

Bhasha Annual Report 1998 – 99

The year has been very active for the Bhasha Centre. As in the previous two years, the Centre organised the Verrier Elwin Memorial Lecture which was delivered by Prof. Ramachandra Guha on the 27th of February 1999. The Centre also continued to publish Dhol magazine. During the last twelve months we have published 16 issues covering 8 languages namely Kukna, Rathwi, Dehwali, Pawri, Ahirani, Dungri Bhili, Panchmahali Bhili, and Bhantu. The library at Tejgadh continued its work, and we took up several minor activities for welfare of Tejgadh including 3-phase electricity supply and social forestry.

During this year the Centre,

Started an archery competition in collaboration with the Police Department (Rural).
did the groundwork for starting computer training for tribal and rural poor with the help of the Tribal Sub-plan,

Conducted a workshop for the employees of Sardar Sarovar Punarvasan Agency and for police personnel in the Rural Division,

held a 3- week long Rural Placement Camp for 40 students of the National Institute of Design in February 1999,

held another short camp of one week for a batch of senior NID students in November 1998,

Organised a Tribal Artists Co operative for covering a wide range of villages,

Organised a 4-month long Tribal Artists Camp,

held an important national seminar on Tribal History, Culture & Literature,

held a series of workshops on Tribal Knowledge Systems,

held in collaboration with the Department of Linguistics a workshop on Language Philosophy, Planning & Practice,

organised 3 day exhibition of tribal arts in the Faculty of Fine Arts in March 1999,

prepared and published an inventory of Tribal Communities & Languages,

accidentally found and started exploring systematically a medieval city and two ancient rock paintings in the vicinity of the Koraj Hill,

provided facilities and infrastructure for initiating a national level Human Rights Body called Denotified & Nomadic Tribes Rights Action Group,

added to its list of publications an English magazine *Budhan*.

inducted four tribal artists and activists in the Bhasha Centre staff.

continued the non-formal schooling experiment for children of migrant tribal laborers till August 1998,

got some of the students admitted to regular schools, instituted 8 Senior and Junior Fellowships, out of which, one was awarded to an archaeologist,

established contact with numerous nomadic tribes,

prepared documentation on migrant tribal labourers,

helped Smt. Mallika Sarabhai in preparing audio and video CDs on tribals of Gujarat.

worked in collaboration with Trifed, Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya, Sahitya Akademi, National Institute of Design and M.S. University,

organised a charity show of Hazar Chaurasir Ma and

carried out research on Tribal Knowledge sponsored by Action Aid.

The Centre now has its own premises at 6, United Avenue, Near Dinesh Mill, given to us by Dr. Surekha Devi for lifetime use, and a plot of 14.000sq.m. land of building its proposed campus at Tejgadh, as well as two houses rented by the Panchayat – one used for activities and another for computer training programme. During the year we had many distinguished visitors from U.K., Australia, U.S, Germany and France as well as from all parts of India. Among the most distinguished visitors were Prof. Romila Thapar, Prof. Gayatri Chakrabarty Spivak, Smt. Mahasweta Devi, who is now our Trustee, Prof. Greg Allice, Prof. David Dalby, Shri Govind Nihalini, Smt. Jaya Bachchan, Smt. Gulshan Nanda, Shri Nirmalkanti Bhattacharya, who is the Director of National Book Trust, Secretary, Sahitya Akademi, Shri A. K. Modi, who is the Commissioner of Tribal Development, Gujarat Government and Dr. Das, Secretary, Social Welfare Department. The Activities of the Centre have received considerable media coverage in news papers such as The Hindu, The Times of India, The Indian Express, magazines like The Week and Frontline, radio services such as All India Radio, BBC and Voice of America and TV channels such as Star Plus, TV Eye, Zee TV and VNM.

There have been some additions to the staff Darshana Shah, Sonal Baxi, Asutosh Vyas and Neeraj Kenge joined the Centre as the employees of the Centre. The Centre has acquired one computer unit in Baroda for office work and three in Tejgadh for training purposes and some office furniture. We have also acquired books worth Rs. 7,00,000/-

given to us for use and Rs. 80,000/- for Chharanagar Library and approximately Rs. 30,000/- for the Centre's collection.

Sandhya Gajjar
Secretary