

# **bhasha**

**Bhasha Research and Publication Centre, Vadodara and  
Adivasi Academy, Tejgadh**

**Annual Report 2019-20**

## A) LANGUAGES, ART AND CULTURE

### 1. People's Linguistic Survey of India (PLSI)

The *People's Linguistic Survey of India* is the first nation-wide survey of Indian languages to be taken up after India's independence. Embarked upon by Bhasha's Founder, Dr. G. N. Devy in 2010, the survey covered all States and Union Territories of India involving 3000 community speakers, linguists, scholars and publishers. Reporting on 780 living languages in the country, the survey was completed in a span of four years and is presently being published in a 70-volume series in regional languages, English and Hindi.

This past year, five volumes were published under the *Peoples Linguistic Survey of India*. This included the translation of the Punjab and Maharashtra volumes into Hindi, and those of Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal into English. With this, the total number of volumes published under the series is presently 49.

### 2. Endangered Languages (supported by Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Govt. of India)

Taking *The People's Linguistic Survey of India* forward, Bhasha has moved on to explore the endangered languages of India. In 2018, under the leadership of PLSI's Chief Editor, Dr. Devy, Bhasha began with the study and documentation of 10 threatened tribal languages of western India. Continuing this initiative, Bhasha identified and documented 10 more of the following vulnerable languages in audio-visual format during the year under review:



In Gujarat: Kunkna, Charani, Siddi, Chaudhari, Gamit, Dhodia

In Maharashtra: Gondi, Halbi and Pawri

In Karnataka: Hakki-Pikki

The documentation has resulted into a total of 10 short documentary films of 15 minutes each. There is one larger film that is an overall comprehensive documentary representing the status of these ten languages.

### **3. Digitisation of recorded Oral Traditions of North Gujarat (supported by Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Govt. of India)**

Eminent folklorist and writer from Gujarat, Dr. Bhagwandas Patel spent a major part of his life recording the oral traditions of the Garasia and Dungri Bhili communities living in the northern Gujarat region, on the border between Gujarat and Rajasthan. Bhasha suggested the possibility of digitising the recordings to Dr. Patel who, very graciously, donated all the taped material running into nearly 600 audio tapes and 20 VHS tapes of as many hours to Bhasha for digitisation. The digitisation will have Dr. Patel's detailed notes on each of the recordings. This documentation will be an invaluable part of the Adivasi Academy's holdings for posterity, easily accessible to Adivasi communities as well as to interested students, researchers and scholars.

### **4. Documentation of Tribal Music of Sikkim (supported by Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Govt. of India)**

As a 'Centre of Excellence' recognised by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Govt. of India, Bhasha began to document tribal music in the year 2008. Over the years, Bhasha has documented the music of tribal communities in the states of Gujarat, Chhatisgarh, Assam, Jharkhand, Uttaranchal, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Telangana and Odisha. Continuing the Tribal Music series, Bhasha selected the state of Sikkim last year. Under the expert advice and support of Prof. Balaram Pandey, University of Sikkim, and renowned ethnomusicologist, Dr. Narendra Gurung, the music and performance arts of the state were documented audio-visually on film. The popular music and dance forms of 11 tribal communities were covered. While the raw footage is with the Vaccha Museum at the Adivasi Academy, a 120-minute edited film has been created that comprehensively covers community dance and song traditions that are performed during rituals and festivals, as well as interviews with some of the artistes.



## 5. Kasota Weaving

The Kasota Weaving project, initiated by Dr. Madan Meena, Hon. Director, Adivasi Academy, has moved forward with full-time intern Akshita Gangwal, supporting with inputs in creating contemporary products with Kasota Weaving. The Adivasi Academy set up pit looms and convinced weavers Govindbhai and Ratanbhai Vankar to come and weave the Kasota. Watching them weave,



Akshita experimented with the fabric in terms of its size, doubling its width from the usual 12 inch length to 24 inches. Keeping the traditional motifs intact, the artisans began to experiment with modern day products such as stoles, cushion covers, jackets and tableware using new shades made with natural dyes. Akshita and her weaver team participated in trade exhibitions at NIFT Gandhinagar, the Department of Clothing and Textiles, The M. S. University of Baroda, as well as the International Loin Loom Festival at Nagaland.

Bhasha looks forward to ***Revitalising Kasota Weaving to bring Skilled Livelihood back to the Weavers.*** If the project is successful, Bhasha will be able to motivate several young persons from the Vankar community to get back to their traditional income-generating skills and live a life of respect and dignity. The activity was partially supported by Ms Sapna Bhatia, member of Advisory Board of the Adivasi Academy, who supported a short film on this subject which we are using for fund-raising (link to the film: <https://vimeo.com/373069687>). She also donated Rs. 40,000 that went towards providing Akshita's fellowship stipend for 4 months. Shri S. K. Das donated Rs 50,000 towards this project.

The initiative requires funding support that so far has not come in. Some of the expenses are met from sale of finished products. In addition to funding, there is a need to place activity on a secure legal footing that includes profit-making, if possible.

## 6. Beadwork (Supported by Keystone Foundation)

Traditionally Rathwa women are skilled in making bead jewellery. Earlier they would use the original large glass beads to make necklaces that they wore themselves. Over a period of several years, with plastic beads becoming cheaply and widely available, the large glass beads have been replaced by the small glass/plastic ones. The patterns of the necklaces too have changed drastically with common designs having completely replaced the old intricate ones. Having come across photographs taken between 1967 and 1997 of the Chhota Udepur bead jewellery by eminent artist, Prof. Jyotibhai Bhatt, who has donated them to the Adivasi Academy, Dr. Madan Meena decided to revive these traditional designs as seen in the photographs using the traditional beads.

Jyoti Navlini, a Ph.D. scholar from the Faculty of Family and Community Sciences of The M.S. University was invited to lead the revival of traditional bead jewellery making among contemporary bead jewellery makers in Chhota Udepur. NID Prof. Erroll Pires helped Dr Madan Meena, to source the traditional beads from an antique dealer in Shahpur, Ahmedabad. Eight training workshops were held at the Adivasi Academy. Nine selected practising bead jewellery women artists between 25 to 45 years of age participated in these workshops.



To encourage our endeavour, Prof. Jyotsna Bhatt very graciously donated three pieces of old bead jewellery from her personal collection. These became a reference point for the contemporary bead artists to delve into community memories and collections and tap their own creativity in new ways.

To simplify the designs, Medha Bhatt, a designer and alumni of the National Institute of Design, (who also joined the project) plotted the designs into graphs. She is planning to prepare an exercise book of graphs for artists in local languages for easy imbibing of the technique by young persons in the Rathwa community.

Bhasha participated in craft exhibitions organized by The M. S. University of Baroda, Indian Institute of Crafts and Design, Jaipur and National Institute of Fashion Technology, Gandhinagar to showcase the jewellery.

## **7. Connecting Community Heritage (supported by World Learning, USA)**

The Connecting Community Heritage Project, awarded jointly to Bhasha and the Department of Anthropology, University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, by World Learning, USA, commenced in December 2018 and ended in June 2019. The project involved cultural exchange between the Chhara community in Ahmedabad and the Karenni Burmese refugees who have relocated to the USA. The aim was to delve into issues of identity and heritage that these communities experience while settling in the midst of the more dominant culture(s) of their country. The project involved virtual exchanges between the two groups that was conducted from Chharanagar and visits of five organisational/community representatives from each side to the other country.

The Bhasha team visited Greeley for a fortnight in the early half of February 2019. Following this visit, the US team visited Budhan Theatre, Bhasha and the Adivasi Academy from May 14 to 26, 2019. Bhasha recorded detailed interviews/statements of each of the team members regarding the issues of identity, heritage and rights of the Karenni Burmese, Afro-American and the Native American.

As part of the project, Bhasha held a public exhibition titled ‘Chharas in Ahmedabad: Communities Connecting Heritage’, highlighting the Chhara history and Budhan Theatre’s journey of de-stigmatising the criminalised identity of the Denotified Communities through the theatre arts. Held at Navjivan Press’s Satya Gallery, Ahmedabad from June 25-30, 2019, the Exhibition received a tremendous response with more than 150 visitors. Many appreciated the fact that the present generation of the Chharas is re-writing their history and culture and an exhibition on their endeavours was viewed as an excellent medium to tell their story.

## **B) EDUCATION**

### **8. Pustak Pankh (Supported by GAIL Charitable and Educational Trust)**

With the aim of enhancing education and access to learning/knowledge, Bhasha has started a library initiative under the title, ‘Pustak Pankh’, in December 2019. Under Pustak Pankh, Bhasha has identified 21 schools in villages of Chhota Udepur taluka to establish community libraries in these schools. Talks were initiated with the sarpanches of these villages and the teachers in the schools to take this program forward. While the libraries will provide books to the children, youth and elders in the village, they will also actively function to improve the learning levels of children. The initiative is conceptualised to give wings to children’s learning by holding interesting and interactive activities as story-telling that make learning easy and joyful. The libraries will function as learning-activity hubs and serve to introduce ways by which children at the primary level improve their levels of reading, writing, comprehension and above all, expression! As part of the process, the team leading the initiative is being trained by educationists in transforming libraries as education tools. Bhasha has invited educationist Prabhat, associated with the Parag initiative of Tata Trust, to conduct story-writing and story-telling orientation workshops with the Adivasi staff online and on Whatsapp group.

(The project is currently kept on hold due to the pandemic that has caused schools to be closed. It will resume once schools reopen and the funding which is also on hold now, will re-start).

### **9. Pictorial Glossaries (Supported by FICCI)**

Bhasha has added to its already published volumes of 16 Pictorial Glossaries, two new glossaries in Tadvī and Bareli languages spoken in Chhota Udepur district. Both tribal languages, **Tadvī** is spoken largely in Sankheda taluka in Chhota Udepur district and Garudeshwar and Tilakwada talukas in Narmada District while **Bareli** is spoken in 15 villages of Kanwant taluka, on the borders between Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh. Each of the two glossaries was distributed across 10 selected government schools where Orientation Workshops were held with the school teachers on Mother Tongue Education. They were counselled in the use of these Glossaries as a tool of communication between non-Adivasi teachers and Adivasi children. The Glossaries have been very warmly received by the

teachers, several of whom were not aware that Adivasi communities have their own mother tongues with a lexicon and grammar of their own and distinct from the state regional languages. Bhasha will map the use and impact of the glossaries on the teaching-learning process and share it with the Tribal Research and Training Institutes and state Samagra Shikshas for preparation of similar multilingual glossaries in other Adivasi languages.

(With the schools closed due to the pandemic, the project is on hold presently.)

### **10. Vasantshala Multi-lingual Primary Schooling Program (partly supported by Tata Trusts, Neogen Chemicals Ltd, Shakun Polymers Pvt. Ltd.)**

During 2019-20, the Vasantshala Centre at the Adivasi Academy had 56 children (24 girls, 32 boys) between the age group of 7 – 12 years. The children made good progress during the year under the care of their 4 teachers. Along with their regular learning sessions, Vasantshala had a range of workshops and excursions for the children to gain acquaintance with their tribal traditions as well have opportunity of learning new skills. The following were special days for Vasantshala:



<b>Day</b>	<b>Event</b>
June 21	Yoga Day
July 8-12	Training in farming activities
July 20	Visit to Cygnus School, Vadodara for performance of Timli dance
July 27	Origami Workshops conducted by Dominique Suaer, an intern from Germany
July 28	Mahasweta Devi's death anniversary was observed
August 15	Celebration of Independence Day and Rakshabandhan
September 5	Teacher's Day celebration
October 2	Gandhi Jayanti celebration
October 15 to 20	Mid-term assessment
October 30	On-campus training by the Gujarat State's National Disaster Response Force on measures to be taken during disasters and calamities
December 18	The children went on a trip with their teachers to the nearby Koraj Hill to acquaint themselves to know the local flora and fauna and had an enjoyable meal at the end!

From October, Marcel Diaz and Clara Henfrich, both interns from Germany at the Adivasi Academy, took to English teaching and sports activities with the teachers and children.

On October 11, the teachers had a session on ‘Mother Tongue and Multilingual Education’ with students of the Bharat Livelihood Rural Foundation, all of whom belonged to Adivasi communities across India. On September 14, B.Ed. students from Pavijetpur College visited Vasantshala and held discussions with the Vasantshala teachers on Mother Tongue Education; on September 19 the group was imparted a day-long training in how Mother Tongue Education can be adapted in the classroom along with the state official language

In June, 40 children were mainstreamed in Government residential schools. They will start attending these schools once schools open.

The Vasantshala children were sent home for Holi festival in March 2020. Unfortunately with the pandemic reaching India in mid-March and the Government declaring a nation-wide lockdown from March 24, the children were asked not to come back until schools would officially open in Gujarat. New admissions to Vasantshala have not been possible in the pandemic.

## **C) HEALTHCARE**

### **11. Prakruti Health Centre (partly supported by Gulbrandsen Technologies)**

The Adivasi Academy’s Prakruti Health Centre has been offering allopathy treatment since the year 2000. With the support of the Ministry of AYUSH, Govt. of India, the Centre began promoting Ayurved since 2016. During the past year, 43 OPDs were held wherein 4520 residents (Men 1726, Women 1870, Children 924) from across 435 villages of Chhota Udepur district availed allopathic treatment. The complaints were related to general ailments such as cold and fever, diabetes, epilepsy and fits, blood pressure, knee and joint pain, asthma and pulmonary ailments, sickle cell anemia and skin diseases. To help patients in the more remote villages, 11 ayurveda health camps were held on Sundays in the following villages of the Chhota Udepur district: Rojkuva, Chichod, Devaliya, Dhandhoda, Ghelwant, Acheta, Kikavada, Kanalwa, Gungavada, Chilarwant and Rangpur. Dr. Maruti Rathwa, a qualified ayurvedic doctor, examined the patients and according to the diagnosis, gave ayurvedic medicines. In all, 1088 patients came for treatment in the camps. Those having more chronic ailments thereafter continued their treatment at the Adivasi Academy. The laboratory at the Prakruti health centre conducted urine and blood tests for 251 patients during the process of diagnosis and treatment.

Because of the pandemic, the Prakruti Health Centre closed from March 24 onwards. Dr. Kiran Shinglot is telephonically giving medicinal guidance to the regular patients who visit the clinic.



## **D) RESEARCH STUDIES**

### **12. Dakshinayan Indian Thought Series (partly supported by Rajiv Gandhi Foundation)**

In 2019, Prof. Devy has undertaken the 'Dakshinayan Indian Thought Series' that will bring together philosophical texts in Indian tradition celebrating diversity, tolerance and non-violence. There are 10 volumes planned in the series. The Rajiv Gandhi Foundation has extended support for the first two volumes in Punjabi and Telugu.

### **13. Voicing the Denotified Communities (supported by Paul Hamlyn Foundation)**

Bhasha has for long been working for the cause of the Denotified Communities, a social group of 191 communities that were declared as 'Criminal Tribes' by the British and 'De-notified' after India's independence in 1952.

In October 2018, Bhasha undertook a two-year study of the Bedia, Bachda, Sansi, Gadiya Luhar, Kalbeliya (Madari), Nat and Kanjar Denotified communities. Titled 'Voicing the Community', the study focuses on capturing the historical transition of these communities from being 'nomadic' to becoming 'denotified' and looking into the contemporary status of their citizenship entitlements. To obtain a comparative perspective on a single community across states, the study covers these communities in Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. Bhasha is collaborating with local NGOs already working with these communities in their respective regions. These include Budhan Theatre in Gujarat, Jan Sahas and Muskaan in Madhya Pradesh, Gramin Shiksha Kendra and Kota Heritage Society in Rajasthan.

As part of the study, Bhasha, in collaboration with the local organisations, has carried out a survey of the status of citizenship entitlements at respective community-locations. As part of the documentary films to be made on each community, detailed interviews and discussions have been held with community members regarding their history, traditional and contemporary livelihood challenges, current lived situation, relationship with their neighbourhood, government and legal authorities, their status *vis-a-vis* other marginal communities, their aspirations and struggle for change and progress.

At the end of the study, a comprehensive Report of the findings along with Recommendations for developmental directions and policy interventions will be disseminated among government authorities, organisations and social activists. Based on the findings of the project, PHF is open to supporting action oriented projects with Bhasha and the collaborating organisations with the local communities.

(The project would have ended in September 2020 but given the pandemic situation, it has been given a no-cost 6-month extension till March 2021).

#### 14. Study of Tribal Livelihoods in Narmada district (supported by Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Govt. of India)

Considering that there is a rising incidence of distress migration among Adivasi communities and the government's emphasis on skill development, Bhasha took up in 2019, a Study of the 'Traditional Life-Skills, Skills in Transition and Potential Livelihood Opportunities' among Adivasi Communities in Narmada district, one of the two aspirational districts in Gujarat. The study reveals that while agriculture continues to be the mainstay of the communities in Narmada district, it no longer provides year-long sustenance. Narmada being a hilly region, it is difficult to carry out cultivation in the rocky terrain. Several of the community members living in the interior areas of Sagbara and Dediapada talukas depend on subsistence agriculture alone, migrating for a few months to meet their other living expenses. Irrigation facilities are not adequately developed and with no other viable source of income, the district sees large scale migration to Surat where people find daily wage labour work in the sugar factories and to Maharashtra to work in the vineyards. The district however does seem to hold out opportunities for livelihood development, some of which are community initiatives.

Fishing in the Tapi river waters (and other smaller rivers) is a viable trade for those who are organised into co-operatives. Farmers with large land holdings are now creating artificial fish ponds on their farms for additional income. However, the smaller fishing communities can only subsist on their daily/weekly catch and have no institutional support.



The Kotwalia community, identified as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group, makes excellent bamboo products and can benefit with design inputs and marketing support. Though the government has provided them with training, the community has no market linkages. The communities are finding MNREGA as a viable option for local employment and village development but suggest increase in wages and work days.



The village Amla, on the other hand, has been extremely enterprising and has made optimum use of the farm training and seed kits provided to them by the district administration a decade back. With this small beginning, the farmers in the village have turned to organic vegetable farming and now profitably do direct selling to the thousands of tourists passing by on the main road to the Statue of Unity. A section of the local community has taken to mushroom cultivation near Rajpipla. The government is making inroads into developing eco-tourism in the region. The district can make good use of forest produce with the collaboration of local communities. At the end of the study, a report with recommendations, several from the community, will be submitted to the Ministry.

## E. DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES

### 15. Indigo Farming (supported by Personal Donations)

The Adivasi Academy has formed a long-term ‘From Yarn to Textile’ plan under which it intends to make in-house production of organically grown cotton textiles by reviving the Kasota (loin cloth) weaving tradition practiced by the local Vankar community. When Dr. Madan Meena started to explore the tradition, only very few aged weavers remained in the village Dhandoda. Weaving was started first with two master weavers who returned from Surat. Slowly when he started looking for natural dyes to dye the yarn he discovered that Indigo grows in the wild in the Tejgadh area; it is recognized by the Adivasis as *jheemti* and is used for certain medicinal purposes. Many other plants which yield different dyes already grow on the Academy’s campus –among these the *Aal* plant and Lac are important ones used for red dye. A visit of the natural dye experts guided him to start Indigo cultivation in March 2019 on a small piece of rented farmland and later do dye extraction after harvesting.



Fairly good results were achieved in the first cultivation and five Indigo vats were prepared using local Mahuwa flowers and lime. It yielded rich blue colour. Since the liquid extract of Indigo leaves was used directly in dyeing the yarn, there was no wastage unlike what goes in making the indigo cakes. This organic indigo is very cost effective because of being cultivated and used in the same area. It is hoped that this project will inspire the local farmers to take up indigo as a commercial crop for better income generation.

Three successful workshops on ‘Spinning, Weaving and Dyeing’ were held during 2019-20 of which Indigo cultivation and dye extraction was the major attraction. With about 10 participants in each workshop (these were all paid workshops), they had faculty that included master artisans like Ranamal Khatri from Barmer, Paresh Patel and Asif Chhipa from Ahmedabad, Juhi Pandey, ex-Director of Khamir in Kachchh, Anantmoorthi from Bangalore, Brijvallabh Udaiwal from Jaipur and Umaben from Vedchhi who mentored the participants. One group of participants was sponsored by Child Fund India. These workshops created good income for the Academy. Such workshops along with the sale of Kasota could cover the expenses incurred on Indigo farming and the Kasota weaving project to some extent.

In 2020, the indigo crop yield is better, and the Adivasi Academy staff is managing the dye extraction on their own as they have learned the process.

Like the Kasota project, this project needs funding so that it can be developed further and become a way to earn the Adivasi Academy some income and move towards self-sustenance.

## **F. TRAINING PROGRAMMES**

### **16. Bharat Rural Livelihood Foundation**

The Bharat Rural Livelihood Foundation (BRLF) offers a six-month Certificate Programme in Rural Livelihoods' to tribal youth from 18 to 40 years from the central tribal belt of India'. The BRLF has MoUs with organisations on training their batches on different aspects related to the programme. The BRLF had an MoU with Bhasha to conduct a course on 'Adivasi Identity and History' for their students. As part of this MoU a batch of 30 students and 2 Faculty members from the Bharat Rural Livelihood Foundation (BRLF) visited the Adivasi Academy from January 1-4, 2020. The course was designed to provide the students an understanding about contemporary tribal issues in a historical context. During their four-days stay, the group not only had the opportunity to see Bhasha's various initiatives in the areas of art, languages and culture, education and healthcare, they also got to hear from the Adivasi Academy's team and invited speakers as Dr. Rajesh Rathwa, Dr. Anand Vasava, Roxy Gagdekar, Atish Indrekar and Sonal Rathwa. The students shared that they had benefitted with the perspective building that they received at the Adivasi Academy and in learning about ways of documenting and revitalising their own traditions and knowledge system. BRLF will explore more such programmes once the pandemic is over.

### **17. Child Fund, ABSSS, CARD and Jatan**

Child Fund and its partner organisations, Akhil Bhartiya Samaj Sewa Sansthan (Chitrakoot), Centre for Advanced Research and Development (CARD, Madhya Pradesh) and Jatan (Rajasthan) approached Bhasha with a request to arrange for a Workshop for their members at the Adivasi Academy for providing an understanding about how Adivasi languages can be meaningfully used for enhancing education among Adivasi Communities and more specifically for preparation of Pictorial Glossaries in Bhili and Bagheli languages spoken in their own regions. A team of 18 members from all the four organisations visited the Adivasi Academy first from March 3-4, 2019 and then again from June 10-12, 2019. Conducted by educationists Prabhat and Pramod Pathak and Bhasha's own team, the Workshop covered Methodology of Preparing Multilingual Glossaries, Challenges in Tribal Education, Tribal Oral Traditions, Documentation and its Processes. The glossaries are in an advanced stage and are being finalised by the organisations.

## **G) VISITORS, INTERNS AND RESEARCHERS**

Throughout the year, the Adivasi Academy received groups of school and college students who came on exposure visits and got acquainted with Adivasi history, culture and developmental issues. A large group of writers and social activists from Maharashtra visited the Adivasi Academy on July 31 and August 1, 2019 to see the work being done here. The discussions were led by Dr. Devy.

Some of the institutions who deputed their students on visit include Alembic Vidyalaya (Vadodara), Shantaben Manubhai School of Studies and Research Architecture and Interior Design (Vallabh Vidyanagar), Anant University (Ahmedabad), College of Architecture (Jabugam), Samarth College of Education (Pavijetpur), Vanvasi Sewa Kendra's B.Ed. College (Pavijetpur) and Sheth T. C. Kapadia Arts and Commerce College (Bodeli).

Students from the K. R. Doshi School of Colleges, National Law School of India University, Shrishti Institute of Art, Design and Technology, The M. S. University of Baroda, Devraj Institute of Social Work and Indian Institute of Crafts and Design came to Bhasha and the Adivasi Academy for internships in the area of arts, design, architecture, media and communication and social development.

Marcel Diaz and Clara Henfrich, German student volunteers came on a year-long internship at the Adivasi Academy in September 2019. (They had to return in March end due to the pandemic)

Dr. Eva Romero, a neuro-scientist from Spain associated with the Cajal Institute of Neuroscience, Madrid has collaborated with Bhasha/Adivasi Academy for her project on 'Looking at the Brain through the eyes of the Adivasi Artist'. As part of her research she has held two workshops at Tejgadh with Adivasi artists from Chhota Udepur district and Madhya Pradesh.

The Facebook page of Bhasha has a good listing of all activities of Adivasi Academy in detail with good images. It also features all the interns who have visited our Academy for different projects.

## **OTHER MATTERS**

Dr Arvind Kumar, who worked as Deputy Director, Adivasi Academy, left during the year to join his family in his home state of Bihar.

Shri Karsanbhai Rathwa, who worked at the Academy, retired this year. He is the first person at the Academy to do so.

## **SINCERE THANKS**

We would like to put on record our very warm and sincere thanks to the several Ministries and Government Departments at New Delhi, Gandhinagar and Chhota Udepur and the corporates who have steadily and continuously extended a helping hand via the CSR mode. At the same time, there are hundreds of individuals, whose contributions, in cash and kind, throughout the year, has been a strong steadying factor. Our immense gratitude to all our friends and well-wishers!

## **Donors**

Atul Dodiya  
Madan Lal Meena  
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India Friends Association, USA  
Keystone Foundation, Chennai  
Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India, New Delhi  
Paul Hamlyn Foundation, New Delhi  
World Learning, US

We thank all of you and look forward to your visit to the Adivasi Academy, Tejgadh, when the pandemic is under control and travel is safe and possible.

## **Hon. Secretary**

## **FOOTNOTE: GETTING PROACTIVE DURING THE PANDEMIC**

(The activity and funding received and spent will be detailed in next year's Report and Audited Accounts)

The COVID 19 pandemic hit India in mid-March and a nationwide lockdown was declared in the third week of March. Soon enough, we saw images of migrant labourers trudging back across the country to the safety of their village homes. The tribal district of Chhota Udepur where the Adivasi Academy is located has a number of poor tribal families that regularly migrate to nearby and faraway urban areas as well. They often came back without any money, fearful, with no food and no possibility of work in the near future. Bhasha immediately started fund-raising from local friends as well as our funding partners from across the world. We then worked with the Academy staff as well as Tejgadh sarpanch to identify the returning migrant families and then give them relief dry food packets such that they could feed themselves. They were also given masks and soaps. Once the Government's ration system began operating, we helped the families with fresh vegetable packets and other basic necessities. In this way, we supported more than 600 families in Chhota Udepur district, mainly in villages around Tejgadh. About 5000 masks were distributed. The Academy has complete lists of families who were thus supported, when and at what intervals and with what materials. Most of these families were supported twice, even thrice, with food kits. The nature of the pandemic being as it is—a fear of unseen infection from unknown sources—we were able to help only those families within and on the outskirts of Tejgadh village. Unlike in relief work generally organised where the affected persons are reached by volunteers with help, this pandemic controlled free movement of volunteers to a very large extent. With the help of Budhan Theatre volunteers, more than 1200 DNT families rendered work-less in the lockdown without rations or money were also helped with food packets. A total of approximately Rs 14 lakh was collected towards this relief work. Some amount from this fund is still saved for possible need in the future because the pandemic is still not over.