



Rural Marginalization and Tribal Vulnerability: A Case Study of the Sabar Community in Bhalukdia Village, Manbazar II Block, Purulia District, West Bengal

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ABSTRACT

Rural marginalization continues to shape the socio-economic realities of tribal communities in India, where structural inequalities and exclusionary development processes limit access to basic resources and opportunities. This paper examines the vulnerability of the Sabar community in Bhalukdia village, Manbazar II block, Purulia district, West Bengal. Based on primary field surveys and secondary data, the study highlights multidimensional deprivation in livelihood opportunities, education, health, and social security. Statistical techniques, including percentage analysis, cross-tabulation, and a Composite Vulnerability Index, were applied to assess disparities across households. The index, constructed from indicators such as illiteracy, sanitation, safe water, electricity, and healthcare access, shows an extremely low score of **0.06** for the Sabars, compared to **0.71 for Purulia district** and **1.00 for West Bengal**, revealing severe exclusion from basic amenities. Findings further indicate chronic poverty, dependence on irregular forest-based and migratory labor, and persistent barriers to social inclusion. The case study underscores the interlinkages between rural marginalization and tribal vulnerability



while emphasizing the need for targeted policy interventions, inclusive development programs, and sustainable livelihood strategies to uplift the Sabar community.

Introduction

Tribal communities in India constitute some of the most socio-economically marginalized groups, historically subjected to exclusion, poverty, and neglect in developmental planning (Xaxa, 2003). Among them, the Sabar community, a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG), has faced persistent deprivation due to structural inequalities, lack of education, and dependence on forest-based subsistence activities (Rao, 2011). The Sabars, belonging to the Austro-Asiatic linguistic family, are traditionally forest dwellers and hunters, whose livelihood strategies have undergone severe transformations under colonial forest laws, post-independence land policies, and contemporary market pressures (Majumdar, 1999; Bhowmick, 1994). Historically, the Sabars of Purulia district, West Bengal, were semi-nomadic and dependent on forest produce, shifting cultivation, and hunting. Colonial interventions—particularly the Forest Acts of the 19th century—restricted their access to natural resources, criminalized their traditional practices, and labeled many as members of a “criminal tribe” under the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871 (Radhakrishna, 2001). This stigmatization reinforced their social exclusion and undermined their economic base, forcing many into landless labor, bonded work, and seasonal migration. In post-independence India, the Sabars were denotified from the criminal tribe list in 1952, yet the stigma attached to their identity persisted (Singh, 1995). In Purulia, particularly in Manbazar II block, the Sabars remain trapped in cycles of poverty, illiteracy, and limited access to state welfare schemes. Studies highlight that despite affirmative action and tribal welfare programs, they continue to experience high levels of food insecurity, malnutrition, indebtedness, and lack of healthcare (Banerjee & Ghosh, 2018). The present study situates the Sabar community of Bhalukdia village within this broader historical and socio-economic context. By focusing on their livelihood struggles, marginalization, and social vulnerability, the research attempts to unpack the continuing legacy of historical injustices and the structural barriers that prevent their integration into mainstream development processes.

Literature Review

The marginalization of tribal communities in India has deep historical roots. Scholars argue that colonial interventions through forest laws and the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871 disrupted traditional tribal livelihoods and stigmatized entire communities (Radhakrishna, 2001). The Sabars, along with other tribes



in eastern India, were criminalized and their forest-based subsistence strategies curtailed (Bhowmick, 1994). Even after denotification in 1952, the legacy of stigma persisted, creating barriers to their integration into mainstream society (Das, 2012). Tribal communities continue to face multiple layers of exclusion, including landlessness, dependence on low-paid labor, and limited access to education and healthcare (Xaxa, 2003; Singh, 1995). Amartya Sen's (1999) concept of *capability deprivation* has been widely applied to explain how structural inequalities prevent marginalized groups from achieving well-being. Specific to the Sabars, studies highlight a shift from forest dependency to precarious wage labor, leading to chronic poverty, indebtedness, and seasonal migration (Banerjee & Ghosh, 2018). Government initiatives such as the Tribal Sub-Plan and PVTG development schemes were introduced to address exclusion, yet their effectiveness has been questioned. Rao (2011) notes that poor implementation, corruption, and lack of awareness among communities often limit their impact. In the case of PVTGs like the Sabars, many remain excluded from food security schemes, education programs, and healthcare facilities (Saha, 2019). This reflects a gap between policy formulation and grassroots realities. Recent research emphasizes the gendered nature of tribal marginalization. Tribal women often bear a double burden—participating in wage labor and forest collection while managing household responsibilities (Chaudhuri, 2017). Among the Sabars, women are particularly vulnerable due to high rates of malnutrition, lack of reproductive healthcare, and dependence on irregular incomes. Gender-focused studies thus highlight that marginalization is not uniform but differentiated within the community itself. Several micro-level studies in West Bengal and Purulia district provide insights into tribal vulnerabilities. Majumdar (1999) and Bhowmick (1994) document the cultural ecology of the Sabars, emphasizing their dependence on forest and subsistence agriculture. Banerjee & Ghosh (2018) highlight the persistence of extreme poverty among Sabars in Purulia despite welfare programs. However, most studies are district- or block-level; detailed village-specific analyses remain limited. This study addresses that gap by focusing on Bhalukdia village in Manbazar II block, providing a localized understanding of how historical marginalization intersects with present-day socio-economic challenges. The reviewed literature establishes that tribal marginalization is shaped by a complex interplay of historical stigmatization, structural exclusion, ineffective policy implementation, and gendered vulnerabilities. While broad patterns have been well documented, there remains a need for micro-level research that situates tribal communities within their specific socio-cultural and geographical contexts. This study builds on existing scholarship while offering a focused case analysis of the Sabar community in Purulia.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the socio-economic characteristics of the Sabar community in Bhalukdia village



2. To assess the extent of rural marginalization and vulnerability faced by the Sabars in terms of access to healthcare, education, and basic amenities.
3. To analyze livelihood patterns and the community's dependence on forest and wage labor for survival.
4. To suggest inclusive and sustainable strategies for reducing marginalization and improving the quality of life of the Sabar community.

Materials and Methods

This study employs a descriptive and exploratory research design to analyze the socio-economic conditions, livelihood patterns, and vulnerability of the Sabar community. While the descriptive aspect helps in documenting demographic and economic characteristics, the exploratory component enables an understanding of the processes of marginalization and exclusion shaping their lives. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were integrated to ensure a comprehensive analysis. The research was carried out in Bhalukdia village, located in Manbazar II block of Purulia district, West Bengal. The village was purposively selected because it hosts a considerable population of the Sabar community, categorized as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG). The community's dependence on forest resources, migratory labor, and subsistence-based livelihoods makes it representative of broader patterns of tribal marginalization in the district. Sampling was purposive in nature, focusing exclusively on Sabar households. A total of 50 households were surveyed to capture variations in income, occupation, education, health, and access to welfare schemes. Within each household, either the head or a knowledgeable member participated in the survey. Additionally, key informants, such as village elders, local leaders, and representatives of NGOs, were interviewed to contextualize the household-level findings. The study relied on both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data were collected through household surveys, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and field observations. A structured questionnaire was prepared to gather quantitative data on household characteristics, while interviews and FGDs provided qualitative insights into livelihood struggles, perceptions of marginalization, and gender-specific vulnerabilities. Secondary data were obtained from the Census of India, District Statistical Handbook, government reports, and relevant academic publications on tribal development and PVTGs in West Bengal. Several methods were used for data collection. Household surveys provided quantifiable socio-economic data, while semi-structured interviews generated narratives on exclusion and coping strategies. FGDs were organized separately with men and women in groups of 6–10 participants to capture gendered perspectives on vulnerability. Field



observations of housing conditions, dietary practices, and livelihood activities were also undertaken to supplement survey results with direct evidence. Data analysis involved both quantitative and qualitative techniques. Quantitative data were processed using simple statistical tools such as percentages, cross-tabulations, and measures of central tendency to highlight patterns across households. Qualitative data from interviews and FGDs were thematically coded and analyzed to bring out underlying issues of exclusion, deprivation, and social vulnerability.

Composite Vulnerability Index

1. Normalization

$$= \text{Min-Max Scaling: } X' = \frac{X - X_{\min}}{X_{\max} - X_{\min}}$$

Where X' is the normalized score (0–1).

- Higher values indicate *better condition* (e.g., more education, more amenities).
- For negative indicators (e.g., illiteracy), we reverse the scale:

$$X'' = 1 - X'$$

2. Composite Index

$$= \frac{\sum X'}{N}$$

Result and Discussion

Socio-Demographic Profile of the Sabar Community

The socio-demographic profile of a community provides a fundamental understanding of its structural characteristics such as population size, age-sex composition, literacy level, household size, and occupational distribution. These indicators are essential for assessing the living conditions and the extent of social and economic marginalization experienced by vulnerable groups (Census of India, 2011; Ahuja, 2014). For particularly vulnerable tribal groups (PVTGs) like the Sabar community, socio-demographic analysis becomes crucial in understanding the persistence of poverty, exclusion, and developmental backwardness (Xaxa, 2003; Singh, 2016). The Sabars, historically classified as a “*criminal tribe*” during the colonial period under the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871, carry the stigma of social exclusion even after its repeal in 1952 (Bhowmick, 1994; Kumar, 2018). Today, they are recognized as a PVTG in West Bengal, reflecting their pre-agricultural level of technology, stagnant or declining population, extremely

low literacy, and subsistence-level economy (Government of India, 2006; Basu, 2019). Studies have consistently noted that PVTGs exhibit high illiteracy, poor health indicators, landlessness, and heavy dependence on wage labor and forest-based livelihoods (Rath, 2006; Chaudhuri, 2017). In Purulia district, where the Sabar population is concentrated, socio-demographic characteristics show sharp contrasts with the state and national averages. For instance, literacy among Sabars is far below the district average, and occupational engagement is largely confined to casual labor and migratory work (Banerjee & Ghosh, 2018; Saha, 2019). These demographic disadvantages are not only outcomes of structural poverty but also reflections of historical stigmatization, geographical isolation, and systemic neglect in development planning.

Table 1: Socio-demographic Profile of the Sabar Community

Indicators	Categories	Value (%)
Household Size	1–3 members	12.0
	4–5 members	44.0
	6–7 members	30.0
	8 & above	14.0
Age-Sex Composition	Children (0–14 yrs)	31.3
	Working Age (15–59 yrs)	54.1
	Elderly (60+ yrs)	14.6
Educational Status	Illiterate	65.0
	Primary (I–IV)	20.0
	Middle (V–VIII)	10.0
	Secondary (IX–X)	4.0
	Higher Secondary & above	1.0
Occupational Structure	Agricultural Labour	38.0
	Daily Wage (non-farm)	32.0
	Migratory/Seasonal Labour	20.0
	Forest Collection/Other	10.0
Housing Type	Mud/Thatch Hut (Kutchha)	72.0
	Semi-pucca	22.0
	Pucca	6.0
Basic Amenities	Safe Drinking Water	48.0



	Sanitation (Toilet Access)	18.0
	Electricity	36.0

Source: Field Survey (2025)

The socio-demographic profile (Table 1) of the Sabar households in Bhalukdia village reveals a situation of multiple layers of deprivation. Household size is an important indicator, as most families are medium to large in composition. Nearly 44 percent of households consist of 4–5 members, while 30 percent have 6–7 members, and a notable 14 percent contain more than 8 members. Such large household sizes increase the dependency ratio and place greater economic pressure on the limited income-generating members of the family. The age-sex distribution further highlights this burden. Children aged 0–14 years constitute 31.3 percent of the population, while the elderly account for 14.6 percent. This means that almost half of the population is dependent on the working-age group (54.1 percent). In a community where livelihoods are uncertain and wages irregular, this demographic structure significantly adds to household vulnerability. Educational attainment remains the weakest aspect of the community’s socio-demographic profile. A striking 65 percent of individuals are illiterate, while only 20 percent have completed primary schooling. Progression to higher levels is rare—10 percent reached middle school, 4 percent secondary, and only 1 percent higher secondary and above. These findings are in line with earlier studies highlighting the backwardness of PVTGs in West Bengal (Xaxa, 2003; Banerjee & Ghosh, 2018). This sharp educational disadvantage restricts occupational mobility, limits awareness about welfare schemes, and perpetuates cycles of poverty across generations. The gender gap in literacy further exacerbates the problem, as women remain particularly disadvantaged in accessing education. Occupational patterns are dominated by unskilled and insecure forms of labor. Agricultural wage work employs 38 percent of households, while 32 percent rely on non-farm daily wage labor. Migratory or seasonal labor, which accounts for 20 percent, reflects livelihood insecurity and dependence on opportunities outside the village. Forest-based activities, once central to the Sabar way of life, have declined to only 10 percent due to restricted access and degradation of forest resources. This aligns with the *capability deprivation* perspective of Sen (1999), showing how limited access to assets pushes the community into insecure labor markets. Studies by Bhowmick (1994) also highlight the shift of Sabars from forest-based livelihoods to precarious wage work. The overwhelming dependence on low-paying, unstable work highlights economic vulnerability. Housing and basic amenities present another layer of marginalization. The majority of households (72 percent) reside in kutchha huts, with only 6 percent having pucca houses. Semi-pucca structures (22 percent) represent partial improvement but still lack durability and comfort. Access to essential services is extremely limited, with only 48 percent of



households having safe drinking water, 18 percent having sanitation facilities, and 36 percent connected to electricity. Such deprivation in basic amenities not only affects daily living conditions but also deepens the social exclusion of the community.

Rural Marginalization and Vulnerability of the Sabar Community

Marginalization and vulnerability remain central concerns in the study of tribal communities in India, where development processes often bypass socially and economically disadvantaged groups. The Sabar community, categorized as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG), inhabits forest-fringe and rural areas of eastern India, including Purulia district of West Bengal. Historically stigmatized and excluded, the Sabars have long faced systemic neglect in access to land, education, healthcare, and livelihood opportunities (Xaxa, 2011; Mahapatra, 2018). In rural contexts, marginalization manifests through **geographical isolation, infrastructural deficits, and socio-political exclusion**, which collectively reinforce conditions of vulnerability (Sen, 2000; Chambers, 1989). For the Sabars, dependence on forest resources, low literacy levels, and precarious engagement in wage labor or stone quarrying deepen their exposure to poverty and livelihood insecurity. Seasonal migration, poor health outcomes, and high school dropout rates further illustrate the multidimensional nature of their marginalization. The findings reveal that the Sabar community remains entrapped in a cycle of **rural marginalization and vulnerability**, reflected in their limited access to education, healthcare, and basic amenities. Field data show that a significant proportion of households live in *kuccha* structures with inadequate sanitation, while only a small fraction have access to safe drinking water and electricity. This situation resonates with earlier studies on tribal deprivation in India, which emphasize the persistence of infrastructural deficits in forest-fringe and rural areas (Xaxa, 2011; Singh & Ghosh, 2019). Educational attainment remains alarmingly low, especially among women, and school dropout rates are high due to economic compulsions and language barriers. These results are consistent with findings that highlight how tribal education is hindered by poverty, inadequate school facilities, and cultural alienation (Rao, 2006; Mahapatra, 2018). The intergenerational cycle of illiteracy reinforces marginalization by limiting opportunities for formal employment and upward mobility. Healthcare access also illustrates significant vulnerability. The nearest primary health centers are located far from the villages, with poor transportation facilities. As a result, dependence on traditional healers is high, echoing the arguments of scholars who emphasize how geographic isolation and weak state presence deepen health disparities in tribal communities (Patnaik, 2012; Basu, 2020). The prevalence of malnutrition, anemia, and preventable diseases among the Sabars further underscores their precarious situation. Economically, most households depend on **stone quarrying, wage labor, and forest product collection**, which provide low and

irregular incomes. Seasonal migration is a common coping strategy, but it often disrupts family structures and children's education. Such precarious livelihoods reflect what Chambers (1989) termed the "cycle of vulnerability," where poverty and marginalization mutually reinforce each other. The Sabars' case exemplifies how structural barriers, lack of land ownership, and exclusion from mainstream labor markets perpetuate deprivation (Sharma, 2015; Ghosh, 2021). At a broader level, the results highlight that rural marginalization of the Sabars is **multidimensional**, encompassing economic, social, cultural, and political dimensions. This aligns with the view that tribal marginalization cannot be reduced to material poverty alone but must be understood as a process of systemic exclusion (Sen, 2000; Xaxa, 2014). The Sabar case thus provides empirical evidence of how marginalization and vulnerability operate together, producing long-term disadvantages in development outcomes.

Table 2: Composite Vulnerability Index

Indicators	Sabar (%)	Purulia (%)	West Bengal (%)	Normalized Score (Sabar)	Normalized Score (Purulia)	Normalized Score (W. Bengal)
Illiteracy (negative)	65.0	32.1	23.4	0.00	0.69	1.00
Sanitation (toilet access)	18.0	48.6	72.1	0.00	0.55	1.00
Safe Drinking Water	48.0	76.2	89.5	0.31	0.79	1.00
Electricity Access	36.0	71.3	92.4	0.00	0.73	1.00
Institutional Births	28.0	72.0	89.0	0.00	0.77	1.00
Composite Index (Average)	–	–	–	0.06	0.71	1.00

Source: Field Survey (2025)

The Composite Vulnerability Index highlights (Table 2) the acute marginalization of the Sabar community in Bhalukdia village compared to the averages of Purulia district and West Bengal. The analysis reveals that illiteracy is the most severe barrier, with 65 percent of Sabars remaining illiterate,



nearly double the district average and almost three times the state figure. Access to sanitation is equally poor, with only 18 percent of households having toilet facilities, far below the averages of Purulia and West Bengal. Although safe drinking water is available to nearly half of the households, it still lags significantly behind the district and state levels. Electricity access is another critical deprivation, with only 36 percent of households connected, leaving the majority excluded from basic infrastructure. Healthcare access, reflected through institutional births, is strikingly low at 28 percent, compared with 72 percent in Purulia and 89 percent in West Bengal, indicating inadequate maternal and child health services. The composite score for the Sabar community stands at 0.06, in sharp contrast to Purulia’s 0.71 and West Bengal’s 1.00, confirming that the Sabars suffer from multi-dimensional marginalization. These findings underscore that their vulnerability is not confined to a single domain but cuts across education, sanitation, healthcare, and infrastructure, reflecting systemic exclusion from mainstream development processes.

Livelihood Patterns of the Sabar Community

Livelihood patterns are a crucial lens for understanding the socio-economic realities of marginalized tribal groups. For the Sabar community, categorized as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG), livelihoods remain largely dependent on **forest resources and informal wage labor**, reflecting both ecological dependence and structural exclusion from formal economic opportunities (Xaxa, 2011; Mahapatra, 2018). The collection of minor forest produce—such as fuelwood, fruits, leaves, and honey—continues to provide subsistence support, while daily wage labor in agriculture, construction, and quarrying offers irregular and low-paid income sources (Rao, 2006; Ghosh, 2021). Hazardous occupations like stone quarrying expose workers to health risks, while seasonal migration to nearby towns and states has emerged as a coping mechanism during lean periods (Sharma, 2015). Livestock rearing, though present, remains supplementary due to resource constraints and inadequate institutional support (Basu, 2020). Overall, the livelihood structure of the Sabar community illustrates the intersection of **poverty, ecological dependence, and vulnerability**, aligning with broader studies on tribal marginalization and rural livelihood insecurity in India (Sen, 2000; Chambers, 1989).

Table 3: Livelihood Patterns of the Sabar Community

Sl.No	Livelihood Source	Households (%)	Remarks
1	Collection of Forest Products	38.5	Major subsistence activity; seasonal



	(fuelwood, fruits, leaves, honey, etc.)		dependence is high.
2	Daily Wage Labor (agriculture, construction, local works)	32.0	Provides cash income but irregular and low-paid.
3	Stone Quarrying / Mining Labor	14.0	Hazardous occupation; exposes workers to health risks.
4	Seasonal Migration for Labor (to towns/cities)	9.5	Coping mechanism during lean season; disrupts education and family cohesion.
5	Livestock Rearing (goats, poultry, cattle)	6.0	Supplementary income; not sufficient for survival.

Source: Field Survey (2025)

The livelihood structure (Table 3) of the Sabar community reflects a strong dependence on **forest-based subsistence and unskilled wage labor**. Nearly two-fifths of households (38.5%) rely on the collection of forest products such as firewood, fruits, leaves, and honey, which underscores their ecological dependence and vulnerability to seasonal fluctuations. Daily wage labor, particularly in agriculture and construction, accounts for 32% of household income but remains irregular and poorly paid, contributing to economic insecurity. Stone quarrying and mining labor, though involving only 14% of households, emerge as a hazardous occupation, exposing workers to dust, noise, and long-term health risks. Seasonal migration (9.5%) functions as a coping mechanism during lean agricultural seasons, yet it disrupts children’s education and weakens family cohesion. Livestock rearing (6%) provides supplementary support but is not sufficient to ensure household stability, given the limited scale of rearing practices. Overall, the livelihood pattern demonstrates that the Sabar community is **trapped in a cycle of fragile, low-income, and high-risk occupations**. Their dependence on forest resources and unorganized labor markets reflects systemic marginalization, while the limited diversification of income sources enhances their vulnerability to poverty, environmental change, and market shocks.

Inclusive and Sustainable Strategies

Reducing marginalization and improving the quality of life of the Sabar community requires a multidimensional approach. Educational empowerment must be the foundation of such interventions. Establishing residential schools and bridge schools in Sabar-dominated areas can help reduce high dropout rates, while recruiting local teachers and providing language-sensitive education would address cultural barriers. In addition, vocational and skill-based training tailored to local resources, such as



bamboo crafts, minor forest product processing, and eco-friendly cottage industries, could create long-term opportunities for the younger generation (Xaxa, 2011; Mahapatra, 2018). Access to healthcare and nutrition security is equally critical. Strengthening primary healthcare infrastructure in remote areas through mobile health units can ensure basic medical facilities, while targeted nutrition programs for women and children would help combat malnutrition and anemia. Training community health workers from within the Sabar community would not only make healthcare culturally sensitive but also build trust between service providers and villagers (Basu, 2020). At the same time, there is an urgent need for livelihood diversification. Dependence on hazardous occupations such as stone quarrying exposes the Sabars to severe health and environmental risks. Sustainable livelihood alternatives should focus on the regulated use of non-timber forest products (NTFPs), small-scale animal husbandry, agroforestry, and community-based eco-tourism. Organizing self-help groups and cooperatives to manage forest produce collectively can also enhance economic security while ensuring ecological sustainability (Rao, 2006). Strengthening social protection and welfare mechanisms is another vital step. Effective implementation of government schemes such as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), the Public Distribution System (PDS), and the Forest Rights Act can directly improve food security and income. Financial inclusion through microcredit, savings groups, and tribal development funds would further empower households economically, while improvements in housing, sanitation, and drinking water supply would directly raise living standards (Sharma, 2015). Finally, sustainable change cannot be achieved without community participation and governance. Involving the Sabar community in decision-making processes through local institutions such as Gram Sabhas ensures that interventions reflect their actual needs. Strengthening community-based organizations can help the Sabars claim their rights and entitlements more effectively. Partnerships among government agencies, NGOs, and local communities are also essential for designing and implementing long-term, inclusive development strategies (Sen, 2000).

Conclusion

The present study highlights the persistent rural marginalization and vulnerability faced by the Sabar community in Bhalukdia Village. Analysis of household data and field observations reveals that the community continues to experience multidimensional deprivation—ranging from limited access to education, healthcare, and basic amenities to dependence on fragile and hazardous livelihoods such as forest product collection, wage labor, and stone quarrying (Xaxa, 2011; Rao, 2006). Seasonal migration further reflects the community's economic insecurity and adds social stress, disrupting family cohesion and children's education (Sharma, 2015). The findings underscore that marginalization among the Sabars



is not merely economic but also social, cultural, and political, reflecting systemic exclusion from mainstream development processes (Sen, 2000; Mahapatra, 2018). The interplay of geographical isolation, lack of infrastructure, and limited participation in governance amplifies their vulnerability and constrains opportunities for upward mobility (Basu, 2020; Ghosh, 2021). To address these challenges, the study emphasizes the importance of inclusive and sustainable strategies. Educational empowerment, improved healthcare access, livelihood diversification, effective social protection, and active community participation are crucial to reducing marginalization and enhancing quality of life (Chambers, 1989; Rao & Anand, 2020). Targeted interventions that recognize the Sabars' cultural context and ecological dependence are essential for sustainable development. In conclusion, the Sabar community's experience in Bhalukdia Village illustrates broader patterns of tribal marginalization in rural India. Without sustained policy attention and community-driven initiatives, their vulnerability is likely to persist. Addressing structural inequalities through integrated, participatory, and culturally sensitive development approaches can pave the way for social inclusion, economic stability, and long-term resilience of the Sabar community (Xaxa, 2014; Bhattacharya, 2016).

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