete the trajectory — 'the village will become like a desert.'
- ▶ Bargaon: named for banyans now largely gone; 'chemical fertilizers turned the soil hard and barren, and input costs risen enormously.'
- ▶ Sonesarar: the gold-pond legend; agriculture 'declining — with reversal,' the only such notation in the three-state pilot; 23 active SHGs.
- ▶ Margaon gave the district its epigraph — the vanished petrichor, in almost the same words as Barchegondi two districts away.



WHAT THE COMMUNITIES ARE ASKING FOR

Common across the five — water first — pond and sarar rejuvenation (Sonesarar's founding pond), recharge, borewell discipline before the desert warning matures; soil regeneration with input-cost relief as the argument; shade and canopy back (Bargaon's banyans on lanes and bunds); crop diversification studying Sonesarar's reversal; and SHG-led enterprise with youth retention.

UNIQUE & WORTH PROBING

Borewell equity — CHA TOLAGAON

where a machine decides who can farm — shared or solar community irrigation and collective rules

The desert warning as a premise — TUMDIBOD

a community that projected its own end point is asking for sequencing — recharge and budgeting now

The reversal worth studying — SONESARAR

the pilot's only marked agricultural turn — document at source, then finance as the plains' demonstration

Named for the banyan, replanting it — BARGAON

canopy restoration with the village's own name as the indicator

GREEN STORIES

“The Gold Beneath the Pond”

NbS / culture · Sonesarar

“The Reversal Worth Studying”

NbS / agriculture · Sonesarar

“Named for the Banyan”

NbS · Bargaon

“One Borewell Divides the Village”

DRE / equity · Cha Tolagaon

“The Village That Forecast Its Own Desert”

NbS / governance · Tumdibod

MONEY & THE GAPS

MGNREGA (pond & sarar rejuvenation, plantation); PMKSY-Watershed (plains drainage); Millet Mission/PMFME (diversification off paddy); Bihan (SHG stack); PM-KUSUM (community solar for borewell-less households, with budgeting); JJM (drinking-water security as the table falls); CAMPA/GIM-type routes (canopy); PKVY/NMNF (the input-cost exit).

Equity finance — no standard line targets irrigation access for the household without a machine.

Prevention at the warning stage — Tumdibod has issued its own forecast; crisis-calibrated finance will otherwise wait for it to come true.

Learning finance — nothing pays to document and transfer a reversal like Sonesarar's — the cheapest knowledge product the pilot could buy.

GREEN VALUE CHAINS



THE SENSES' RECORD

The pilot's warning label, in smell and touch: the sondhi-sondhi khushbu gone from Margaon in almost the same words as Barchegondi; Sonesarar's fruit that no longer announces itself even in the hand; soil 'hard and barren' under the longest chemical exposure in the state pilot; the mud house remembered as 'better than a palace'; Bargaon's banyan canopy opened to paddy glare. Indicators: petrichor after first rain, a banyan sapling shading a lane, water standing in the sarar at Kila Para, a household ledger where the input line finally falls.

TIERED FIRST MOVES FOR RAJNANDGAON

PRIORITY	A · community alone	B · a little support	C · External support and convergence ·
Water & the desert warning	Shramdaan desilting of ponds & the Sonesarar sarar; protect drainage lines; Gram Sabha borewell rules; soak pits	Recharge & pond deepening (MGNREGA); village water logs; drinking- water testing	Pond & sarar rejuvenation at scale (Amrit Sarovar, MGNREGA); watershed (PMKSY); drinking-water security (JJM); community solar irrigation (PM-KUSUM)
Soil & the input-cost exit	Revive gobar & compost; reduce chemical load with petrichor as indicator; end residue burning	Vermicompost units (Bihan); soil testing; chemical-vs-organic cost-ledger demos	Natural-farming transition (PKVY/NMNF); millet & pulse value chains (Millet Mission, PMFME)
Canopy & the pond edge	Banyan, peepal & native planting onlanes, bunds, pond edges — Bargaon's name as target; sapling rotas	Village nurseries; fenced blocks; pond-edge riparian planting	Canopy restoration at scale (CAMPA/GIM); fisheries stocking in rejuvenated ponds
Equity, learning & institutions	Document Sonesarar's reversal with the farmers who made the turn; SHGs to NRM; include borewell-less households in water decisions	SHG enterprise near the 1–2 km markets (Bihan, PMFME); shared-irrigation pilot design	The reversal documented & financed as the plains' demonstration (ATMA routes); shared irrigation at scale; youth skilling (DDU-GKY)

CONCLUSION

Reading the Village Whole

What twenty-five villages, across five districts, taught one state about itself.

Read end to end, the Chhattisgarh pilot resolves into a single, insistent argument: **a landscape is one interdependent system, and it can only be governed as one.** Across Bastar, Dantewada, Kondagaon, Kanker and Rajnandgaon, the same eight life-elements were read by very different villages — a plateau village measuring water in hand-lengths, a plains village forecasting its own desert, a village that never took the chemical road — and yet the underlying grammar of change repeats with striking consistency, even as the particulars never do. No single village's finding stands for the state; each is one reading among twenty-five, and this report has tried throughout to keep that distinction rather than average it away.

The clearest thread is **water and forest as one hydrology.** Every district's hydrology declined, and in nearly every case the cause traced back to the same source: a rainfed, mixed forest-and-farm system giving way to borewell-fed paddy monoculture, encouraged by MSP and PDS rice. As the recharge forest thins, the water table falls faster; as the water table falls, the pressure to draw harder on both forest and field increases. Groundwater, in this sense, was never a separate line item from the forest canopy above it — the two decline together, exactly as the LCAT framework's opening chapters argued they would.

A second thread runs through **biodiversity and the senses.** Wildlife declined in every village that could be tabulated, and communities described that decline not as an abstraction but as something registered directly in smell, taste, sound and touch — the earthy fragrance after the first rain, gone in Barchegondi, Margaon and Sonesarar alike; the vulture's circle absent from the sky; well water turned from sweet to metallic. That five villages across three districts independently reached for the same sensory register — almost the same words, unprompted — is itself a form of evidence: it suggests a shared, real, physical change in soil biology and ecological health, not a coincidence of language.

A third thread is the state's **signature pairing of decline and endurance.** Six of the eight life-elements declined across the pilot; only infrastructure/economy and community/governance improved. But the pilot's most important nuance sits inside that pattern: culture and institutions do not always decline together. Where a sacred grove still stands — Kondagaon's fifteen devgudi, Bastar's protected patches — the community's own protection instrument survives even as other cultural practices fade. And where the forest has thinned past a threshold, as Daspur's own words made plain, the institution built to protect it goes dormant with it. Governance, in other words, is not automatically resilient; it is exactly as resilient as the ecological base it was built to steward.

This is why the report has resisted treating agriculture, water, forest, culture and livelihood as separate columns to be improved independently. The grove cascade, the vulture, the committee that runs on the forest's health — each is a demonstration that a change in one life-element is rarely contained to it. A plan that repairs a pond without also addressing the borewell incentive that drained it, or that funds a plantation without the community rule that will let it survive, treats the symptom the villages named rather than the system they described. The value the twenty-five villages have added, again and again, is exactly this integration: a mahua tree is at once ecology, income, and calendar; a sacred grove is at once biodiversity, climate buffer, and institution. Local, integrated planning is not a nicety layered onto climate adaptation — in landscapes like these, it is the only planning that can see the problem accurately at all.

WHAT THE COMMUNITIES WERE ALREADY DOING

Before any outside institution named it "climate adaptation," these villages were already practising a form of it — reading their own weather, timing their festivals to a flowering, keeping a grove because it cooled a field. The LCAT did not introduce this knowledge; it gave it a structure, a trendline, and a route into the Gram Sabha's own plan. That, more than any single finding, is what "reading the village whole" means: taking community knowledge as seriously as any instrument, because in a landscape this interconnected, it is often the only instrument fine enough to catch what is actually changing.

Chhattisgarh's twenty-five villages did not ask this report for sympathy. They asked, specifically and in their own words, for ponds desilted, wells recharged, groves protected, seed saved, and their own Gram Sabhas trusted with the authority the law already gives them. Reading the village whole is not a technique for producing better documents. It is a discipline for noticing, before it is too late to act on, that the fragrance after the rain, the vulture overhead, and the health of the committee that governs the forest are, in the end, one and the same fact about one and the same place.



“This is the first time we have looked at our village, and all that has changed in it, together — as one community.”

A self-help-group member, LCAT field conversations

ABOUT THIS REPORT

Reading the Village Whole — a national consolidated report on the Community-Led Landscape Assessment Tool (LCAT) pilots across Chhattisgarh

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